

## Emerging Issues Relating to Peace and Conflict Prevention in the Post COVID- 19 Era in the Global South

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### Abstract

*Worldwide, COVID-19 has ravaged the once blooming economics and social fabrics of the world. This has led to a very fragile post COVID-19 era which is fraught with conflicts amongst states, particularly in the Global South. As a result, the dynamics related to peace and conflict prevention has had a number of emerging issues which are examined in this article. This article used the qualitative approach utilizing the desk review method to examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South in the post COVID-19 era. The researchers used the search engines such as PUBMED, EMBASE, EBSCOHOST and Web of Science as well as Open Grey, Open Access Theses and Dissertations (OATD), Google scholar, the websites of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organisations to search for emerging issues related to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South in the post COVID-19 era. The researchers used a comprehensive search strategy that utilized search terms that related to the key concepts of the study and combined search terms within a concept with the Boolean terms 'OR,' combined search terms between concepts with the Boolean term 'AND,' and was adapted to the syntax used by each database. The human security model was used to examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South. It was identified that the peace in the Global South was very fragile post COVID-19 era with a number of violent conflicts being reported. The issues reported included fragility of the economic, social, health, personal, community, food, environmental and political security. These all have detrimental effects on sustainable peace and security in the Global South. More robust approaches are thus needed to ensure human security needs are addressed in order to prevent conflicts and ensure sustainable peace is enjoyed in the Global South.*

**Keywords:** Covid 19, Global South, Peace, Conflict, emerging conflicts, Prevention, sustainable peace

### Introduction

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of 25 February 2024, the global burden of COVID-19 stands at nearly 775million confirmed cases with over 7,04million deaths (WHO, 2024). Several countries have experienced a number of waves for the pandemic with even higher infection rates than the first wave that began soon after the first reports of SARS-CoV-2 in Wuhan, China (Cheung et al., 2022, Thakur et al., 2022, Buisson, 2022, Koelle et al., 2022).

While Africa contributes about 1.2% of the global burden (9,576,309) (WHO, 2024), the post COVID-19 era has had emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the African continent. These emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the post COVID-19 era in the global south shall be examined in this article.

The African continent has been found unprepared to deal with the pandemic of Covid 19 (Gilbert et al., 2020) and this has led to socioeconomic and political ills affecting peace and conflict prevention, management and resolution at the family, community, national, regional and continental level (Agunyai, 2023, Shaningwa, 2023). This has also been the case with some countries in the Latin America and Asia including some in the Middle East. The strategies that were implemented during the pandemic were reactive in nature and has opened a number of issues on the socioeconomic and political dimensions in countries to the global south (Dzobo et al., 2020).

The way of handling peace and conflicts has been put to challenge with a surge in the number of conflicts that have been reported among the countries to the global south (Pettersson and Wattensteen, 2015). The outbreak of Covid 19, has provided a fertile ground for resurgence of conflicts in the post COVID-19 era. These conflicts require immediate interventions if the de-escalation of these were to be realised. (Filip, et al., 2022). The conflicts have led to a more splintered world demanding immediate rehabilitation to restore this world (Tarantino, et al., 2020). The need for a rehabilitated world requires more actions around preventing conflicts and ensuring peaceful coexistence of communities (Tarantino, et al., 2020). Therefore, this paper will examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the post-COVID 19 era in the global south.

Conflict prevention is defined as a process in which there are means and strategies through which conflicts are mitigated (Ryan, 2016). Conflict prevention emanates into standpoint when a conflict has been identified (Menkhaus, 2013). Conflict prevention allows for conflict management and interventions such as, negotiations, dialogue, arbitration, mediation, etc., are put in place to contain and avoid escalation (Prado, 2021). Achieving effective conflict management, resolutions and transformation allows for a de-escalation of conflicts and shapes the roadmap towards peace building and initiatives around conflict prevention in future.

