

# **Evaluation of Understanding Conflict to Value Peace**

## **“Where the Nexus is Located”**

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### **Abstract**

The paper on the analysis and evaluation of understanding conflict to value peace is a research paper to bring out the values of peace in the lives of people. Beyond that, efforts are made towards finding out and presenting the importance of peace also in the lives of organisations and institutions.

The author tried to find out the components of peace and the need for inclusive participation in peacebuilding if peace is to be sustained. The paper made contributions towards deterring conflict so that peace will reign. Other than that, the paper looked into the factors that not only promote peace but are inevitable for the substantial existence of peace. Suggestive measures were also proposed.

Besides, it is discovered that there is no universal definition of peace. It is established that peace means different things to different people at different stages of life. In addition, it depends on where one is born and grew up and the environment in which one is spending the rest of his or her life. This is because diverse factors and situations can objectively and subjectively influence people's opinions on what peace is all about. That notwithstanding, it is argued that peace is the cornerstone for the well-being of humanity and unprecedented economic activities.

Under the foregoing, instances are drawn not only from America but also from Mideast, Europe and Africa. The roles these Continents have played and playing to leverage the importance of peace cannot be overemphasised. The paper concluded by proposing sticking to the original international world order by working together instead of against one another if world peace is to be realised. Today, the geopolitical challenges and the unipolar engagements of some superpowers endanger humanity.

Finally, on the one hand, it presents some lessons learned in the research work. On the other hand, asking questions about how these lessons can be applied to bring peace to some countries, especially in the African Continent.

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## 1. Introduction

**In social theory, conflict is seen as** a method or process of social change and this change can be radical and gradual based on those pushing or seeking changes. There are always reasons or conditions that call for the movement for change. For instance:

*“Marxists, in particular, tend to depict social life in capitalist society as a struggle between a ruling class, which wishes to maintain the system, and a dominated class, which strives for radical change. Social change then is the result of that struggle”<sup>1</sup>*

- ✓ This struggle can be between persons, or groups of persons that may share one ideology but refuse to accept another one, instead continue pushing forward their ideologies and forcing others to accept them,
- ✓ The Ideologies can be diversified, and difficult to reach a consensus,
- ✓ The struggle can also be between firms or institutions seeking diverse changes or innovations with diverse ideologies,
- ✓ It can also be, for example, a nation against another one in a community of nations,
- ✓ It can besides be a struggle within a country from one region against the other or against the nation itself,
- ✓ It can also be a simple misunderstanding between two entities amongst others. The list is endless but the few foregoing instances are good enough to understand this analysis.

All these things happen due to the self-interests of the individual groups and or persons. By extension from some countries against the others. These lead to struggles and these struggles will then manifest into conflicts when not curtailed on time.

## 2. Factors that Cause or Promote Conflicts

- ✓ The urge or desire for dominance and the corresponding resistance,

For instance, imperialistic ideology is the application of force to take control of another country's territory. Most of the time involves the military and application of diverse weaponry,

- ✓ Differences in opinions on a particular matter,
- ✓ Misunderstanding between at least two persons over an issue,
- ✓ Inability to respect agreed rules and regulations – existing order, sometimes a party or someone crosses the red line,

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<sup>1</sup> FORM William: A contributor to Encyclopaedia Britannica

- ✓ Disrespect to and application of unnecessary power over another person,
- ✓ Human errors or consequences of man-made mistakes or well-planned sabotage - Communist Soviet Union and Democratic USA under Mikhail Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan/Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton. This led to the Russia – Ukraine War among others. It is documented that:

*“In February 1990, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev discussed NATO’s future role in a unified Germany. Baker told Gorbachev that “there would be no extension of NATO’s jurisdiction for forces of NATO one inch to the east” and agreed with Gorbachev’s statement that “Any extension of the zone of NATO is unacceptable.” – [Today] many Russian elites have dredged up the notion of such a promise to argue that they were betrayed in the settlement that ended the Cold War in Europe, thereby justifying Russian pushback, including the invasion of Ukraine, against the U.S.-led security order”<sup>2</sup>*

### **3. Defining Conflict, Insurgency, Crisis, Revolution and Meanings**

Given the importance of these terminologies and words in this discourse, let us briefly evaluate and explain them. Understanding their importance and the roles they play in conflict situations will be very helpful in understanding the value of peace.

#### **3.1. Conflict**

According to [www.managementstudyguide.com/how-to-handle-conflict-of-interest-in-corporate-settings.htm](http://www.managementstudyguide.com/how-to-handle-conflict-of-interest-in-corporate-settings.htm):

*“Whenever two individuals opine in different ways, a conflict arises. In layman’s language, conflict is nothing but a fight either between two individuals or among group members. No two individuals can think alike and there is definitely a difference in their thought processes as well as their understanding. Disagreements among individuals lead to conflicts and fights”<sup>3</sup>*

Again [www.managementstudyguide.com/how-to-handle-conflict-of-interest-in-corporate-settings.htm](http://www.managementstudyguide.com/how-to-handle-conflict-of-interest-in-corporate-settings.htm) made us understand that:

*“Conflict not only can arise between individuals but also among countries, political parties and states as well. A small conflict not controlled at the correct time may lead to a large war and rifts among countries leading to major unrest and disharmony. It can simply be defined “ as a clash between individuals arising out of a difference in*

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<sup>2</sup> GOLDGEIER James: Promises Made, Promises Broken? What Yeltsin Was Told About Nation In 1993 and Why It Matters. July 12, 2016. [HTTPS://WARONTEROCKS.COM/2016/07/PROMISES-MADE-PROMISES-BROKEN-WHAT-YELTSIN-WAS-TOLD-ABOUT-NATO-IN-1993-AND-WHY-IT-MATTERS/](https://warontherocks.com/2016/07/promises-made-promises-broken-what-yeltsin-was-told-about-nato-in-1993-and-why-it-matters/)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/how-to-handle-conflict-of-interest-in-corporate-settings.htm>. Accessed on Monday, April 18, 2022.

