

**ECOWAS RESPONSE TO CONFLICT IN WEST AFRICA: THE CASE OF
GAMBIA, 2016- 2017.**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project was carried out by **OLUWABUSAYOMI ABULATAN** with of the Department of History and International Studies University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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Date: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to God almighty for his guidance throughout my study.
This work is also dedicated to my amazing mother, Mrs. B.A Abulatan for her continuous support and words of encouragement.

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My utmost gratitude goes to God almighty for His love, grace and mercy that has brought me this far.

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CHAPTER ONE

ORIGIN AND NATURE OF THE GAMBIAN CRISIS

Crisis and conflict have become constant features of countries in West Africa, from civil war in Liberia between 1989 and 2003, Sierra Leone from 1991 to 2002, to insurgency and instability in Mali, Nigeria, Guinea, and Mali. Election crisis has plunged some West African states into a battlefield between supporters of the contending parties in the election as in Cote d'Ivoire and Madagascar, and this has resulted in a state of instability in these states. When Gambians went to the polls on December 1, 2016 to decide who their next president will be, the country did not know that a change is about to take place in the country's highest seat of authority, that is, Yayha Jammeh, who has been in power since he led a military coup against President Dawda Jawara in 1994, would lose his bid to become Gambia's president for the fifth term to the opposition leader Adama Barrow.¹

Never before in the fifty years of Gambian independence had a power change occurred through election, and the strongly authoritative regime of Jammeh had shown little sign of erosion. The contrary was the case under Jammeh even the slightest hints of independent political activity were repressed and opposition leader Ousainou Darboe had ended up in prison together with nineteen other politicians for simply having participated in a demonstration calling for political reforms in April 2016.²

After the election results were announced, dispute came up and gradually metamorphosed into a political crisis that was moving towards a full blown war.

Jammeh initially conceded defeat by congratulating the winner of the election, Adama Barrow on December 2, before the final results were released, but Jammeh retracted his statement on 9 December by calling for a new election to be conducted because he felt the December 1 election was manipulated. This action by Jammeh led to tension rising in Gambia which necessitated Senegal, her neighboring West African state to deploy troops to Gambia to put down any form of crisis that may occur due to Jammeh's refusal to hand over power. During the campaign period and the days before the election, a significant number of Gambians left Gambia fearing electoral violence; some even voted for Jammeh fearing his anger in case of defeat.³

Over the past twenty two years, Jammeh and the Gambian security forces have used enforced disappearances, torture, intimidation and arbitrary arrests to suppress dissent and preserve Jammeh's grip on power. Ahead of the 2016 election, the government has repeated these tactics, with a crackdown on opposition parties, particularly the United Democratic Party (UDP), that has all but extinguished hopes for a free and fair election. Prominent UDP activist, Solo Sandeng, was arrested after he led a public protest calling for electoral reform on April 14, 2016 by the Gambian police who took him to the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) headquarters where he was beaten to death. Gambian authorities have in 2016 arrested more than ninety opposition activists, including those arrested with Sandeng for participating in largely peaceful protests. Courts have convicted thirty opposition members and sentenced

them to three-year terms, including UDP leader, Ousainou Darboe, and many of the UDP leadership.⁴

“Let me warn those evil vermin called opposition”, he said in May. “If you want to destabilize this country, I will bury you nine-feet deep”, he gave this speech in the North Bank region on May 17 when he began a national tour. During a subsequent June 3 speech as part of the same tour, he said:

Let me tell you something that I can swear by Allah. Any group who says they are against my leadership and that they are against the people’s servant. I swear to Allah that you will not see elections. Police will not catch you, nobody will catch you, but you will all die one by one before elections

The Gambia under Jammeh was characterized by gross violations of human rights directed against journalists, opposition figures and Gambian dissidents living in the diaspora.⁵ For over a decade, Jammeh’s party The Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) dominated the political landscape characterized by political intimidation, repression and the politicization of the security forces, clamping down on the opposition, Jammeh won four presidential elections in 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011 and by heading to the 2016 polls, he was one of the most long-standing rulers in post-Cold War Africa. Jammeh alongside the president of Togo, Faure Gnassingbe, were the only two of the sixteen ECOWAS member states that refused to sign the agreement in 2015 for the introduction of term limit in their national constitutions. His refusal to sign this agreement shows that any attempt to prevent him from contesting for the fifth term would be met with stiff resistance.⁶

Jammeh came to power in 1994 after overthrowing the elected government of Jawara who had been the president since Gambia gained independence from the United Kingdom on February 18, 1965 in a coup on July 22, 1994. Jammeh insisted that the coup was a coup that made a difference, that they were not here to stay permanently, they would return to the barracks after life returns to normal condition.⁷ This prompted jubilation from the people. Upon coming to power, Jammeh ruled by decree, suspending the constitution and all existing political parties, he set up the Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC) which wanted a four- year transition period, but the people demanded the transition be limited to two years. In order to be able to contest election in 1996, Jammeh resigned from the military and transformed himself into a civilian politician. He started a political party named the Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC)⁸ under which he contested for the 1996 presidential election which he won in a widely criticized election, after which he consolidated his rule and grip on power.⁹ He was reelected in 2001,2006 and 2011, although these contests were generally not in line with international standards of free and fair elections. In an interview with the BBC in 2011,Jammeh was quoted to have said that he “would rule this country for one billion years{...},if Allah says so”.¹⁰

The 1997 constitution of Gambia limits the president to two five-year terms. However, this was altered to suspend the two- term limit. After the presidential

election of 2001, the constitution was again amended, this time to omit a second round of voting should the electoral candidate fail to win a fifty plus one percent majority.¹¹

In the same vein, the upper age limit for seeking office was pegged to 65 years. During Jammeh's regime, the independent media were deliberately targeted and weakened through calculated attacks, assassinations and kidnappings, e.g, Deyda Hy dara, who was *The Point* editor, was assassinated in 2004; also in 2006, Ebrima Chief Manneh disappeared and has not been found since being arrested by plain clothes security men, an incident which coincided with the sudden closure of independent media outlets like Citizens FM, Sud FM and the *Independence* newspaper that has had a presence in the Gambia since 2001.¹² With these actions taken against the media by Jammeh's administration, online and social media took on the role of independent media and this act contributed in no small measure to the drive for change in the December 1 election. WhatsApp was blocked during the run up to the election in reaction to the high volume of activity. When the government was unable to completely shut down WhatsApp, the government instituted an entire internet shutdown before voters went to the polls, calls into and out of the country were also disabled through the international telecommunication gateways. The government blocked access to certain websites and companies, such as Skype, internet users could not access sites of US-based online exile newspapers, *Freedom* and *The Gambia Echo*.¹³

Jammeh and the APRC dominated Gambian politics through intimidation, repression and politicized security forces that were oppressing the opposition parties, although in mid-2015, Jammeh pardoned more than three hundred prisoners (security, political, and common criminals) some key political opponents remained incarcerated, including the UDP's national treasurer and two other members. The three were convicted of sedition in 2013 and have allegedly been tortured in custody.¹⁴ Due to the nature of the conduct of Gambia's election, ECOWAS refused to send an observer mission to the presidential election that took place in the country on November 24, 2011.