The post-Covid-19 era has shaped the dimensions of conflicts in the global south and these are threatening the need for co-existence of countries to the global south or its citizens (He, 2021, Hafezi and Asemi, 2023). Citizens has questioned the central governments over the way they have dealt with human rights issues such as the democratic principles which must be observed by each country in governing its citizens and the rights to freedoms as enshrined in the various constitutions of the countries to the global south. The UN has disseminated information on conflict management which is outlined in UN Charter Article 33 (1) which presented mediation, arbitration, negotiation, adjudication and peacekeeping in extreme cases as the boulevards for conflict management (Adegbonmire, 2015). These boulevards for conflict management have had to be observed in the era of COVID 19 and post COVID-19 in order to have an in-depth indulgence of the vigorous measures that must be employed to prevent conflicts. (Kleinfield and Amin, 2021). However, the Global South has had a number of these conflicts including armed conflicts, coups and even political unrest some being linked to the way states have managed the COVID 19 pandemic (Bank, et al., 2022). The decision-makers of the countries to the global south have been accused on various issues including being very corrupt and being insensitive to the needs of their citizens and this has led to perennial mistrust of governance. The states were accused of heavy handedness in trying to contain the right to free expression of views and/or demonstrations against poor governance by the authorities. As a result, countries in the global south have experienced a number of conflicts caused by socio-economic, political and ethnic issues amongst others (Pedersen 2002).

The post Covid-19 era have seen conflicts recurring beyond the borders of one state and having wide and diverse effects within communities (Kleinfield and Amini, 2021). Challenges with conflict prevention in the post Covid-19 era in the global south left countries being vulnerable to escalation of conflicts and their over dependence on the UN and countries to the global north (Clark and Alberti, 2021, Carayanis and Weiss, 2021).

The inability to deal with conflicts at source has also been exposed with the ongoing Russo-Ukraine war, Middle East Conflicts, The West Africa uprisings and coups, the Great Lakes (East-Central Africa) perpetual conflicts and the insurgence of SADC conflicts in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. These conflicts need new perspectives for moderating them and that must be relevant to the times (Hockings, 2009). Murray (2020) noted that African problems require African solutions. This means that there is need to identify the causes of conflicts and then apply these home-based solutions in mitigation of these. It is therefore, the focus of this research article to critically examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the post-COVID-19 era in the global South.

**Aim and Objectives of the article**

The aim of the article was to critically examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the post-COVID-19 era in the global South and draw some lessons that can be implemented in ensuring peace and conflict prevention.

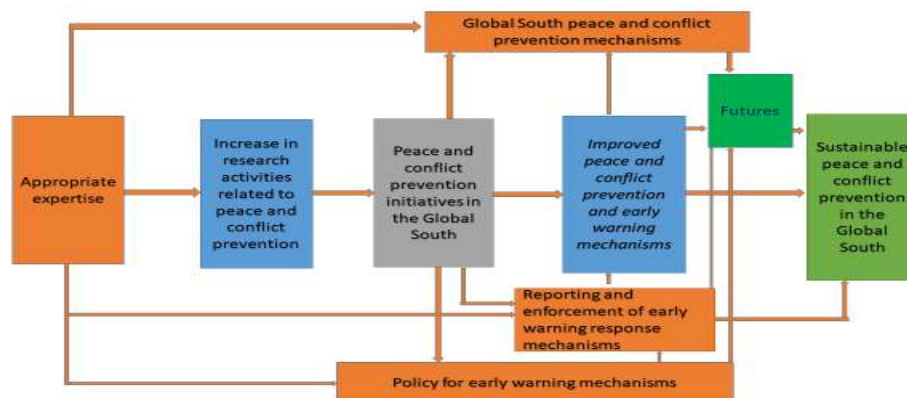
**The objectives of the article**

- To identify peace and conflict prevention gaps in the global South in the post Covid-19 era
- To examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the post Covid-19 era in the global south
- To recommend interventions for effective peace and conflict prevention in the global South in the post Covid-19 era

**Conceptual/Theoretical Framework and Literature review synopsis**

This article has adopted both the conceptual framework which the authors have developed (fig 1) and the human security model to best examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the post Covid 19 era in the global south.

**Figure 1: The conceptual model for peace and conflict prevention.**



The conceptual model for peace and conflict prevention as shown in fig 1 above suggests that there should be appropriate expertise for peace and conflict prevention. These experts should

increase research activities around the concepts of peace and conflict prevention which should result in peace and conflict prevention initiatives in the Global South. Peace is defined as the absence of conflict or violence and, conversely, as the presence of states of mind and of society

such as harmony, security, accord, and understanding (Krishnamurthy, 2015). A means to peace is the ability to prevent conflicts through effective resolutions to conflicts (Jeong, 2017).