*thought process, attitudes, understanding, interests, requirements and even sometimes perceptions”<sup>4</sup>*

### 3.2. Individual Conflict

When someone has an indecisive mindset on a particular issue, individual conflict comes into play.

- At one time or the other, an individual experiences conflict challenges within himself or herself. For instance, a conflict to decide on a particular issue.
- We develop personal or internal conflict because we refuse to do the right thing at the right time or do not realise to do what we would have done.
- This leads to the person struggling to make a decision. The person in such a situation or a state of mind has what is called “*Conflict of Decision Making*”. The fellow has a conflict within him/herself.
  - ✓ *A political scientist will tell you, that person has a conflict of decision-making on issues within him/herself,*
  - ✓ *A psychologist will say he/she has psychological challenges in decision-making while,*
  - ✓ *A spiritualist will say he/she has some spiritual indecision.*

We learn in the foregoing that a small conflict not controlled at the correct time may lead to a large war and rifts among countries leading to major unrest and disharmony.

**This is the belief the USA** shares in their military defence policy and actions around the world. They believe that if the conflict in any remote corner of the world is not quenched, it might spread up into American territory, or disrupt American interests around the world because of what may be the consequences of the conflict. These interests can be political, economic and trade issues. All these can lead to a *group conflict involving many actors or countries*. Based on this the United States of America went on to fight and bomb *Yemen’s Houthi rebels group* carrying out piracy activities at the international sea thereby disrupting the free flow of private ships and others supplying commercial goods. It is documented that:

*“The U.S. military on Tuesday carried out a new strike in Yemen against four Houthi anti-ship ballistic missiles, two U.S. officials told Reuters, the latest move against the Iran-aligned group over its targeting of Red Sea shipping. One of the officials said the missiles were struck because they were being prepared to target ships in the region. The U.S. strike came a day after Houthi forces hit the U.S.-owned and operated dry bulk ship Gibraltar Eagle with an anti-ship ballistic missile”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid

<sup>5</sup> Idrees Ali & Phil Stewart: Exclusive- US targets Houthi anti-ship missiles in new strike on Yemen, officials say. <https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/us-targets-houthi-anti-ship-missiles-new-strike-yemen-officials-2024-01-16/>. Accessed on 18.02.2024

This is because the activities and blockage from the Houthi terrorists have disrupted commercial ships amid other ships operating along the route carrying commercial products most of them produced in America or American companies located in other regions around the world. If America doesn't react, it will have economic effects on their country when the products are destroyed or stolen by the Pirates.

On the other hand, we learnt from HESLOP D. Alan that:

*"The conflict of private interest is the leading characteristic of the political process in constitutional democracies, and the supervision, mediation, arbitration, and adjudication of such conflicts are among the key functions of their governments"*<sup>6</sup>

This is one of the reasons why political parties quarrel and struggle to win elections for private and political gains. It is not a hidden issue that most political parties around the globe do one thing immediately after the election and the swearing-in ceremony is to increase their salaries and benefits even before they think about the masses that voted them in.

Therefore a conflict not only happens between individuals but also among countries, political parties and states as well and the last one that deliberated on *"a struggle for power, property, etc. an armed conflict violent border conflicts"*. Under this condition, **Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines** the conflict as, *"a struggle for power, property, etc. an armed conflict violent border conflict"*<sup>7</sup>

### 3.3. Insurgency

Insurgency is *"the term historically restricted to rebellious acts that did not reach the proportions of an organized revolution. It has subsequently been applied to any such armed uprising, typically guerrilla in character, against the recognized government of a state or country"*<sup>8</sup>

Some good examples can be drawn from Nigeria. Here are the Boko Haram Terrorist Group, The Unknown Gun Men, The Banditry and Kidnapping for Ransom, The Cattle Herdsmen and Farmers Conflict, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), The Oduduwa Republic and the IPOB groups calling for secessions and even the Arab Spring that started in Tunisia, on 18 December 2010, which led to Government overthrown.

### 3.4. Crisis

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<sup>6</sup>HESLOP D. Alan: A contributor to Encyclopaedia Britannica. Former Director, Rose Institute of State and Local Government, Claremont McKenna College, California. Editor of Californians in Congress. Accessed on Thursday, April, 14, 2022.

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict>

<sup>8</sup> See The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

According to Collin's Online Dictionary "crisis is a situation in which something or someone is affected by one or more very serious problems" or "an unstable period, esp one of extreme trouble or danger in politics, economics, etc".<sup>9</sup>

Tracing further the definitions and meanings of crisis, the Cambridge online dictionary explains that it is: "**a time of great disagreement, confusion, or suffering**" giving instances like (a) when the country's leadership is in crisis and (b) during an economic/financial crisis"<sup>10</sup>

- **An example** of this typical crisis was experienced in Nigeria when *President Musa Yar'Adua* died in office in 2010. There was this political crisis of succession even when the constitution specified that the vice president would take over the leadership of Nigeria. But the power blockers would not let him assume his Constitutional right until some undisclosed agreement was reached.
- **Another one:** From late 2019 until 2022 there was this *Covid-19 Epidemic Crisis*. This was "*a worldwide health crisis*". People all over the world were locked inside their houses or confined in some particular places and restricted from free movement.

In these instances, one realises that there was NO PEACE!