The pre-election ECOWAS assessment mission stressed the need to raise funds to match the "vast resource imbalance" between the incumbent and the collective opposition, an issue that was a key factor in the 2011 presidential election (abuse of incumbency).¹⁵ The state has always refused to provide security for the opposition candidates, rather the opposition had to hire their own security guards for their personal protection, while supporters relied on their numerical strength to resist and defy intimidation from the ruling party and elements of the security services. Human rights groups and election observer missions have documented instances of intimidation by members of the military, the police, and the intelligence services throughout the entire electoral process, from the registration of voter rolls, to the voting itself, and the counting of ballots, the security services used to campaign openly by wearing ruling party T-shirts and by displaying their loyalty through slogans like

“We will die for you!”, referring to Jammeh. A major feature of Jammeh’s administration is violation of human rights; people were prosecuted for protesting and even jailed. He threatened to behead gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender Gambians and this caused the greatest damage to his international standing, while simultaneously providing a very credible basis to the asylum claims of sexual minorities seeking refuge protection in Europe and North America.¹⁶

When Gambians went to the polls on December 1, 2016, few of them might have thought that the election was going to bring about a change in the political history of their country because never before in Gambia’s history since independence was attained in 1965 had a power change occurred through elections.¹⁷ Dawara, the first president who gained independence for Gambia ruled for almost twenty nine years and was overthrown through a coup by Jammeh and the strongly authoritarian regime of Jammeh had shown little sign of erosion. Much to the contrary under Jammeh even the slightest hints of independent political activity was repressed, and opposition leader Ousainou Darboe had ended up in prisons together with nineteen other politicians for simply having participated in a demonstration calling for political reforms in April 2016. In the buildup to the elections, Jammeh’s regime refused to allow international electoral observers except a small African Union contingent.¹⁸

In July 2015, Gambia’s National Assembly adopted an amendment to the election laws that opposition parties criticized as an effort to restrict opposition participation in the upcoming 2016 presidential election and the 2017 parliamentary election. The

Election Amendment Act 2015, they said, imposed prohibitive conditions on presidential candidates and their parties to be registered by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) notably by sharply increasing the deposit needed to run for president from 10,000 Dalasi to 50,000 Dalasi, requiring a party's executive members to be resident in Gambia, and requiring parties to maintain a secretariat in each of Gambia's five regions.¹⁹

The December 1 election was contested by three presidential aspirants; the incumbent Jammeh of APRC who was seeking for a fifth term in office, Barrow of the Coalition 2016 (Coalition 2016 comprises of seven opposition parties) and Mamma Kandeh of the Gambia Democratic Congress (GDC). The seven political parties that formed the Coalition 2016 are; Gambia Moral Congress Party (GMC), National Reconciliation Party (NRP), People's Democratic Organization for Independence and Socialism (PDOIS), United Democratic Party (UDP), People Progressive Party (PPP), Gambia People Democratic Party (GPDP), National Convention Party (NCP) and an independent candidate Dr. Isatou Touray. Before the 2016 election, there was no united opposition to contest against Jammeh and this had worked in his favour in past elections, majorly the 2011 election as there was no strong opponent against Jammeh but in the 2016 election, however, the major opposition party UDP was able to come together with six other opposition parties and stand as a formidable opposition by presenting one candidate, which was the relatively unknown treasurer of the UDP, Adama Barrow against Jammeh and his party, APRC. This coming together was one

of the major factors that led to Jammeh losing his bid for a fifth term as the president of Gambia.²⁰

The IEC on December 2, officially announced the result of the election, stating that Barrow polled 263,515 votes (45.5%); Jammeh 212,099 votes (36.7%) and Mama Kendeheh 102,969 votes (17.8%). Before the final results were announced, Jammeh enthusiastically spoke to Barrow on a televised phone call to accept defeat, stating that “*I call to wish you all the best, the Gambian people have spoken*”, Jammeh went on state television to publicly concede defeat, he congratulated Barrow and assured him of his co-operation in handing over power while he would “*prepare to go back to his birth village (Kanilai) as a farmer*”.²¹ He further said on television he would not contest the results and vowed to return to his farm “*to eat what I grow and grow what I eat*”: Jammeh said:

Our system is unique and we have decided to go to the polls for you, the Gambia people decide who you want to lead you. Today, 2nd of December, 2016, you, Gambians have decided that I should take the backseat. You have voted for somebody to lead our country and I wish you all the best.²²

The IEC readjusted the votes counted on December 5, 2016 based on an error that occurred in the Basse Administration Area, where the total numbers of votes acquired by all three candidates were added to their votes nationally, increasing their total votes as revealed in the first results. The correction of the vote count error reduced presidential-elect Barrow’s margin of victory over Jammeh from 9% to 4%.²³ Despite the error that occurred and after it had been rectified, Barrow still won the

election. The IEC on December 5 made two awful announcements, first, that the total votes cast were actually 9.1% lower than those it had announced, second, that there were errors in its counting as some of the votes counted in Barrow's favor actually belonged to Jammeh.²⁴ Based on these, it released another set of results which showed Barrow with 227,708 votes (35,807 votes lower than what had been earlier declared) and Jammeh with 212,099 (or 3,612 more votes). With this, the vote difference narrowed from 51,416 votes to 19,212 votes.²⁵ The IEC stressed that the corrections "had not changed the status quo" of the election.²⁶

Jammeh, who had earlier conceded defeat, retracted his statement on December 9, 2016 by declaring in a speech that he no longer had trust in the electoral process and that he will contest the result declared by the IEC, and also given some irregularities in aggregating result from one region ask for a fresh election under a different electoral administration because of the error that occurred in the Basse region, which when corrected, reduced Barrow's lead against Jammeh to 4% from the 9% in the result originally released on December 2.²⁷ In a televised address on national television, Jammeh cited "severe abnormalities that transpired during the elections", including unprecedented foreign interference, he rejected the results of the elections in its "totality" and called for fresh elections to be officiated by a "God fearing IEC".²⁸ Jammeh claimed that his party's representatives at the rectification meeting on December 5, did not sign the rectified results and further stated that some 25,000 of his voters were not allowed to vote, his party agents were not allowed access to some

polling stations, and thus rejected the outcome of the 2016 presidential election.²⁹He declared that:

I hereby announced to you Gambians my total rejection of the election results and thereby annulling the election in its entirety until we go back to the polls, we will go back to the polls because I want to make sure every Gambian has voted.