Conflict prevention in this model is defined as the operational or intercessory means to preserve intrastate or interstate tensions and disagreements from intensifying into substantial violence and used of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of probable parties to violent conflict for resolving such conflict peacefully and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce these issues and conflict. Conflict prevention is also defined as a non-violent (or creative) conflict transformation and encompasses activities designed to defuse tensions and prevent the outbreak, escalation, spread or recurrence of violence (Arulogun, 2023). The idea of conflict prevention epochs back to the Vienna congress of 1815 where a number of measures, such as mutual consultations, the establishment of neutral states and demilitarized zones, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts were put into effects. It is a central feature of the United Nations Charter, authorizing, the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly in Chapters VI and VII to settle disputes peacefully and to prevent the outbreak of wars and other forms of armed confrontation (Ackermann 2003).

The initiatives for peace and conflict prevention in the Global South must lead to development of policies for early warning mechanisms and better the reporting of and enforcement of early warning response mechanisms. The early warning mechanisms are hazard monitoring, forecasting and prediction, disaster risk assessment, communication and preparedness activities systems and processes that enables individuals, communities, governments, businesses and others to take timely action to reduce disaster risks in advance of hazardous events (Šakić Trogrlić, et al 2022). These must be put in place to be able to prevent conflicts or de-escalate the conflicts. These strategies including policies for early warning mechanisms are meant to achieve sustainable peace and conflict prevention. The Global South must be able to engage in peace and conflict mechanisms which fosters improvements of peace and management of conflicts as well as forecasting of possible conflicts. Ability to forecast the conflicts should allow the countries to be able to engage in discussions that are meant to de-escalate conflict and that conflicts must remain in a manageable state.

### **The Human Security theory**

The Commission on Human Security (CHS) (2003), defines human security as: "...to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfilment. Human security means protecting fundamental freedoms – freedoms that are the essence of life. It means protecting people from critical (severe) and pervasive (widespread) threats and situations. It means using processes that build on people's strengths and aspirations. It means creating political, social, environmental, economic, military and cultural systems that together give people the building blocks of survival, livelihood and dignity."

Human security brings together the 'human elements' of security, rights and development. These are studied in this article to examine the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the global south in the post Covid 19 era. As such, it is an inter-disciplinary concept that displays the following characteristics:

- people-centred
- multi-sectoral
- Comprehensive
- context-specific

- prevention-oriented

As a **people-centred** concept, human security places the individual at the ‘centre of analysis.’ Consequently, it considers a broad range of conditions which threaten survival, livelihood and dignity, and identifies the threshold below which human life is intolerably threatened. Human security is also based on a **multi-sectoral** understanding of insecurities. Therefore, human security entails a broadened understanding of threats and includes causes of insecurity relating for instance to economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security.

This interdependence has important implications for policy-making as it implies that human insecurities cannot be tackled in isolation through fragmented stand-alone responses. Instead, human security involves **comprehensive** approaches that stress the need for cooperative and multi sectoral responses that bring together the agendas of those dealing with security, development and human rights. “With human security [as] the objective, there must be a stronger and more integrated response from communities and states around the globe” (CHS, 2003).

In addition, as a **context-specific** concept, human security acknowledges that insecurities vary considerably across different settings and as such advances contextualized solutions that are responsive to the particular situations they seek to address. Finally, in addressing risks and root causes of insecurities, human security is **prevention-oriented** and introduces a dual focus on protection and empowerment. The article examined the human security model components which include the economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political securities. These human security components are examined in the context of the Global South in the era of Covid-19 in order to fully understand the emerging issues related to peace and conflict prevention.

### **Operationalising Human Security model for this study.**

From an operational perspective, human security aims to address complex situations of insecurity through collaborative, responsive and sustainable measures that are (i) people-centred, (ii) multi sectoral, (iii) comprehensive, (iv) context-specific, and (v) prevention-oriented. In addition, human security employs a hybrid approach that brings together these elements through a protection and empowerment framework and these are examined to better understand the emerging issues relating to peace and security in the global south in the post Covid 19 era. Subsequently each human security principle informs the human security approach and must be integrated into the design of a human security programme.