- A recent memory was when the Lagos State deported some Igbo people and ordered others to leave the State in 2012.
- Another example was when the Arewa Youths Consultative Forum in northern Nigeria ordered all the ethnic Igbo people living in the north to leave the region on or before 1. October 2017. It is, therefore, documented that:

*"The Arewa Youth Consultative Forum, ACYF, a coalition of socio-political groups in northern Nigeria, on Tuesday, issued a three-month ultimatum for all Igbos in the 19 northern states to vacate the region. If the Igbos fail to leave by October 1, 2017, the group said, it would use force to evict the Igbos"*<sup>11</sup>

All the foregoing definitions and meanings of words have been the order of the day in Nigeria. There have been recorded insurgencies and crisis across the whole of the country each group making their respective demands to the federal government of Nigeria. Their activities present how tense the situation is and indications show that the government is facing an upheaval task that it may no longer be able to deal with.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/crisis>. Accessed on Saturday, March 5, 2022

<sup>10</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/crisis>. Accessed on Monday, February, 28, 2022

<sup>11</sup>. By HARUNA Abdulkareem: Arewa groups ask Igbos to leave Northern Nigeria, threaten violence, June 7, 2017.

If that is the situation on the ground, one may be forced to ask, what can be done to save the situation and which tools Nigeria have at hand to tackle the ongoing destabilisation of all the thirty-seven states in Nigeria including Abuja – The Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

- ✓ Is the application of the mediation technique possible to solve the challenges?
- ✓ Is the government willing and ready to face the realities and challenges as noticed?
- ✓ Can all the foregoing situations and confrontations lead to a revolution in Nigeria?

### 3.5. Revolution

According to *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica*, **Revolution can be defined** or at best explained and understood to mean a situation that “*constitutes a challenge to the established political order and the eventual establishment of a new order radically different from the preceding one*”<sup>12</sup>

It is further understood that in some contexts for instance in social or political science:

*“Revolution is a major, sudden, and hence typically violent alteration in government and related associations and structures”*<sup>13</sup>

- **French Revolution!**- A political Revolution from 1787 to 1799 (between the ruler and the ruled),
- **British Revolution!** 1640 to 1660– a bourgeois revolution in which the final section of English feudalism (the state) was destroyed by a bourgeois class (and its supporters) and replaced with a state (and society), that ushered in the **Industrial Revolution** in Britain among others.
- **The Old Austrian/Hungarian Empire!**- in 1848 was into three categories social, democratic- liberal, and national. It was a social-liberal and political revolution.

Having analysed, evaluated and understood the various terminologies aforementioned, let us now focus on the terminological word Peace.

## 4. Definition and Meaning of Peace

### 4.1. Introduction

**There is no common** definition and common understanding of what peace is all about.

Peace means several things to several people depending on where one was born, grew up and the prevailing situation at the time. This is given because at different

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<sup>12</sup> The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica

<sup>13</sup> Ibid



times in life and in a particular place some challenges may not be present as it is in another place. The influences of the challenges tell much about one's understanding of the meaning of peace, and safety and how one will tend to define peace. These factors have for instance shaped Americans understanding of peace and its definition.

In some scholarly efforts to produce a better and generally acceptable definition and the meaning of peace, two issues were raised. One is the positive peace and the other is the negative peace. We will look into them in this work at a later stage.

However, let us treat two examples of the definitions or what one should understand by the term peace:

- One from the European Union (EU), and
- The other is from the United States of America (USA).

A good example can be taken from an excerpt from the interview with **Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy**. Answering a question concerning the Russian Invasion of Ukraine that goes this way,

- Short of an unconditional Russian withdrawal or a Ukrainian military victory, does the European Union have a peace plan for Ukraine that would be acceptable to both sides?

He gave the following answer with his brand definition of peace referring to the Russia and Ukraine War:

*"Look, everybody wants peace. Us too. And the ones who want peace the most are the Ukrainians. **But what does peace mean? Peace is something more than "not war"**. We should not confuse the terms. If I want to stop the war, I know how to do it very quickly, in one week. I stop supporting Ukraine, stop sending arms to Ukraine and the war will stop because Ukraine will have to surrender. **Would that mean peace? No. Peace is something more. Peace means to recognise the right of Ukraine to exist, to respect international borders, and to arrange for war reparations and accountability from Russia**"<sup>14</sup>*

**The United States of America (USA)** presenting their version of peace through **Sargent Shriver**, then Presidential Candidate in 1972 has the following to say:

*"When we speak of peace, we must speak also of **justice**. For peace is not only the absence of war...**Peace must mean not only the absence of war among governments but also the creation of social justice among peoples**...Peace must mean **furthering the dignity of man and the sanctity of life**. The quest for such peace will require two fundamental changes in America's approach to the world. We must get away from an obsession with a power which excludes attention in*

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<sup>14</sup> Josep Borrell, the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, was in Singapore last week to attend the Shangri-La Dialogue. 10.06.2023.  
[https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/straits-times-peace-not-no-war-and-derisking-has-risks-josep-borrell\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/straits-times-peace-not-no-war-and-derisking-has-risks-josep-borrell_en)

*peoples' lives, And we must reform a foreign policy bureaucracy which is a mechanism for war instead of a ministry for peace"*<sup>15</sup>

He continued and advised thus:

*" We would do well to remember in this moment that peace begins with each of us. Let us each embark on our own "quest for peace". Let us use our individual spheres of influence to make peace and seek justice in our own families and in our own communities. And let us work to create a world where, even under the most difficult circumstances, choosing peace feels like the best possible option"*<sup>16</sup>

Not only that, we learnt from *GrainesdePaix an Organisation for Transforming Education for Societal Peace* that:

***"Peace is an activity, not an idle passiveness. It is a daily engagement in all of our interactions. Being a passive spectator to the violence and wars of others kills peace; Remaining passive sends the wrong signal"***<sup>17</sup>

One other reason why it has not been universally acceptable to have a common definition of peace among scholars and nation-states around the world is discussed below.