It was earlier reported by the BBC that hopes were not “high for a peaceful transfer of power, with a crackdown on opposition leaders, months before the polls, the banning of international observers and post-election demonstrations, and then the switching off of the internet”. Before Jammeh, who disputed Barrow’s election victory, many African heads of state had attempted, in some cases successfully, over the past few years to remain in power beyond their legal mandate.³⁰In some countries, elections had been disputed amid deadly violence, as was the case in Kenya, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Togo and Gabon.³¹

On December 10, 2016, troops were deployed on the streets of Banjul as a sign that Jammeh was still in control of the security apparatus, the offices of the IEC were occupied by the army on 13 December, and staff hindered from entering the building. Jammeh no longer appeared committed to handing over power to the elected president by 18 January, 2017, the legal end of his office.³² When Jammeh realized that the power to dissolve the election results resided in the Supreme Court, he decided to go through the legal process, an irony lost to no one. His party, APRC, filed a petition to the country’s apex court demanding that Jammeh be declared winner of the December

1 election.³³ On 13 December, Jammeh's APRC appealed to The Gambia's Supreme Court accusing the IEC of having "failed to properly collate the results", (Jammeh's reported intent was to pressure the court to rule that the IEC's results were null and void and to call for a new election).³⁴ But Jammeh had already sacked some judges from this court and therefore needed a quorum to decide the matter, Nigerian-born Chief Justice Emmanuel Fagbenle asked the party to resolve the matter through other means as the required number of judges was not available and would probably not be until May or November 2017 after Jammeh's tenure had ended.³⁵

In the days leading up to 19 January, it was reported that Jammeh's security forces were roaming the streets, curfews were imposed and public assemblies were banned. Opposition figures and civil society activists were followed and intimidated, many fled the country in anticipation of the outbreak of war, due to Jammeh's refusal to step down. Reports described Jammeh's decision to resort to intimidation tactics, including arbitrary arrests and the private media were restrained from expressing their opinion, it described an environment in which "the security situation remains tense, with military personnel and paramilitary forces reportedly deployed across Banjul in combat gear". Another report estimated that over 50,000 individuals (most of them were women and children) had left the capital for the countryside, fearing imminent widespread violence.³⁶

By 12 January, Jammeh's efforts to stall the transition through the Supreme Court were still proving ineffective, the Bar Associations of both Nigeria and Sierra Leone

had issued orders barring their members from accepting Jammeh's offers and the broader region was building a united front against his efforts. On 17 January, Jammeh, running out of legal options for opposing the transfer of power, took the feared steps of declaring a State of Emergency. The Gambian Parliament, under pressure from Jammeh, then voted to extend the State of Emergency, as well as Jammeh's tenure for an additional 90 days but the cabinet resignations continued and most significantly, now included senior members of The Gambia's armed forces, in response to these resignations Jammeh dissolved his cabinet on 18 January.³⁷ The Gambia crisis was caused by Jammeh's refusal to accept his defeat in the December 1 election and step down at the end of his tenure, which led to the intervention from the ECOWAS body in order to foster peace and stability.

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CHAPTER TWO

EVOLUTION OF ECOWAS MECHANISM FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The Economic Community West African States established on the 28 of May, 1975 was created to serve as an avenue for economic integration of the fifteen (15) West African states. However, the community had to include conflict resolution to as part of its objectives due to the internal crises West African states started battling with, the Liberian civil war of 1991 being the start of violent internal confrontations in the sub region. It was also reasoned that for economic growth to be achieved in the region, it must be politically stable. Moreover, no region had more fragile states than West Africa, during the 1980s. ECOWAS was, therefore, confronted with a large number of political crises, ranging from civil wars to various military or constitutional coup d'etat.¹

It dawned on African states that they are the only ones that can resolve their crisis, unlike during the Cold War era which was from the end of the Second World War in 1945 until 1991, when the two superpowers, i.e., United States and The Union

of Soviet Socialist Republics rushed to aid any African state in crisis. With the end of the Cold War, the interest of the major powers (America and the European Union) now lies with the eastern Europe crisis and they saw African crisis as one that does not possess any threat to the international community and were focused on assisting the eastern European states who are interested in converting to a capitalist state, so ECOWAS had to rise to the occasion where it had to engage in conflict resolution to put down any form of crisis in the affected state before it turned into one that will engulf the whole sub region.² This led to the adoption of various protocols to tackle the new reality and ensure political stability in the West African region.

ECOWAS was created with the goal of accelerating and sustaining economic development of member states which was expected to climax in the economic union of West Africa by fifteen states in the West African sub region: Benin Republic, Burkina Faso, Cote d' Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo on the 28th of May, 1975 in Lagos, Cape Verde joined in 1976, bringing the total number to sixteen, but Mauritania left the community in 2002. The Economic Community West African States (ECOWAS) was established as a regional initiative to facilitate economic growth and development in West Africa. Even though the sub region is not homogenous but the states all shared the feature of economic underdevelopment.