HS Principle	HS Approach
People-centred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Inclusive and participatory.</li> <li>➤ Considers individuals and communities in defining their needs/vulnerabilities and in acting as active agents of change.</li> <li>➤ Collectively determines which insecurities to address and identifies the available resources including local assets and indigenous coping mechanisms.</li> </ul>
Multi-sectoral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Addresses multi-sectorality by promoting dialogue among key actors from different sectors/fields.</li> <li>➤ Helps to ensure coherence and coordination across traditionally separate sectors/fields.</li> <li>➤ Assesses positive and negative externalities of each response on the overall human security situation of the affected community(ies).</li> </ul>



Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Holistic analysis: the seven security components of human security.</li> <li>➤ Addresses the wide spectrum of threats, vulnerabilities and capacities.</li> <li>➤ Analysis of actors and sectors not previously considered relevant to the success of a policy/programmme/project.</li> <li>➤ Develop multi-sectoral/multi-actor responses.</li> </ul>
Context-specific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Requires in-depth analysis of the targeted situation.</li> <li>➤ Focuses on a core set of freedoms and rights under threat in a given situation.</li> <li>➤ Identifies the concrete needs of the affected community(ies) and enables the development of more appropriate solutions that are embedded in local realities, capacities and coping mechanisms.</li> <li>➤ Takes into account local, national, regional and global dimensions and their impact on the targeted situation.</li> </ul>
Prevention-oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Identifies risks, threats and hazards, and addresses their root causes.</li> <li>➤ Focuses on preventative responses through a protection and empowerment framework.</li> </ul>

**Adopted from the © CHS 2003**

## **Review of literature synopsis**

### **Post Covid-19 era**

The post Covid-19 era is the period after which the effects of the pandemic were experienced (Omar, 2023). This period is characterised by understanding the consequences of the pandemic and the effects that it has had in relation to a plethora of issues and particularly in this study, to peace and conflict prevention. This environment therefore is characterised by trends and patterns that seek to achieve peace and mitigate conflicts, from issues that would have had both influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic directly or indirectly (Omar, 2023).

### **Methods of Conflict Resolution**

As noted by the Conflict Research Consortium (2005), conflict resolution and management are long-term processes that seek to end conflicts based on the experiences that conflicts cannot be managed over a short period of time. The following are the commonly used conflict management practices.

#### **2.3.1 Diplomacy**

Track processes in diplomacy are amongst the methods to resolve conflicts. Folarin (2015) argues that Track I diplomacy can be utilised to resolve and manage conflict in which there is high level end-to-end communication between governmental representatives where aspects such as mediation, negotiation, diplomatic sanctions and other related conflict resolution tools are discussed and implemented effectively. Track II diplomacy can also be utilised to resolve conflicts which are unofficial channels where interaction between conflicting parties are engaged (Murray, 2020). Officials engaging in Track II diplomacy can meet at international summits or conferences and engage in closed-door meetings to try and come up with solutions to the conflict.

It is important to note however that diplomacy can either de-escalate the conflict or escalate the conflict.

### **Peacekeeping**

Peacekeeping is also another form of conflict resolution and management. As noted by the African Union (2018), peacekeeping are missions that are aimed at the prevention, moderation, containment and termination of conflict through a third-party organisation that is formed for specific reason for conflict resolution. Most peacekeeping missions in the 21<sup>st</sup> century comprises of the armed forces, police as well as civilians who have the sole purpose of mitigating the cause of conflict and in their duties, protect civilians, vital installations and generally maintain peace and order. The UN has often partnered regional organisations in these peacekeeping missions.

### **Peace Enforcement**

Another method for conflict resolution is through peace enforcement. Murray (2020) argues that peace enforcement is an initiative organised under international law with the aim of improving conditions for peace. This includes the need to prevent the resurgence of violent conflicts. The main aim of peace enforcement is to come up with conditions aimed at creating a peaceful environment within warring parties with exceptions where the UN Security Council can deem that force should be utilised. Article 33 (1) of the UN Charter postulates that parties to a conflict are obliged to follow international principles where there is negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, regional settlements and other forms to peaceful conflict resolution. There is an advocacy for the creation of peace enforcement which is characterised by units of military force which can only be used when peaceful methods to resolve conflict have not achieved results.

### **Challenges in peace and conflict prevention in the Global South**

There has been a plethora of challenges peace and conflict prevention especially in the global South. One of these challenges is lack of integration of all conflicting parties to conflict resolution or prevention. As noted by Makinde (2021), some parties to a conflict fail to acknowledge peace efforts and in the process, sabotage these processes, leading to the escalation of conflicts. Murray (2020) however argues that some groups are marginalised or not included in the conflict resolution process and through ignoring their views and participation; conflict resolution and peace cannot be achieved. Within violent conflicts as in Africa, there is usually a security transition where armed actors must be brought under political control and be persuaded to lay down their arms and be persuaded towards peaceful coexistence. As shown in Liberia, Ivory Coast and South Sudan, disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of fighters into the society has been seen as challenging (Nerd, 2021). There are groups that often remain outside of mainstream processes and continue to engage in violent conflict, making efforts for sustained peace difficult.