***"Peace is a choice of life in which human interactions are rooted in humane impulses capable of reversing the violent instincts of the powerful, the vindictive and the angry, by touching their hearts and their minds. A choice of life that is at the same time individual, collective, economic and political"***.<sup>18</sup>

These definitions justify the American quest for peace around the World, and the efforts the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU)] are making to end the war between Russia and Ukraine. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU) are struggling to stop Putin's war against Ukraine so that the War will not spill over into other countries. But Imagine the damages done to date because of the ongoing war. *See the pictures below showing solidarity from the US-led NATO Group.*

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<sup>15</sup> Sargent Shriver |Philadelphia, PA| October 4, 1972 in the article "How do we define peace?: August 16, 2021; <https://www.sargentshriver.org/blog/how-do-we-define-peace>

<sup>16</sup> Ibid

<sup>17</sup> GrainesdePaix an Organisation for Transforming Education for Societal Peace . <https://www.grainesdepaix.org/en/resources/basic-concepts/how-to-define-peace>

<sup>18</sup> Ibid



NATO allies offer Ukraine security assurances as Biden hits out at 'craven' Putin

**Source:** Steve Holland, Andrew Gray, John Irish and Sabine Siebold. Wed, July 12, 2023.

<https://www.yahoo.com/news/g7-offer-ukraine-security-framework-091626702.html> Accessed 13.07.2023

The situation in Iraq during the tenure of Saddam Hussein and after the United States of America (USA) pushed him out as President of Iraq, destabilised and destroyed that country and was later arrested and hanged by the successive regime.

The experiences in the land of Lybia during President Muammar Ghadaffi and the blonder France did with his Western allies. They killed the president, destabilised and destroyed the country. Today, Lybia is suffering, there exist two leaders, one in the north including the capital Tripoli (Mohamed al-Menfi as Lybian Presidential council) and the other Khalifa Haftar; - Libyan rebel commander Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive to seize control of southern Libya.) Apart from the two, there exist several leaders controlling one region or the other.

The ongoing war between the Russian Federation and Ukraine. See the picture below indicating the inhuman destruction of the country:





Ukraine – Reuters

**Source:** Matthew Lynn: Sun, February 19, 2023

<https://www.yahoo.com/finance/news/first-phase-putin-war-over-110000730.html>. Accessed on 19.02.2023

Also, the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine Hamas. *See the pictures below.*



Smoke plumes billow during Israeli air strikes in Gaza City on October 12, 2023, as raging battles between Israel and the Hamas movement continue. (Photo by MAHMUD HAMS/AFP via Getty Images) **Source:** Bethaney Phillips: Why is Hamas attacking Israel? Tue, October 17, 2023; <https://www.yahoo.com/news/why-hamas-attacking-israel-192426132.html>. Accessed on 18.10.2023



Oct. 31 | Deir Al-Balah, Gaza Relatives pay their last respect to casualties of an airstrike at the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital.© Loay Ayyoub For The Washington Post. **Source:** Michael Birnbaum: The U.S. is warned about its global standing as Gaza's suffering persists.

[https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/u-s-is-warned-about-its-global-standing-as-gaza-suffering-persists/ar-AA1jLrSX?ocid=NL\\_ENUS\\_A1\\_00010101\\_1\\_1](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/world/u-s-is-warned-about-its-global-standing-as-gaza-suffering-persists/ar-AA1jLrSX?ocid=NL_ENUS_A1_00010101_1_1). Accessed on 12.11.2023

## 5. Definitions and Understanding of the Terminology of Peace

Before diving further into the various definitions of peace and making efforts to understand the terminology, it will be good enough to call to mind that the definition of peace has changed in recent times, from the traditional or classical universally known definition to a more elaborated and modern definition that showcases over-proportional inclusiveness of agreeable conditions that are meaningful to the addendums made on the definitions and meanings. These changes arose from experiences the world has gone through, especially after the First and the Second World Wars until now. Despite that, relentless efforts are being made to make the world a better place to live and prosper without unnecessary barriers.

For readers to understand the changes in the definitions of peace and why these changes are relevant, it is important to survey, analyse, present, as much and evaluate the differences between the traditional definitions and the modern ones.

Now let us begin with **the traditional definition** of peace:

*Google.com* told us that, *the word 'peace' is derived from the original Latin word 'pax', which means a pact, a control or an agreement to end war or -- any dispute and conflict between two people, two nations or two antagonistic groups of people.*



The same *Google.com* went further and said that *perhaps the most popular (Western) view is as an absence of dissension, violence, or war, a meaning found in the New Testament and possibly an original meaning of the Greek word for peace, Irene.*

Besides, further survey discloses that **The Oxford Dictionary** defines peace in the following ways:

- ✓ Freedom from civil unrest or disorder; public order and...
- ✓ Freedom from anxiety, disturbance (emotional, mental, or...
- ✓ Freedom from quarrels or dissension between individuals or, (especially in early use, between an individual and God); a state of friendliness; amity, concord;
- ✓ To maintain public order; to prevent or refrain from public commotion or disorder;
- ✓ Generally to prevent or refrain from argument, strife, disruptive behaviour, or displays of hostile feelings, etc. means that there is peace.

**Coming to the modern definition of peace**, *Google.com* also offered us some good ideas by defining peace, as *a state of law or civil government, a state of justice or goodness, a balance or equilibrium of Powers. Such meanings of peace function at different levels. Peace may be opposed to or an opposite of antagonistic conflict, violence, or war.*

In pursuit of arriving at a better and eventually generalised definition of peace, let us look at what the United Nations officials said about peace.