The 1975 treaty that established the community states the aim of ECOWAS thus:

To promote cooperation and development in all fields of economic activity particularly in the fields of industry, transport, telecommunications, energy, agriculture, natural resources, commerce, monetary and financial questions and in social and cultural matters for the purpose of raising the standard of its people, of increasing and maintaining economic stability of fostering closer relations among its members and of contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.³

The idea of an economic community of West African states dates back to 1964, an idea proposed by president of Liberia, William Tubman. This eventually resulted in a multilateral agreement in 1975. The organization which was initially created for economic cooperation has undertaken the mission of ending the conflicts and disputes in the region with the wave of political reform since the 1990s through the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).⁴

ECOWAS was initially not designed to carry out a security role. It was inevitable that the organization will perform this task given the increasing security challenges that befell the sub-region after its establishment such as the failed attempt in 1977 by some mercenary soldiers to overthrow the government of the Republic of Benin allegedly sponsored by some African states; incessant border disputes and the problem of irredentism (an annexation doctrine) between Togo and Ghana, over the control of the Volta Region; Togo's accusation of Ghana and Burkina Faso of interfering in her internal affairs by stirring up internal uprising against its government, territorial dispute between Mali and Burkina Faso resulting in armed conflict between the countries in 1985 and so on.⁵

These disturbing events not only interrupted ECOWAS' ability to pursue its economic development mandate, but led to serious deliberations on the need to ensure sub-regional security, stability, and peace. Consequently, ECOWAS adopted the Protocol on Non-Aggression in 1978 and in 1981, the Protocol on Mutual Assistance Defence, two legal instruments that were meant to facilitate peace and political stability in the sub-region. The Protocol on Non-Aggression directly addressed issues of inter-state conflicts within the sub-region and also the promotion of peaceful settlement of conflict between ECOWAS member states. The Mutual Assistance on Defence, on the other hand, called on ECOWAS member states to pull together their defence strategies at a regional level against threats of aggression within West Africa backed by external influences.⁶

The events that happened in the 1990s led to the adoption of collective security to the principles of ECOWAS, alongside economic integration, which was the core objective when it was established. The internal conflict that occurred in Liberia in 1990 resulted in massive destruction of lives and properties and almost shatters the whole country at large. This made ECOWAS member states to seek for collective security to limit the civil war and to further prevent the outbreak of another internal conflict in other West African states. This led to the establishment of a Standing Mediation Committee on May 9, 1990 made up of five member states which established the ECOWAS Ceasefire Monitoring Group with the mandate to stabilize the situation. Other states like Sierra Leone, Guinea Bissau and Ivory Coast also

witnessed violent upsurge in internal conflicts in which ECOMOG forces were also deployed for peacekeeping. These interventions were controversial and did not enjoy universal support within ECOWAS as it was seen as interference in a state's internal affair. For example, ECOMOG deployment in Liberia was perceived by states like Ivory Coast as Nigeria's way of proving her dominance in the west African sub-region and that Nigeria's head of state as at that time, General Ibrahim Babangida intervened in the Liberian crisis due to his relationship with the embattled Liberian President Samuel Doe and for his economic interest in the country. All these reasons led to discussion on the need to institutionalize a mechanism for managing future sub-regional conflicts.⁷

During the ECOWAS' Authority of Heads of States and Government meeting held in Lome on December 10, 1999, member states adopted the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security as a way of building the organization's institutional capacity to manage sub-regional conflicts. This protocol elaborated more clearly the criteria and objectives of ECOWAS' interventions into states experiencing civil conflicts in West Africa.⁸ It also institutionalized a framework that would ensure wide consultation and inclusiveness of relevant stakeholders in managing issues that affect sub-regional security.⁹

In Article 2 of the Lome Protocol, member states reaffirm their commitment to the principles contained in the Charters of the United Nations Organization and the

Organization of African Union and to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, particularly the following;

- a) That economic and social development and the security of peoples and states are inextricably linked;
- c) Promotes and consolidation of a democratic government as well as democratic institutions in each members states
- g) Promote close cooperation between member states in the areas of preventive diplomacy and peace-keeping
- h) Constitute and deploy a civilian and military force to maintain or restore peace within the sub-region, whenever the need arises¹⁰

Chapter two (11) of the Protocol Relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security, states the institutions and duties of the Mechanism; Article 4 list the institutions in order of precedence;

- a) The Authority
- b) The Mediation and Security Council
- c) The Executive Secretariat
- d) Any other institutions as may be established by the Authority.

Article 5 to 7 states the composition of the Authority, their functions and how they delegate power, while Article 8 to 14 states the part of the Mediation and Security Council; It comprises of nine member states of which seven are elected by the

Authority while the other two are current chairman and the immediate past chairman of the Authority and the duration for serving is two years which is renewable. Article 10 states the functions of the Council. Three levels was adopted for deliberation of the Mediation and Security Council; Heads of State and Government, Ministerial and Ambassadorial levels. Article 15 states the role and functions of the Executive Secretary which includes recommendation of the Special Representative and the Force Commander for appointment which is subjected to the approval by the Mediation and Security Council, the secretary also appoints members of the council of elders.

In chapter three of the 1999 Protocol, Article 17 list out the organs of the institutions of the mechanism.

- a) The Defense and Security Commission;
- b) The Council of Elders;
- c) ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).¹¹

Other Protocols adopted by the ECOWAS states includes The Protocol on the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention of 1999 and the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance of December 2001. These formally enshrined the commitment of the organization to promote democracy and good governance, electoral observation has been part of the ECOWAS mandate since the revised 1993 treaty but responsibility were further clarified with the 2001 Protocol.¹²

Section two of the 2001 Protocol, from Article 2 to Article 10, states the electioneering process that should be adopted by member states which includes, the

independence of the electoral body conducting the election, equal rights in voting, voters list being prepared in a transparent and reliable manner, result announcement done in a transparent order, introduction of a tribunal for petitions arising as a result of the elections, involvement of civil society organizations, the defeated party should concede defeat and power holders should refrain from acts of intimidations while section three was based on election monitoring and ECOWAS assistance which complement the provisions of Article 42 of the Protocol of 10 December 1999 which states ECOWAS institutional capacity for peace-building.¹³

The 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance defines twelve constitutional principles shared by all member states. Article 1b states that “every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections”, and Article 1c states that “zero tolerance for power obtained or maintained by unconstitutional means”, the protocol also gave ECOWAS the right to sanction any member who breached this agreement with Article 45(1) affirmed this by stating that “in the event that democracy is abruptly brought to an end by any means”.¹⁴ These sanctions ranges from suspension of decision-making rights within ECOWAS to any other intervention deemed appropriate by the Mediation and Security Council and the Authority of Heads of State and Government as stated in Article 45(2). The 2001 Protocol entered into force in 2008, upon its ratification by nine out of the fifteen member states, Gambia was one of the countries that ratified the Article.¹⁵

In conclusion, the Economic Community of West African States which initially started as an organization formed for promoting the economic integration of the West Africa states, along the line added conflict resolution to its duties and objectives because for a union to strive economically, its members must be in harmony both within each state and with other member states. With the condemnation faced by the organization when it intervened in the Liberian civil war, especially by some member states who considered the intervention as one backed with selfish interest. So in order to enable all member states to be on the same page during any internal crisis faced by any member state, many agreements were signed and implemented which has facilitated intervention during any crisis.