Another challenge to peace and conflict prevention in the global South is the role of multiple actors that fail to coordinate because of interests of each party. As noted by Makinde (2021), peace building efforts are heavily dependent on external sources of funding and post conflict areas seeking to ensure peace building processes are often confronted by a number of global actors seeking to shape such peace building efforts. Furthermore, the interests of countries that are part to the prevention processes often take shape and impact negatively on the outcome of peace (Diamond and MacDonald, 2016). Countries such as India, China and Russia have also increasingly become part of peace building efforts and their role come with interests that challenge the achievement of peace. Therefore, the role of multiple actors in the global South conflict resolution processes challenges the achievement and establishment of peace.

## **Interventions for peace and conflict resolution in the Global South**

Various mechanisms have been discussed in relation to conflict resolution in the global South. However, the novel Covid-19 pandemic has changed the dynamics of conflict resolution, requiring a new method that speaks to the nature of conflicts in line with the effects of the pandemic. Nerd (2022) therefore argues that there is need to re-look at the strategies that were utilised to mitigate conflicts and re-adjust so that conflict management can be enhanced. This means that there is need of a well-structured mediation task force, with well trained and resourced staff to undertake this critical process. In line with this proposition, Mutisi (2016) advises that regional bodies should consider working with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The mediation processes undertaken by South Africa (Inter-Congolese Dialogue) when they mediated in the DRC conflict, should be taken as a starting point for the participation of CSOs, which could be expanded in the post-conflict reconstruction and development phase. Mutisi (2016) further proposes the designing and implementation of coherent national peace building processes, which encourage people-to-people and people-to-state engagements. In the era of Covid-19 where a plethora of factors have shaped conflicts, this method can be critical in conflict resolution.

Another method to conflict resolution that should be applied in resolving conflicts in the global South is the need to ensure political willingness amongst conflicting parties to resolve conflicts. This is noted by Maeresera and Zengeni (2017) who advocate for the strengthening Sub-Regional coherence and political will among member states. A fragmented approach is often bound to fall short of achieving desired peace and stability in the global South. It has been observed that African countries are yet to share common values towards common peace and security goals. To enhance peace and conflict resolution, African countries therefore need to agree on conflict resolution principles and commit to developments and processes that would have been implemented to achieve peace (Folarin, 2015).

## **Data and methods**

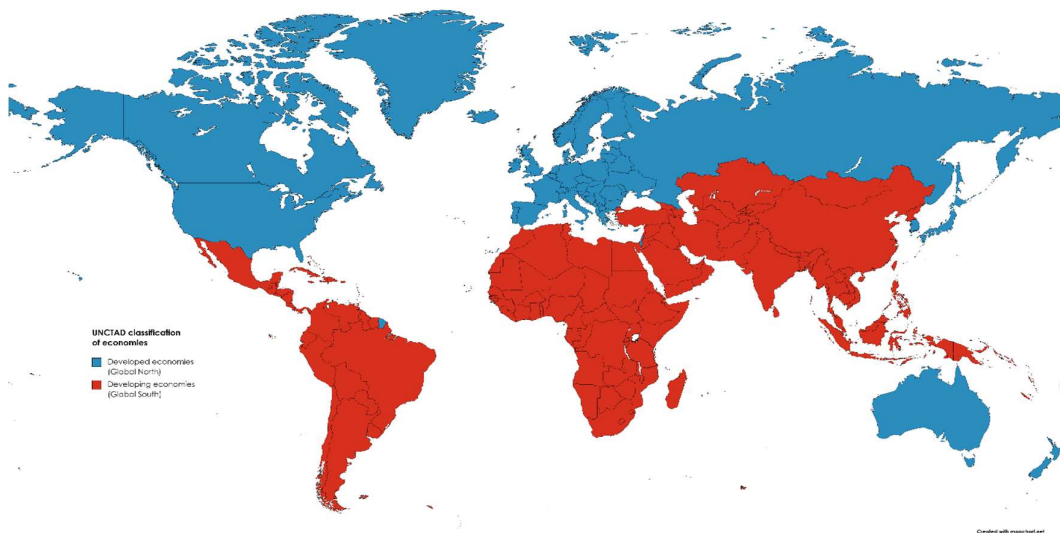
This article used the qualitative approach to unpack the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South in the post-Covid 19 era. The article utilized the desk review approach to identify the documented emerging issues from published research articles, newspapers and national reports from these countries that are found to the Global South. The Global South mostly comprised Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia (excluding Israel, Japan, and South Korea), and Oceania (excluding Australia and New Zealand). The authors searched for articles reporting the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South countries in the post Covid 19 era using some search engines such as PUBMED, EMBASE, EBSCOHOST and Web of Science. The secondary source of potentially relevant materials was a search of the grey or difficult to locate literature, including Open Grey, Open Access Theses and Dissertations (OATD), Google scholar, the websites of the World Health Organization (WHO) and other organisations. We performed hand-searching of the reference lists of included studies, relevant reviews or other relevant documents reporting on peace and conflict prevention in the Global South in the post Covid 19 era. We used a comprehensive search strategy that utilized search terms that relate to our key concepts and that combined search terms within a concept with the Boolean terms 'OR,' combined search terms between concepts with the Boolean term 'AND,' and was adapted to the syntax used by each database. The experts (PN, CM and DM) collaborated to develop the search strategy. We then piloted to search all the alternative words in the search strategy. We used the basic search terms which are as follows; -