### 5.1. United Nations

The United Nations officials define peace to mean, *dignity, and well-being for all, not just the absence of war.*

According to Mr Ban Ki-moon the former UN Secretary-General, peace means:

- (i) *“access to education, health and essential services – especially for girls and women; giving every young woman and man the chance to live as they choose; and developing sustainably and protecting the planet’s biodiversity.*
- (ii) *More than ever, it means living with others on the basis of tolerance, respect and mutual understanding”<sup>19</sup>*

While Wikipedia contributed and says:

*“Peace means societal friendship and harmony in the absence of hostility and violence. In a social sense, peace is commonly used to mean a lack of conflict (such*

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<sup>19</sup> Peace means dignity, well-being for all, not just absence of war – UN officials, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2014/09/476992> Accessed on 24.11.2023

as war) and freedom from fear of violence between individuals or groups”<sup>20</sup>

According to the UN Charter, the United Nations has the primary responsibility “to maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace...”<sup>21</sup>

In the following sections of this work, we are going to meet and make use of both traditional and modern definitions of peace to enable us to see how the definitions have changed meanings in recent times and where peace and conflict overlap. These processes we now embark on will assist and influence us to understand better the reason why it has not been able to have a universally acceptable definition of peace in any social discourse.

With the brief instances of both the traditional and modern definitions of the terminology peace, let us now focus attention and share what experts from diverse schools of thought say about peace.

## 5.2. What the Professionals from Different Disciplines Say

Other diverse definitions of peace can be listed below to shed more light on the intricacies and difficulties inherent in the definition of peace and why it has been difficult also to agree on a particular and universal acceptance of the definition of peace. Different people and experts from different fields of study define peace more often than not to reflect their field of discipline. A good example is cited from studies carried out by the Columbian College of Arts & Sciences. What Does Peace Mean? December 9, 2015. <https://columbian.gwu.edu/what-does-peace-mean> . Below are six extracts from the study.

**5.2.1. “Peace means tranquillity. Peace means being free from persecution due to one’s nationality, immigration status, race, ethnicity, political affiliation, religious beliefs (or lack thereof) or sexual preference. Peace also comes from the comfort of knowing that you have a roof over your head, food to eat and loving family members and friends. Many people are not free from persecution, nor can they count on the comfort of shelter, food and a supportive social circle. I hope we can keep them in our thoughts this season.”**

— Daniel E. Martínez, Assistant Professor of Sociology

**5.2.2. In Old Aramaic (the language of ancient Syria), the word for ‘peace’ is ‘shalam.’ In Old Hebrew (the language of ancient Israel), the word is ‘shalom.’ And in Old South Arabic (the language of ancient Arabia), the word is ‘salam.’ These words from the world’s ancient Semitic languages are often rendered into English as ‘peace,’ but the actual meaning is much deeper and broader. After all, these words signified then—and now—not**

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<sup>20</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peace> Accessed on 12.02.2024

<sup>21</sup> Ibid

**merely the absence of war, but also the presence of good health, serenity, happiness, harmony and safety. During this season, and indeed throughout this year and every year, may we all do our part to bring about 'peace,' in every sense of these grand Semitic words."**

— Christopher A. Rollston, Associate Professor of Northwest Semitic Languages & Literatures

**5.2.3. "Peace means living our lives selflessly, treating others with respect, sharing the extra that comes to us with others who have been shortchanged. It means being in the wilderness without fear but with respect for the world around us. It means living as small as possible in material things and as large as possible in goodwill."**

— J. Houston Miller, Professor of Chemistry

**5.2.4. Many think of 'peace' and 'conflict' as antagonisms; peace, then, evokes images of calm and tranquillity. But struggle—including the political struggles we have seen unfold on college campuses—can be animated by a desire for peace. In this case, peace isn't necessarily quiet and tranquil. Instead, it is a radical call for freedom from oppression, and a bold challenge to re-think how we live together in ways that not only honor each other's dignity but that recognize and redress the violence that has marked—and continues to mark—the everyday. Peace, then, is an ongoing call to imagine living otherwise."**

— Jennifer C. Nash, Assistant Professor, American Studies & Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Director, Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program

**5.2.5. In December, we think about peace on earth. But we do not have peace—and will not—until more pressing needs are met. There are human disparities and insufficiencies, not simply in wealth, but in basic survival necessities, safety, in opportunity. Let us pledge that, in the challenge for attaining peace in our own lives, we will also work to achieve human dignity, justice, freedom and welfare, for all people who share the earth."**

— Paul Poppen, Professor of Applied Social Psychology

**5.2.6. Peace is finding a place that allows me to connect with the world without worry. This usually means being in touch with something inspiring and often visual. That might be an artwork, a historic structure or a path through the woods. Sometimes it's about being by myself; other times I am peaceful in a crowd. It's the joy of walking my dogs in a field that opens to the sky. Or it's the feeling of being lost in the creation of something new."**

— Martha Morris, Associate Professor of Museum Studies Assistant Director, Museum Studies Program<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Columbian College of Arts & Sciences. What Does Peace Mean? December 9, 2015  
<https://columbian.gwu.edu/what-does-peace-mean>



**Meanwhile, peace** “is the ability for people to live in harmony with themselves and with each other. In practice, however, that can mean many different things to different people”.<sup>23</sup>

Contributing to the discourse Anderson, Royce argued that:

*“Peace is defined as a two-dimensional construct with both objective and subjective measures that must be studied within specific micro-to-macro contexts”*<sup>24</sup>

Examples of such micro and macro contexts can be drawn from the studies of some research fellows of political scientists and experts in *Negotiation and Conflict Resolution matters*, that conducted research work in various American Universities. During the period, they interviewed a group of people including children to find out what they mean by the word safety and how their communities have been affected by lack of safety.