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CHAPTER THREE

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ECOWAS: THREAT OF THE USE OF FORCE

ECOWAS use of threat of force in resolving the election conflict in the Gambia helped to restore peace and order, in the West African state. Threat of force was employed alongside other strategies to persuade Yahya Jammeh to concede defeat and go into exile, thereby preventing the outbreak of a civil war which would have resulted in loss of lives and properties of innocent citizens disruption of peace and stability in the small country of the Gambia. This strategy proved how effective threat of force is to conflict resolution without actually engaging in warfare.

ECOWAS intervention through the use of military force in both the Liberia and Sierra Leone civil wars were not totally accepted by all member states, some of which were critical in their condemnation of the use of ECOWAS military force in the civil wars. Ivory Coast most especially took the lead in the condemnation of ECOWAS intervention in member states, which they insisted movie violated the non-interference policy contained in the 1975 ECOWAS treaty. Therefore, the need to adopt more protocols that deals with these issues and grant ECOWAS the right to

intervene led to the adoption of more treaties to confront the challenges facing ECOWAS member states.

The Economic Community of West African States was established in May 1975 in Lagos, by states in the West African sub-region to facilitate economic cooperation and integration among member states and help bring about free movement of people, capital and services. However, external threats to the organization's peace and security during the Cold War era led to the adoption of the Protocol on Non-Aggression and the Protocol on Mutual Assistance on Defence in 1978 and 1981 respectively. The community's effort of peaceful settlement of disputes among member states remained the ideology that brought into existence the 1978 protocol, in reaffirming the prohibition of the use of force enshrined in Article 2 (4) of the United Nations charter.

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This position taken by ECOWAS was informed by three considerations to adopt the security mechanism in the early years of its coming to existence, and they are: One, the responsibility in maintaining regional peace and security; Two, the desire of ECOWAS leaders for security stability, development and integration; and Three, exploring its collective Powers for its own defence. However, the Protocol on the Mutual Assistance on Defence adopted in 1981, made provisions for a multinational ECOWAS defence force, and it points out the need to provide mutual assistance for defence against any external aggression or threat. The desire to improve regional

security and the attempts to promote military cooperation in the community was based on the need to maintain the territorial integrity of the community.²

The emergence of violent conflicts in the 1990s can be attributed to the withdrawal of super powers strategic interest in Africa following the end of the Cold War in 1989. While the rest of the world celebrated the demise of the Cold War, due to the new found peace, many countries in Africa became involved in armed conflict. The intensity and chaotic situation that accompanied these conflicts together with the lack of interests shown by the super powers towards this issue emphasized the need for an African solution to an African problem. This brought about sub-regional organizations such as ECOWAS to intervene in Countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ivory Coast through its intervention force - ECOWAS Cease Fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).³

Since, the first intervention carried out by ECOWAS in Liberia in the early 1990s, the body has created a detailed conflict management framework for dealing with the challenges facing the sub-region. ECOWAS first deployed ECOMOG forces into Liberia to prevent the overthrow of Samuel Doe by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) led by Charles Taylor. ECOMOG intervention can take the form of peacekeeping, enforcement, it can monitor cease-fire agreements and when the factions who signed the agreement do not do so in good faith, it could compel ECOMOG to use force to get the parties to comply to the provisions of the ceasefire agreement. ECOMOG missions could change from peace keeping to peace

enforcement depending itself from on the conditions on ground and can also quickly transform a fighting force to a peace keeping force. Such was the case in Sierra Leone and Liberia where ECOMOG intervened as a Peace keeping force to protect government properties and the civilian populations but the violence displayed by the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and NPFL in both countries led to the intervention changing from peace keeping to peace enforcement operation.⁴

The effects of the conflicts had earlier led to the establishment of a Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) on May 9, 1990 which gave birth to ECOMOG with a mandate to stabilize situations, in both countries. Apart from the legality of ECOMOG intervention in Liberia being challenged, it encountered several challenges in its operations. Similar difficulties were experienced in Guinea-Bissau between 1990 and 1999 and this convinced ECOWAS that developing a conflict management mechanism that would address the inadequacies of the earlier protocols was important if sub- regional stability and development was to be achieved.⁵

In 1999, ECOWAS established the basis for a West African Peace and Security structure to address some of the spillovers of war and conflict in the sub-region based on protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security. A Mediation and Security Council composed of nine member states received the mandate to take decisions with majority rule on required measures and possible sanctions, including military interventions in member states. An element of supra-nationality has been introduced by Article 10 which grants

ECOWAS the power to all forms of intervention and Article 25 which permits the Council to be active “when and where a democratically elected government is overthrown or will be overthrown”.⁶

The Council implements the provisions of the Mechanism through the Defence and Security Commission, the Council of Elders and ECOMOG, now ECOWAS Stand by Force (ESF). In addition, Article 22 provides for eight major roles of ESF as below:

- * Observation and Monitoring;
- * Peace-keeping and restoration of peace,
- * Humanitarian intervention in support of humanitarian disaster;
- * Enforcement of sanctions, including embargo;
- * Preventive deployment;
- * Peace-building, disarmament and demobilization;
- * Policing activities, including the control of fraud and organized crime;
- * Any other operations as may be mandated by the Mediation and Security Council.⁷

In June 2004, ECOMOG was renamed ECOWAS Standby Force (ESF), in order to ensure adequate preparedness for action. It was integrated into the Mechanism as a useful tool for maintain peace in the region. Troops of the ESF consist of contingents from national armed forces of member states. The ESF is designed to have the capability for rapid deployment within fourteen days to stop sub- regional crisis. The tasks of the ECOWAS Stand by Force include military and observation mission

where ECOMOG will supervise and monitor Ceasefires, disarmament, demobilization, elections, respect for human rights and humanitarian activities among other responsibilities.⁸

The 2001 supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in support of the 1999 protocol, empowered ECOWAS to implement sanctions in “the event that democracy is suddenly brought to an end by any means” by virtue of Article 45; these Sanctions range from suspension of decision making rights within ECOWAS to inter other intervention considered appropriate by the Mediation and Security Council and the Authority of Heads of State and Government. The 2001 protocol has the ability to utilize its military power to restrain unlawful individuals from taking over the machinery of government by force.⁹

