

Accra Peace Agreement of 2003 Evaluation

1. Strengths & Weaknesses

a. Three strengths & why

- i. The ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) immediately established an international peacekeeping force that would enforce the ceasefire in Liberia (part of an even larger International Stabilization Force to be deployed there -- Art. 4(1)), allowing for an immediate and decisive end to violent conflict. The details of which, Art. 3(2.a-g), are very clear and specific with little room for error.
- ii. Art 3(3) -- multiple international guarantors of ceasefire agreement including ECOWAS, UN, AU, ICGL, and parties involved in the ceasefire agreement (Annex 1).
 1. Important first step in implementing negative peace (in which positive peace, the goal of this agreement, rests on)
 2. These guarantors would also be the mediators and act as the primary dispute mechanisms if disputes regarding the agreement should arise after its implementation
- iii. The agreement included assurance that the thousands of child soldiers utilized in the conflict would be demobilized in a humane way, and given appropriate medical treatment. As opposed to vocational training, the children soldiers were provided various incentives to return to school. This was a strength that allowed for this generation to regain some sense of normalcy and control over their future.
 1. Additionally Article 13 describes the creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission which would "create a forum that will... [create] an opportunity for both the victims and perpetrators of human rights to share their experiences... to facilitate genuine healing and reconciliation". There are not specifics here, but it seems as though issues of political rights and sexual violence could be addressed.
 2. Art.31 "Vulnerable Groups" and Art.28 also provides legislation to help those affected, including women and children, by human rights violations and provide "gender balance"

b. Three weaknesses & why

- i. While the police forces were restructured to focus on human rights, there were not any clarifications or guidelines offered to the restructuring of these forces beyond necessitating an emphasis on human rights and

democratic values. This left an unnecessarily large room for interpretation on what was a key part of the agreement.

- ii. Annex 1: the ceasefire agreement. The Peace Agreement of Accra is dependent on the original ceasefire agreement (Annex 1). However, Annex 1 does not state an enforcement mechanism which brings the parties together. It simply states the conditions of the ceasefire, and why a ceasefire is necessary. The conflicting parties, with no institution forcing them to do so, agreed to this Annex. Without something forcing them to agree, we can only assume that all parties understood that it was in their best self interest to form a new government and cease fighting. This realization is not something we see a lot of in international crises. While this realization is a good thing, we mean to point out the weakness as there being a lack of an enforcement mechanism (if one party suddenly rejects the agreement... what then? Potentially the ISF gets involved but when does that end?)
- iii. More of a fear: Annex 4. Relatively equal division of Ministries, Public Corporations, and Autonomous Agencies/Commissions between the three warring parties feels equal. BUT
 - 1. If the GOL party controls all of the Liberia Broadcasting System, what stops them from only broadcasting GOL propaganda?
 - 2. If LURD controls all of the National Investment Commission, what stops them from only investing in LURD-loyal business/areas?
 - 3. If MODEL controls all of the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission, what stops them from allocating the best land to MODEL-loyal individuals, while giving others simply... the rest?
 - a. Seems as though Trust is what keeps these Ministries, Public Corporations, and Autonomous Agencies/Commissions from becoming partisan
- iv. Not a lot said about how to secure foreign financial support other than Art. 16(2f) which "Ensures an enabling environment which will attract private sector direct development" in starting up the private sector. The creation of the Contract and Monopolies Commission would hopefully ensure an uncorrupt public-private economic sector interface, but *how* Liberia would entice MNCs to come in is not clear. But, it was stated that the new government would call upon the UN, IMF, World Bank, and other IGOs for financial help.

2. Elements that we think make a good/successful peace agreement

A successful agreement contains clear, specific objectives that are supported by easy to follow, all encompassing details that clearly refer to the objectives originally stated. Usually, this would mean a clear set of articles detailing specific steps taken in order to achieve the desired, realistic and attainable outcomes.

Specific to this agreement: so much of the transitional period, and the success of the agreement/the new Liberian Government relied on this International Stabilization Force (ISF). Its creation and use was imperative in creating a peaceful transition from a country in civil war to a democracy. The use of International Forces was an important element in the peace process.

3. Evaluation of Success (has there been sustained peace over long term?)

The Accra Peace Agreement of 2003 had a 87.65 Implementation Score after 10 years according to Peace Accords Matrix, indicating a reasonably successful implementation. The ceasefire was a crucial step towards peace, and was backed up by a third party intervention force. More recent reports indicate that peace has taken roots in Liberia, and while the state still often requires oversight from the United Nations, it is no longer at war consistently. This is a major shift from a 14 year Civil War waged from 1989 to 2003, so it is a reasonable assumption to make that these peacekeeping efforts have had a successful impact on the Liberian people and government systems. Even more encouraging, there seemed not to be an enforcement mechanism bringing the parties together in 2003. They simply realized, separately, that peace was the best option. The fact that these parties were not forced into peace, but instead sought it out adds to the success of the agreement, and the likelihood of it withstanding time.