Peace-making OR Conflict OR Conflict prevention OR Conflict mitigation OR conflict management OR conflict resolution) AND ("emerging issues"[Mesh] OR obtaining issues OR developing issues OR emergent issues OR evolving issues)) AND (Global South filter: Developing countries OR Low income countries OR African countries OR Asian countries OR



Middle east countries OR Caribbean Countries OR Latin American countries OR Oceania countries)) AND (("Post-Covid-19" [Mesh] OR SARS-COV-2 OR Severe Respiratory Syndrome of corona virus)

The issues searched and identified were then presented in the themes and sub-themes for the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South in the post-Covid 19 era. There are 78 countries to the Global South. These countries are traditionally referred to as underdeveloped or economically disadvantaged nations. These countries are those who tend to have unstable democracy, are in the process of industrializing, and have historically frequently faced colonization by Global North countries (especially by European countries). These countries have been negatively affected by capitalist globalization. They can also be referred to as “developing countries” or low-income economies. Therefore, any documented evidence relating to these countries will be presented in this article to reveal the emerging issues relating to peace and conflict prevention in the Global South in the post-Covid 19 era. See map below for countries listed in the Global South.



*Economic classification of the world's countries by the UNCTAD: the Global North (i.e., developed countries) is highlighted in blue and the Global South (i.e., developing countries and least developed countries) is highlighted in red.*

## **Findings and Discussions**

### **Economic Security**

It has been observed that many countries in the Global South have experienced a down turn of their economies in the post-Covid 19 era (Thapar, 2023). In Africa, the decline in global demand for commodities has affected the key economies of countries such as South Africa, Nigeria and Angola (Katoka and Dostal, 2022). This has led to regions that are highly susceptible to external shocks and vulnerable to insecurity of their peace. As observed in South Africa, the post Covid 19 era has seen a rise in the xenophobia and the citizen have been blaming the non-performance of their economies on the foreigners (Ndaba, 2023). The sentiments of anti-immigrant have been a common phenomenon in South Africa where it is believed the White minority rule had failed to deliver meaningful changes for the Black South Africans (Gordon, 2022). was observed from the South Africans with the following statements being attributed:

*“They want to take away our businesses. Attacks against migrants have sharply increased since May 2008, when an estimated 62 people were killed and scores injured in Johannesburg in one of the country’s worst xenophobic attacks.”*

COVID-19 has severely affected economies in the Global South (Alcázar, et al., 2021). Gross domestic product (GDP) has been affected not only because of lockdowns, but also because of the global slowdown and its effects on tourism, trade in goods, and capital flows (Habibi, et al., 2022). This has had a bearing on the peace and conflict prevention initiatives in the Global South. The resultant was the observed military coups in West Africa (Mali, Bukina Fasso and the Niger) (John, 2022). Whilst the immediate health and direct economic impact appears to be lower or similar between poorer and richer economies, poorer countries are likely to be affected more in the medium term because of less well-resourced policy responses. Furthermore, the pandemic is having significant social impacts such as rising inequality and the creation of new vulnerable groups.