ECOWAS did not rule out military intervention in its approach to resolve the Gambia crisis during its 50th summit held in Abuja on 17 December 2016. They issued a joint statement to take “all necessary means to enforce the election results of December 1”, which “reflect the wishes of the Gambian people”. The statement by ECOWAS was reaffirmed by both the African Union and the United Nations Security Council on 19 and 21 December respectively. Members of ECOWAS began to discuss provisions for the departure of Jammeh from the Gambia and the deployment of ECOWAS forces led by Senegal, to protect citizens in the wake of potential conflict around his departure, in close door meetings.¹⁰

On 12 December, ECOWAS Defence and Security Committee met to discuss contingency planning for an intervention while mediation continues, in case the mediation team fails to reach an agreement with Jammeh.¹¹ Negotiation between Buhari and Jammeh failed to reach an agreement on 13 January and as the deadline of 18 January drew near, the option of military intervention became more realistic. This led to ECOWAS Chiefs of Staff to gather on 14 January in Abuja to discuss the preparations for the establishment of the ECOWAS Military Intervention in the Gambia (ECOMIG). Troops mostly from Senegal with contingent from Nigeria, Ghana, Mali and Togo started to advance towards the Gambia borders on 18 January with Nigeria providing a naval blockade on the sea and sending in fighter jets which was seen flying over the state house and if fired on, would have sent those inside ablaze. ECOWAS placed standby forces on alert and officially granted them the permission to intervene militarily if Jammeh did not step down.¹²

This threat of force by ECOWAS alongside the refusal by the Gambian army not to engage in conflict with the external troops helped convince Jammeh together with the last minute mediation with offer of safe passage and not being prosecuted to accept to step down on 21 January, 2017.

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CHAPTER FOUR

STRATEGIES EMPLOYED BY ECOWAS: PREVENTIVE DIPLOMACY

The inability of the use of forceful means mostly military to resolve conflict in ECOWAS member states, by the organization, convinced ECOWAS to search for alternate conflict management mechanism, which led to the adoption of the Protocol establishing the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security by the ECOWAS' Authority of Heads of State and Government in Lome, December 10, 1999. The Mechanism established a framework that would ensure wide consultation and inclusiveness of significant stakeholders in managing issues that affect sub-regional security.¹ With this and other protocols subsequently adopted to buttress it, preventive diplomacy became a major strategy employed by ECOWAS to resolve conflict in member states, as the Gambia election crisis of 2016/ 2017 is a good example of the use of preventive diplomacy.

Boutros - Ghali identifies four possible organizational approaches to preventing and managing international conflict: preventive diplomacy, peace-making, peace-keeping, and peace-building. Preventive diplomacy, which emphasizes prevention rather than cure, combines all aspects of the peace process, and it is

designed to institute a process of early conflict resolution. Central to preventive diplomacy is the objective of reducing tensions before they result in a violent conflict. Preventive action to stop conflicts from erupting into violent hostilities depends on knowing where and why conflict might occur. Accurate assessments and credible early warnings of conflicts may lead to effective preventive actions.²

The ECOWAS mechanism on conflict prevention elaborated more clearly the objectives of ECOWAS intervention in conflict in West Africa. The conditions that could result in intervention in any member state include: cases of external aggression, conflict between two or more member states, internal conflict that may lead to serious humanitarian disaster, or serious violation of human rights and the rule of law and the removal or attempts to remove a democratically elected government, these are contained in Article 25 of the protocol.³ ECOMOG was also incorporated into the mechanism framework because it is seen as a useful tool for maintaining peace in the region. ECOMOG could change from peace keeping to peace enforcement depending on the conditions on ground and it can quickly change from the latter to the former. Organs such as the Authority of Heads of State and Government, Mediation and Security Council, the Executive Secretariat, Council of Elders, Defence and Security Operations were parts of the framework that would ensure effective consultation and inclusiveness of major actors in managing issues that affect the security of the sub-region.⁴

In order to strengthen the Mechanism for Conflict Management and Resolution, Peace-keeping and Security, which has become the ECOWAS' foundational regional security framework, ECOWAS leaders signed the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance in 2001 as a supplement to the existing protocol. The Supplementary Protocol is considered as an instrument which takes into account the established political causes of conflict, instability and insecurity whereas the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention deals more particularly with addressing conflicts and other types of Causes.⁵

The ECOWAS Mechanism for Conflict Prevention also provided an Early Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN), as part of its conflict prevention strategy. The Observation and Monitoring Centre (OMC) is the base of ECOWAS early warning system. The function of ECOWARN is to collect data on potential causes of disputes or conflict triggers and report to the central ECOWAS Observatory at the headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria. ECOWAS has four observations and monitoring zones within the sub-region, the first zone comprises: Cape Verde, Gambia and Guinea Bissau with the capital in Banjul (Gambia). The second zone include: Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali and Niger, with Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) as the capital. Zone three has: Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Ghana, the capital is Monrovia (Liberia). The fourth zone comprises of: Benin, Togo and Nigeria and its capital in Cotonou (Benin).⁶

As part of the search by ECOWAS for a long lasting solution to the numerous security problems West African states were facing, the Economic Community of West African States adopted in 2008, the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) to establish and enhance mediation capacities in West Africa. The ECPF alongside other protocols, commits ECOWAS to the development of comprehensive preventive diplomacy structure, that seeks to deal with gaps in mediation with the participation of major stakeholders. Preventive diplomacy according to ECOWAS is considered to be an operational conflict-prevention tool to deal with impending conflict. It is used to promote conflict resolution within member states through good offices, mediation, conciliation and facilitation; based on dialogue, negotiation and arbitration.⁷

In order to ensure the practice of effective democracy in the West Africa sub-region, the Economic Community of West Africa States, adopted the 2001 Protocol on Good Governance and Democracy, which was ratified in 2008 after it was adopted by nine member states which includes the Gambia. ECOWAS has a legal mandate to deal with the domestic politics of member states, the organization not only promotes democratic development in the region and in member states; but also requires member states to fulfill the major principles of democratic governance. The 2001 Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance defines twelve constitutional principles "shared by all member states". Article 1(b) and 1(c) state that "every accession to power must be made through free, fair and transparent elections", reflecting the principles of "zero tolerance for power obtained by unconstitutional means". ECOWAS leaders had made

it very clear that the anti-coup norm is still very much in existence and formally in force, and that the organization would claim a right to intervene in domestic political conflicts.⁸