We learnt that participants were presented with a few questions like, how they feel and what safety or the lack of safety looks like in their community and neighbourhood. It was quite overwhelming from the answers received. The result from their research work in the communities discloses the expressions from kids, that *they want basic life skills and job skills training or have mentors and role models*. Kids need to have fantasies and hope to excel and make success in their life and these can only be possible if there is adequate safety mechanism in their community. They do not want:

*“Prevalence of guns, shootings and gangs in their lives [because they] are desensitized to gunshots and violence or are arrested or kicked out of their homes.— These kids and teenagers ultimately lose sight of how their lives – and the lives of others – have value.--I want to go back to a more innocent time, when [they] -- know nothing about any of this”*<sup>25</sup>

The aforementioned therefore underpins the fact that safety is more important to American people than conflict. However, in this research, children are more likely to be influenced than adults which will result in subjective answers rather than objective presentations.

In the USA, people talk more about **safety and security**, issues like **gun control, terrorism, crime, illegal drugs and immigration**. This is because these are the issues that confront them in everyday life on the one hand and because they have never experienced war in their life on the other. That is to assume that when the above-identified areas are under control, they will experience safety and this will automatically bring in the expected peace.

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<sup>23</sup> Peter Dixon and Co: Americans do talk about peace – just not the same way people do in other countries  
Published: September 20, 2023. <https://theconversation.com/americans-do-talk-about-peace-just-not-the-same-way-people-do-in-other-countries-213330>

<sup>24</sup> Anderson, Royce: A definition of Peace in: *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology*, Vol 10(2), Jun 2004, 101-116. <https://psycnet.apa.org/buy/2004-20175-002>. Accessed on 23.01.2024

<sup>25</sup> Op. cit. Peter Dixon and Co: Americans do talk about peace.

***If people grow up in a war-torn zone*** the most important meaning or definition of peace will be something like the possibility that they have:

*“The infrastructure necessary to supply basic needs, like clean water, or when they could actively participate in regular social gatherings. In Bosnia, residents highlighted the ability to use public spaces, including rebuilt ruins from the war, as well as the presence of more day-to-day amenities like streetlights and parking”*<sup>26</sup>

For these groups of people, their understanding of peace as well as safety is to get the foregoing facilities available so that they will have peace of mind.

Further than that *Dixon and co*, also enlightened us from their research work when they opined:

*“Just as we know that violence and security are only two aspects of people’s understanding of peace, the same is true of safety. The police – and even crime – are just two aspects of how communities think about safety in their everyday lives. They also think about economic opportunities, public space and social connections. -- But, like peace, **safety is about far more than reducing violence. It’s being able to trust that police have communities’ interests in mind and knowing that residents will receive fair treatment in the courts**”*<sup>27</sup>

The phrase, “*residents will receive fair treatment in that court*” brings justice into this discourse. It discloses that justice which belongs to human rights, peace and conflict have something in common. They are interwoven and go *pari passu* (equal footing) to one another.

But why does America in the name of peace go fight wars in other countries and continents?

This is because, the Americans believe in the value of peace as their understanding and claim that at the end of the Second World War, they inherited specific and special responsibilities:

*“To use its economic, political, and military might deter and prevent another of the great wars between major powers that so consumed the early part of the 20th century”*<sup>28</sup>

*Bruce Jones* Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy according to his research findings went further to say that:

*“Logic and history tell us that the result of the United States spending less effort to keep the peace means that these dangers will mount and become less and less manageable—ultimately posing greater direct risks to the United States—and be much harder to tackle when they eventually become too large to ignore”*<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>27</sup> Ibid

<sup>28</sup> Ibid

<sup>29</sup> Ibid

Beyond that, the American Government and policymakers, the likes of *Bruce Jones* believe that:

*“The use of American power should hew closely to the responsibility we’ve taken on since the end of the Second World War to maintain global peace. **[But in a modern time to exercise the right to build a “standing coalition”]** so that when we act in the world to maintain the peace, we should do so with as many friends and allies as possible.---These should be built around those actors committed to keeping the global peace and willing to shoulder substantial responsibilities to do so. That will include a core of the West, but not all members of NATO, and should be open to participation by countries like India with a huge stake in global stability”<sup>30</sup>*

So what America needs in the contemporary time to combat conflicts around the world to maintain peace and safety are the following:

- ✓ A new vision for how to act to keep the peace in a world defined by a weakened West and an ill-formed East,
- ✓ A new concept and a new architecture for action,
- ✓ A new model of burden sharing for a multipolar world.

Reacting to the last point above (*a multipolar world*), a Peking University professor while analysing the gains of the unprecedented multipolar sharing responsibility to make the world a conflict-free zone and sustain peace, called the attention of readers and advised that the government of the United States of America (USA) and the Peoples Republic of China should remember that:

*“Seven years ago, when the world celebrated the 70th anniversary of the victory of the anti-fascist war,[presently it is 79 years] few people appreciated the fact that the post-World War II world order is not just liberal, but more importantly, realistic and pragmatic. It is realistic and pragmatic because its founders realised that, if the world wants peace, countries need to acknowledge and respect each other’s core interests, especially those of the great powers. The UN charter stipulates the principle of respecting national sovereignty and territorial integrity and opposing interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign country. **The Charter also gives special privileges to great powers, such as permanent membership of the UN Security Council and the veto power. The founders did this not because they wished to belittle the importance of values or ideological aspirations, but because the only way to keep the great powers peaceful was to give them a stake in the existing international order and allow countries of different ideological persuasions to work together on issues of common concern.** Cooperation between China and the United States was important for the world’s efforts to fight terrorism, conduct UN peacekeeping, deal with the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and sign the Paris Agreement on climate change. **But after former president Donald Trump came into office, the United States changed this policy. It began with the trade wars that challenged China’s right to development. It then challenged China’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity in Hong Kong, Taiwan and***