### **Food Security**

Many countries to the Global South have reported to be food insecure in the post Covid 19 era (Alabi and Ngwenyama, 2023, Erinle, et al., 2021). Success in food security had been reported to be limited in the developing countries as a result of a number of inherent challenges. The challenges and vulnerabilities associated with food security in these countries have been exacerbated by the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (Erinle, et al., 2021). Almost above 50% of countries to the Global South and especially African countries have experienced food insecurity which has been perpetual into the post Covid 19 era (Wudil, et al., 2022). This has resulted in reported cases of violence as communities are scavenging for food (Kimani-Murage, et al., 2022). A case at hand is that of the Maasai people who were arrested in Uganda following their clashes with the farming communities whereas they were in search of pastoral/grazing land (Ntambazi, 2022). The Nomadic Maasai people escalated the tension between Kenyan authorities and that of Uganda when they were arrested affecting peace in the region (Maisori, 2019). Poor communities from the Global South especially African countries (South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Mozambique, etc) have suffered greater impacts, especially those who live in informal settlements or slums who are most unemployed and suffer from lack of adequate and quality food (Weimann, 2019, Mbongo, 2017, Chirisa, et al., 2020). South Africa has experienced xenophobia as her citizens has accused foreign nationals of other countries (Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, DRC, etc) of grabbing their employments and creating artificial shortages which has caused the citizens to suffer from hunger (Ogunnoiki and Adeyemi, 2019). Countries have had to engage at the level of diplomacy to avoid further escalation of violence among their citizens (Ogunnubi and Aja, 2022).

*“We must be realistic here that most of the problems that we have are caused by the influx of foreign nationals. Our country is a mess” Zandile Dabula: Operation Dudula president*

See attached picture of demonstrators of the operation Dudula in South Africa in 2023.



*Photographs of Operation Dudula Leader Nhlanhla Dlamini Supporters Protest Outside Court In South Africa@2022.*

### **Health Security**

Many countries have reported limited access to dignified health care and medication in the Global South in the post Covid 19 era (Santoro and Shanklin, 2023). Most of people who live in the countries to the Global South have had to experience challenges with access to Covid 19 vaccine (Privor-Dumm, et al., 2023). This was attributed to development and affordability of vaccines, as these are important pillars of the vaccination programme that ensures enough doses would be available globally. Scarcity in supply coupled with the large volumes of pre-orders made by richer countries created challenges to achieving timely, universal access to medical care (Van De Pas, et al., 2022). This created gaps between the Global North and Global South countries since most manufacturing companies were in the Global North. Permission to manufacture the vaccine had to be given by those with the manufacturing rights, e.g. Johnson and Johnson Co gave South Africa and Brazil, Argentina, Thailand and India were given by AstraZeneca (Wouters, et al., 2021).

Despite, authority to manufacture these vaccines, distribution of these vaccines had to be given by the Global North and this created artificial shortages for the countries to the Global South (Pilkington, et al., 2022). The World Health Organisation had to engage in the vaccine diplomacy in order to avert the potential crises in the countries to the Global South (Kickbusch and Lui, 2022). Due to Covid 19, many countries in the global south have experienced health care provision crises and this has had a potential of escalating tension among governments and their citizens (Shammi, et al, 2020, David Williams, et al, 2021, Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020). Mental health and Drug and Substance abuse have become major issues in the Global South since the period from Covid 19 outbreak to date (Ntho, et al., 2024). If not averted, drug and substance abuse can potentially affect peace and security of nations (Durán-Martínez, 2015). Given these circumstances related to inadequacy of health security, the peace and conflict prevention in the Global South needs continual monitoring as potential violence may erupt if health needs are not met and remains topical.

### **Environmental Security**

In many countries to the Global South, access to safe, reliable, and affordable water remains limited despite that Covid 19 pandemic emphasized on the need continual supply of clean and safe water (Zvobgo and Do, 2020, Matta, et al., 2022, Zindi and Shava, 2022). In many countries water has been inadequate and could lead to the next global conflicts among nations in the post Covid 19 era (Paudel, et al., 2023). Access to clean water has been erratic in many African countries with South Africa being reported to importing water from Zimbabwe (Du Plessis, 2023). It has been reported that only 5% of Nigerian, 23% of Kenyan, and 31% of Angolan populations have access to piped water in their dwellings or compounds (Saad and William, 2024). The other major issues that could potentially affect the peace and prompt conflict in the Global South is the issue of Climate change (Paudel, et al., 2023). Southern Africa have is experiencing El nino induced drought and there has been reported migration of people within Southern Africa to other parts of the world in search of employment and food (Tongwane, et al., 2022) This movement of people is likely to create artificial shortages of food and employment in other regions resulting in violent protest in the affected regions. This is the case with South Africa, Botswana, Namibia (Acheampong, et al., 2024).