The Protocol also specifically strengthened ECOWAS to carry out sanctions in "the events that democracy is suddenly brought to an end by any means", according to Article 45. Also in fulfillment of Article 13 of the ECOWAS Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance, ECOWAS dispatched a four-member pre-election fact finding mission to the Gambia on July 14-15, 2016. The major aim of the mission were to ascertain the country's level of readiness for the planned presidential elections; measure the political and security situation in the country and hold consultations with key political stakeholders, with the intention of providing the needed support that would help the country in achieving peaceful, free, fair and credible elections.⁹

Electoral observation has been part of the ECOWAS mandate since the revised 1993 treaty, but responsibilities were further clarified with the 2001 protocol. The ECOWAS commission created the Electoral Assistance Unit in 2005, and since then ECOWAS began to systematically observe all national elections in member countries. Electoral observation needs an invitation from national authorities, and in a quite rare step, Jammeh refused to allow the ECOWAS observation team to monitor the December presidential elections.¹⁰

Preventive diplomacy as employed by ECOWAS played a strategic role in resolving the conflict caused by the election result in the Gambia. Preventive

diplomacy refers to the diplomatic action taken to prevent disputes from escalating into conflict and also to limit the spread of conflicts when they occur. The most common expression of preventive diplomacy is found in the works of envoys dispatched to crisis areas, to encourage dialogue, compromise and the peaceful resolution of tensions.¹¹ As an international organization, ECOWAS derives its mandate for mediating in member states' internal conflict from Article 58 of its 1993 revised treaty, Section 2(e) of Article 58 obliges member states to cooperate with the community in establishing and strengthening appropriate mechanisms for the timely prevention and resolution of intra-state and inter-state conflicts, paying particular regard to the need to employ, where appropriate good offices, conciliation, mediation and other methods of peaceful settlement of disputes.¹²

After Gambia's presidential election in December 2016, where the opposition candidate Adama Barrow, defeated the Incumbent and long-term president Yahya Jammeh at the poll in the December 1 election, constitutional crisis erupted when Jammeh who had earlier concede defeat declared on December 9, that he no longer had trust in the electoral process and subsequently annulled the election results, calling for a fresh election to be conducted under a new independent electoral commission's leadership. Due to the irregularities in the accumulation of result by the IEC who announced three days after the initial release of the result that some rectification and readjustment had to be made, the commission subsequently released a new result which reduced the number of votes won by each candidates, but ultimately confirming

Barrow's victory. Jammeh deployed troops to the headquarters of the electoral commission and the citizens fearing wide- spread violence, about 45,000 Gambians fled across the border to Senegal.¹³

ECOWAS was quick to react, calling on the Gambian government to “abide to its constitutional responsibilities and international obligations going on to state; “It is fundamental that the verdict of the ballots be respected and that the security of the president-elect, Adama Barrow and that of all Gambia citizens be fully ensured”.¹⁴

By 12 December, ECOWAS alongside the African Union and the United Nations issued a joint statement calling on "Gambian stakeholders to contribute to a peaceful transition and handing over of power from the outgoing administration, to the president-elect within constitutional deadlines, in accordance with Gambian electoral laws", they urged Jammeh to step down on 18 January, 2017 which is the end date for his tenure in office. Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who also doubles as the ECOWAS chairperson, led a team of ECOWAS Heads of State and Government and the UN special representative to ECOWAS, Ibn Chambas to Banjul on 13 December with the goal of convincing Jammeh to recognize the existing election results and step down, which he refused.¹⁵

ECOWAS during their regular summit held in Abuja on December 17, 2016, decided upon the following course of action: ECOWAS would continue mediation efforts through Presidents Buhari and Mahama, requesting for the endorsement of the African Union and the United Nations on their decision. The heads of state would

attend the inauguration of Barrow, the president-elect who is to be sworn in on 19 January, 2017 in accordance to the constitution of Gambia among others.¹⁶

Mediation according to the West Africa Network for Peace building (WANEP) is defined as “a process in which a third party impartially assists in resolving a dispute between two or more parties”. While the United Nations Guidance for Effective Mediation defines mediation as “a process whereby a third party assist two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements”. Even though Jammeh did not give his consent to the ECOWAS mediation, Gambia was bound by the ECOWAS treaty to accept the team sent for mediation. ECOWAS derives its mandate for mediating in member states from Article 58 of the 1993 revised treaty, which oblige member states to cooperate with the organization in establishing appropriate mechanism for the timely prevention and resolution of conflicts both intra-state and inter-state.¹⁷

The appointment of Presidents Buhari and Mahama as mediators by the ECOWAS’ Authority of Heads of States and Government during its 50th session held in Abuja was to enable them engage with Jammeh and Barrow, in sticking to the Gambia's Constitution, in respect of the declared December presidential election result. The mediation mandate given to them also includes, determining a comprehensive and practical timetable to ensure the smooth transfer of power on 19 January, 2017 and develop a mechanism for mediated settlement for the outgoing President in support of the maintenance of peace and stability.¹⁸

In implementing the mediation mandate, Buhari established his Mediation Support Team (MST), headed by Geoffrey Onyeama, his foreign affairs minister. Prior to the mediators meeting with Jammeh, the MST prepared by consulting with the Presidents of Senegal, Liberia and Ghana (the co-mediator) on 29 to 30 December, 2016. During the summit of ECOWAS mediators held in Abuja, Onyeama noted that the leaders consulted agreed to the use of diplomacy as the preferred solution and the agreement on the need to reach out to leaders outside of ECOWAS to help negotiate with Jammeh to leave office and accept asylum.¹⁹

The mediation team headed by President Buhari met with Jammeh in Banjul on 13 January, to persuade him to accept the result and give up power peacefully. The king of Morocco in addition offered Jammeh temporary refuge including assurance of safe passage, Jammeh still refused the offer. However, in a last minute effort to prevent his forceful removal and prevent the outbreak of war in Gambia, President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz of Mauritania alongside President Alpha Conde of Guinea and the UN representative, Ibn Chambas met with Jammeh on 19 January to talk him out of the corner in which he found himself. This effort and the last minute call to Jammeh offering him safe-passage and long- term exile in Equatorial Guinea was accepted by Jammeh. On 21 January, 2017 after a six-week stand-off, with a high risk of civil war and loss of life, Jammeh stepped down and accepted exile in Equatorial Guinea.²⁰

The use of the strategy of preventive diplomacy in the Gambia crisis prevented what was moving towards a civil war from happening as it was already speculated. The timely intervention by ECOWAS led to the safety of the Gambia state and people.