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<sup>30</sup> Bruce Jones: America’s role in a turbulent world, September 29, 2016. [www.brookings.edu/articles/americas-role-in-a-turbulent-world/](http://www.brookings.edu/articles/americas-role-in-a-turbulent-world/)

*Xinjiang. It initiated an ideological war against China. Confronted with such attacks, China felt that it had no choice but to fight back. This led to cycles of negative reactions between the two countries. President Joe Biden's ascent to power has not changed this momentum. Out of ideological and domestic political considerations, it has largely inherited Trump's approach toward China. Given their size and capabilities, this trend of development of the relations between the two countries has its consequences. **As long as the world's two most powerful countries remain confrontational and hostile toward each other, the international order goes unattended, and countries such as Russia and North Korea see opportunities to pursue their interests.** More countries which are dissatisfied with the existing international order are likely to follow. China and the United States need to stabilise and improve their relations based on shared interests and stakes, rather than competing and confronting each other over conflicts of interests and values, or over ideological aspirations. They must work together to maintain the international order on this basis. But if China and the United States want to defend their interests — and if the world wants to defend the international order — they have no better alternatives. For this to happen, our leaders need to demonstrate foresight, political wisdom and courage if they want to leave a positive historical legacy. They can begin with finding a way to put an end to the current Ukraine crisis”<sup>31</sup>*

At this juncture, you will agree with this discourse that America has from time to time thwarted the standing international order stipulated in the UN Charter at its establishment regarding the equal rights and legitimacy of the five world powers that jointly defeated the Nazi-Germans. On many occasions, we have seen America practising *Unipolar Diplomacy in the Geopolitical World* and engaging in war combat with other sovereign states without due consultations with the colleagues of the superpowers. One such action was during the tenure of *President George W. Bush* when he carried out warfare against *President Saddam Hussein in Iraq* and told the world that if anyone was not with them – the USA, that person was then against them. Further than that, one can judge within one's mindset the faith of present-day Iraq. Other countries that called for attention are Vietnam and Afghanistan, which is one of the takeaways from this paper.

### **5.3. The Positive Peace**

**Positive Peace** represents the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies.

#### **Made up of eight different but inter-related pillars**

- i) Well-functioning government,
- ii) Low levels of corruption,
- iii) Strong business environment,

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<sup>31</sup> Jia Qingguo- Peking University: China-US cooperation is the key to peace, 14 March 2022.  
<https://eastasiaforum.org/2022/03/14/china-us-cooperation-is-the-key-to-peace/>  
Accessed on 04.02.2024

- iv) Acceptance of the rights of others,
- v) Equitable distribution of resources,
- vi) Free flow of information,
- vii) High levels of human capital and
- viii) Good relationships with neighbours

– **“Positive Peace** provides a measurable framework to gauge a country’s capabilities to absorb, adapt and recover from shocks, be they financial, ecological or societal. It defines the goals that a system needs to evolve too. Interventions should nudge the system towards ever higher levels of Positive Peace, rather than creating radical change, which runs the risk of disrupting the fabric of society”.<sup>32</sup>

#### 5.4. The Negative Peace

**Negative Peace** historically refers to the “absence of war” and other types of large-scale fear of violence in human conflicts. The following references can be taken from the situation in present-day Nigeria namely,

- *Random Killing of Human beings,*
- *Kidnapping for Ramsome,*
- *Banditry Activities,*
- *The Operation of Unknown Gunmen and*
- *Herdsmen and Farmers Confrontations.*

### 6. Advantages and Disadvantages of Peace and Conflict

#### 6.1. Introduction

Section six of this work presents the commonly known and eventually new knowledge on what makes up the advantages and disadvantages of conflicts. The question of whether there is an advantage in conflicts or not is very controversial. Some schools of thought argue that the advantages that accrue to the winner are ill-gotten through bloodshed and inhuman behavioural attitude, while another group challenges the former, expressing their grievances that one must not use the instrument of conflict to destroy humans for the sake of advantages he may gain over the weak or defeated partner in conflicts.

Further than that, political diplomacy opined that conflict is sometimes an instrument to achieve peace irrespective of the price paid to achieve it; but at the same time argued that when one understands the dangers of conflict, one should avoid it and apply all other available diplomatic measures or tools to prevent it and therefore value the peaceful tranquillity that provides and promotes freedom for life.

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<sup>32</sup> Steve Killelea AM, Global Peace Index creator: Here’s Why We Need a New Definition of Peace.  
<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/why-we-need-a-new-definition-of-peace/>

Despite the variations in the academic discourse, let us now evaluate and present the pros and cons of the subject matter.

## **6.2. The Winner and The Loser**

### **Advantages to the Winner in a Conflict Situation**

- ✓ The stronger wins the conflicts but not without incurring some losses,
- ✓ The winner most of the time takes all (*The Takes It All System*),
- ✓ He suppresses the loser,
- ✓ He rewrites the history,
- ✓ Sometimes, a period to develop and improve on technologies,
- ✓ Most of the time promotes rapid development,
- ✓ The winner may be in a position to free himself from the master or the dominant partner, where the latter was in control before the conflict and
- ✓ Dictatorship and tyrannical system of governance may set in depending on various scenarios.

## **6.3. The Loser**

### **Disadvantages to the Loser in a Conflict Situation**

- ✓ Lives lost- people die through various means (War, Gunfire, Kidnapping and Hanging),
- ✓ Properties and diverse wealth in millions and billions of dollars are lost or confiscated,
- ✓ Infrastructures across the country are damaged and destroyed,
- ✓ Social disorderliness – prices of goods and services skyrocket,
- ✓ Hunger will be the order of the day, given that people can no longer afford to feed themselves. The necessity of life is out of the reach of many people,
- ✓ Acute diseases will develop and set in as a result,
- ✓ Crime waves and armed robbery will be the order of the day,
- ✓ Psychological fears will destroy peoples' way of life,
- ✓ Regressive development takes effect,
- ✓ Production of refugees - Cross Border Persons and
- ✓ Production of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) – Persons within a country's territory.