### **Personal and Community Security**

Central to human well-being is the feeling of being secure in home and community. The feeling of fear of being a casualty of criminality or violence can lead to high levels of stress, anxiety, and other negative mental health outcomes. Most countries in the Middle East, Balkans, West Africa and Central Africa have experienced violent conflicts which has affected personal and community security for their people (Jolof, et al., 2022). As a result, most citizens of these regions have sought refuge in other regions especially to the Global North and Southern Africa which is relatively stable (Shohel, et al., 2024, Glied, 2024). The current conflict between Israel and Palestine has put women and children in an unsafe state of affairs and risking their lives. Gaza strip has been described as one place which is very unsafe and having all forms of risks from physical, sexual and risk of outbreaks of diseases due to unsafe water and dilapidated housing conditions as a result of violent conflict between HAMAS and Israel. Also, Israel although a country to the Global North, is unsafe given the current hostilities between her and Syria, Iran and Iraq. All these personal and community risks points to the need of a more comprehensive need for interventions at personal and community security level to avert unnecessary human loss.

### **Political Security**

The concept of “positive peace” which consists of “the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies” and can lead to “an optimal environment for human potential to flourish” is one of the many ways to examine political security. (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022). It was noted through the Positive Peace Index for 2022, that Tunisia and Namibia enjoyed high levels of positive peace, where Kenya and Gabon had a medial level of positive peace with Angola and Nigeria experiencing low levels of positive peace (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2022). Angola was reported as lacking on the acceptance of the rights of others, having a poor functioning government, inequitable distribution of resources and corruption as a key factor undermining positive peace (Elsharkawy, 2024). Most countries in the Global South have reported negative peace due to have repression by state apparatus. Zimbabwe, Iran, Iraq, Venezuela, DRC, Mozambique, Syria, Yemen, etc have been observed among countries that have reported state repression of freedoms (Bailliet, 2024, Zallé, 2023, Dupuy, et al., 2022). This was observed during the post Covid 19 era where perpetuity of policies that restricted freedoms of citizens became order of the day. Police and militaries have been responsible for human rights abuses, including the use of excessive force against citizens, especially in relation to public protests. Citizens experiences with political security vary widely across the countries in the Global South, including with respect to the impact of collective



violence, repressive actions by security forces, apprehensions about openly criticising the government or ruling parties, and the protection of the rights of vulnerable and minority groups. A case of political security where repressive laws were to be applied included in some Southern African countries like Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi where political activists were arrested for their free will expressions of despondence against their governments. This is also observed in Central and eastern African countries like Uganda. In Burkina Faso, a medical doctor was arrested for criticizing the military junta for the lack of protection of citizens. These and other issues point on the inadequacies to the political security of citizens in the Global South.

### **Conclusions/Recommendations**

The post Covid 19 pandemic era has complicated an already very difficult global and regional security dynamics threatening peace. This has had furtherance of conflicts as conflict prevention strategies have not been fully accepted within the Global South sphere. Tensions and wars are becoming an order of the day threatening human security thus affecting sustainable peace processes for the world. The pandemic has put further strains to already strained diplomatic relations and has led to the undermining of social, economic and political cohesion among nations. The issues of conflict prevention and peace keeping, making or building has been challenged resulting in more confrontational wars/violence in most countries to the Global South. However, the intertwine of peace and conflict in the Global South which heavily relies on the Global North has had a bigger challenge as the Global North also faces a mire of confrontational wars (Russo-Ukraine war and the Israel War on the Gaza strip supported by Americans and Britain). Given these expositions, there is need for concerted efforts towards strengthening institutions that prevent conflicts.

It is thus recommended that;

- States in the Global South should embrace the human security model holistically if the nations are to have sustainable peace and conflict prevention mechanisms.
- International organisations and states should address the human security issues that were adversely affected by the Covid 19 pandemic that include accessibility and affordability of health, education and social infrastructure.
- United Nation Security Council should take a more robust stance in handling conflict situations in order to create peace.

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