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CHAPTER FIVE

IMPACT OF ECOWAS INVOLVEMENT ON GAMBIA CRISIS

ECOWAS involvement in the Gambia crisis through its early prevention tactics, prevented the Gambia from experiencing a Civil War due to the refusal of Jammeh to step down after losing the December 1 election. ECOWAS early intervention in the Gambia crisis with the use of both the threat of war and preventive diplomacy strategies is seen as a major success for the organization as this helped preserve democracy and stability in Gambia.

The atmosphere after Jammeh rejected the Gambia's presidential result was tensed; especially after the deployment of military troops to the street of Banjul, the capital on December 10, many Gambians and other people mostly the international

media feared for the worse. It was reported that thousands of Gambians fled to the neighboring countries, mostly to Senegal, the next-door neighbor, while some mostly women and children fled from the capital leaving behind their homes and properties, to the rural areas, in anticipation of the disruption of law and order.

Yayha Jammeh's administration since his transition into a democratic leader in 1996 when he won his first presidential election, has been known for putting down any opposition to his rule. Some reporters who were strong critics of his government has being reported to have disappeared, and their corpses found sometimes. Opposition members have also been tortured, for example Solo Sandang, the opposition youth leader, was tortured to death by the armed forces after his arrest. Jammeh also uses unlawful arrests to suppress his opposition like the arrest of opposition members for staging protest in early 2016. Therefore, he was not expected to peacefully give up his presidential seat without some force being applied, the people feared that war was inevitable.

Peaceful transfer of power especially from African leaders who has spent quite a number of years in office is almost impossible, as they employ any means necessary to keep their position, ranging from rigging election result, to preventing the conduct of election, to engaging indirect warfare. These leaders do anything to keep their spot as the president; therefore Gambia has never experienced change of government through election since she gained independence. Dawda Jawara was in power since Gambia gained independence in 1965 to 1994 when he was removed from office

through coup d'état while Jammeh who had spent twenty-two years in power since he overthrew Jawara in the 1994 military coup in an interview with BBC was quoted saying he will rule Gambia for a billion years; therefore, it was not expected that someone who made such a bold statement on an international television station will step down quietly and peacefully.¹

Jammeh had already started carrying out actions that would lead to him retaining his position, first by his rejection of the adjusted result on December 9, where he subsequently annulled the election and call for a new election under a new Electoral Commission's Leadership. He also petitioned the Court to rule in his favour and has started to deploy military troops to the capital city and to the IEC headquarters on December 10.² The timely intervention of ECOWAS prevented the degeneration of the crisis into a war, where citizens lives would have been lost, properties destroyed and many being rendered homeless.

ECOWAS determined intervention to the Gambia crisis shows the organization's commitment to promoting democratic government in the community. In line with all the protocols ECOWAS had adopted since she incorporated promotion of peace and security stability, shows that Africans can truly solve African problem as the intervention was carried out with little help from international bodies of the United Nations and African Union, whose contribution was mostly endorsing ECOWAS resolution to end the crisis.

Failure to ensure Jammeh's departure would have delegitimized the whole democratic agenda of the union, mostly the 2001 protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. As capacity and a stronger interaction is required for active promotion and strengthening of democratic institutions and the rule of law in member states, therefore ECOWAS intervention in Gambia sends a powerful message at the time when democracy is under serious attack.³ While Barrow's restoration as elected president might not have resulted in the Gambia being a functioning democracy, it however still created the pre conditions for a restoration of democracy.⁴

In terms of general evaluation of the performance of ECOWAS conflict management framework, notable accomplishment has been made by ECOWAS in managing conflict in member states. More also, progress has been made in the fact that ECOWAS sub region has been transformed from a crippling war zone in the 1990s into an area where no active war is going on nowadays. ECOWAS has achieved more success in the area of crisis management and has become a reference point in the African continent.⁵

At the peak of the tension in Gambia, the country suffered economically, as tourism, which is a major source of income for the country was receiving little to turn out, resulting in not only a dramatic drop in the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but constituted a serious economic crisis internally; which create hunger for the citizens and other sectors of the economy were also in rough conditions. In addition, there were shortage of food, medicine, basic commodities and essentials like fuel,

including energy to power electricity. The crisis also had negative impact on the transport system and communication lines went totally poor. Should war had happened, the Gambia, a country known for peace would have become a mass burial ground. ECOWAS intervention helped put out the peoples fear and restored hope.⁶

ECOWAS has been faced with the challenges of conflict and political instability. The organization has passed through the necessary transformation that has placed it as the leading institution for conflict prevention, management and resolution West Africa. The organization's involvement in mediation is part of a wide approach to the promotion of peace and stability within West Africa sub region.⁷ These transformation from being an economic organization to one that embraces political stability and conflict management helped the organization to be able to employ the necessary tactics in order to prevent the outbreak of war in Gambia.

The adoption of more protocols to compliment the 1975 protocol that established the ECOWAS organization has helped the community to stand firm in its intervention programme in member states. These protocols helped ECOWAS to ensure the practice of democracy in the sub-region which prevented the deterioration of internal conflict in member states, into humanitarian crisis, that was experienced in the early intervention stages of the organization in both the Liberian and Sierra Leone Civil Wars.

The early deployment of ECOWAS mediators to Gambia sent to persuade Jammeh to step down and not go into war in order to remain in office alongside the

formation of “Operation restore democracy”, which was the military troops sent from other member states to intervene incase mediation fails; helped in restoring democracy and preventing the state of Gambia from experiencing war. It also sends a warning to other member state of what to expect if the terms of the protocols were not utilized. ECOWAS successful intervention in the Gambia crisis portrays the ommunity as capable to external organizations and groups and also reflect the African solution to African problem, that is Africans are capable of resolving their disputes themselves.

Endnotes

1. Hartmann, ECOWAS and the Restoration of Democracy in the Gambia, 86.
2. Brubakar and Druet; Back from the Brink, 7
3. Joshua, Ityoonzughul and Amoke, ECOWAS and the Management of the Post-2016 Electoral Conflict in Gambia, 49.
4. Hartmann, ECOWAS and the Restoration of Democracy in the Gambia, 95.
5. Odobo, Andekin and Udegbunan, Analysis of ECOWAS Institutional Framework for Conflict Management, 151.
6. Oyejide Felix Omotosto and Aboubacar Abdoullah Senghore, “The Gambia and the 2016/2017 Political Impasse: An Impact Assessment of the Peace and

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7. Atuobi, ECOWAS and Mediation in West Africa, 39.

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