## **7. Locating the Nexus of Conflict and Peace, Why It Matters**

Locating the nexus of conflict and peace may sound simple because it is easy to sample them out but the implementation to achieve the most needful result is still above human endeavour. Political Scientists, contemporary researchers and writers as well as anthropologists and even policy writers, likewise policymakers and people

conversant with diverse diplomacies have failed up to this day to come up with what could be seen as sustainable solutions to eliminating conflict to value peace.

The three or four examples of the core elements involved herein among others are *human rights* by extension *justice as part of it, safety and democratic principles*, which also cover the sustenance of peace. Where any of these core guiding rules fail, conflict will arise and peace is in danger. Safety is a component of peace just as human rights complement peace. All of them have their connections and linkages. *Merriam online dictionary* defines nexus as:

*“a connection or link between things, persons, or events especially [one] that is or is part of a chain of causation”<sup>33</sup>*

There is a need for each country to protect and respect the rights of its citizens no matter what it takes and make sure that they receive fair justice in legal battles, just as it is very important to provide its citizens with the safety of their lives and properties.

Other than that, practising and respecting democratic norms is inevitable. In the modern political jargon, one may hear Western politicians mentioning *the free world, the democratic world*. One also hears what is called *a hybrid democracy (a mixture of democratic principles in process and some well-known elements of autocratic measures)*. An example is what is obtainable in the former Eastern Europe or some countries in Asia or the Middle East. Further than that, there exists the third type of democratic governance called the *Kleptocracy. This is a corrupt system and means stealing by ruling*. This is most common in developing countries around the world, especially in Africa and some Asian and Latin American countries. They also apply some level of autocracy.

Referencing that, and expressing the importance of human rights, American President Franklin D. Roosevelt in his Annual Message to Congress, on January 6, 1941, said:

*“Even when the World War broke out in 1914, it seemed to contain only a small threat of danger to our own American future. **But, as time went on, the American people began to visualize what the downfall of democratic nations might mean to our own democracy.**” - “Just as our national policy in internal affairs has been based upon a decent respect for the rights and the dignity of all our fellow men within our gates, so our national policy in foreign affairs has been based on a decent respect for the rights and dignity of all nations, large and small. And the justice of morality must and will win in the end.” - **“We know that enduring peace cannot be bought at the cost of other people's freedom.”** - “We Americans are vitally concerned in your defence of freedom. We are putting forth our energies, our resources and our organizing powers to give you the strength to regain and **maintain a free world**. We shall send you, in ever-increasing numbers, ships, planes, tanks, guns. This is our purpose and our pledge.-*

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>

- *The first is freedom of speech and expression--everywhere in the world.*
- *The second is the freedom of every person to worship God in his own way--everywhere in the world.*
- *The third is freedom from want--which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will secure to every nation a healthy peacetime life for its inhabitants everywhere in the world.*
- *The fourth is freedom from fear--which, translated into world terms, means a worldwide reduction of armaments to such a point and in such a thorough fashion that no nation will be in a position to commit an act of physical aggression against any neighbour--anywhere in the world."*

*The world order which we seek is the cooperation of free countries, working together in a friendly, civilized society."* - **"Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere"**<sup>34</sup>

In conclusion, we should understand that when we as individuals, states and countries recognise, respect and practice these three dignities of human beings, we must have come a long way and at a high level of understanding of conflict to value peace.

## **8. Summary, Lessons Learned, Referencing to Nigeria**

Throughout the research I carried out to present this paper and also throughout the discourse, I discovered that it is difficult to establish a universally acceptable definition of the term peace. I also discovered that people tend to understand what peace is all about and define it based on their primary or personal experience in the community where they were born or grew up to a particular stage in life. I further, recalled what I thought was the meaning of peace while I was growing up in a small city in Nigeria; And I compared that with my experiences at my tender age and my ripe adult period. I also, substantiated it with my studies and professions while living in Europe. Eventually, I concluded, that it will be difficult to produce a universally acceptable definition and the meaning of peace the World over.

This is because people tend to define peace regarding their *needs, wants, and wishes*. Based on these examples, it is simple to say that 'peace reflects on *the need* that a person is missing' or what people are lacking in their current state of mind or what they feel is important to them. It can even mean *what they see as a threat* to them and wish that there is a solution to it. And also, that it is obtainable or attainable. They may even *wish* that it is stopped or eliminated. As a result, one may hear people say, *I wish this conflict would stop. I will be happy if I can obtain this or that*, amongst other instances that may be available. Those things people *wish* themselves serve as a basis for their understanding of and defining what peace is all about as long as they can *get the satisfaction of their wants through a solution to their needs*.

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<sup>34</sup> Franklin D. Roosevelt Annual Message to Congress, January 6, 1941; Records of the United States Senate; SEN 77A-H1; Record Group 46; National Archives



Further than that, I stand to affirm that it will be humanly impossible to deter conflict and achieve one hundred per cent (100%) tranquillity or absence of conflict.

Unfortunately, conflicts and wars are always eminent in our daily life. But the most rewarding in this summary is to realise that no matter the situation and the challenges facing humanity, one should not relax or abstain from soliciting and advocating for the realisation of peaceful conditions. This is because both peace and conflict are natural conditions and the incident for peace or conflict can arise at any particular time in people's life, in organisations and in the life of a nation. Peace and conflicts are therefore inborn in human beings. Working against conflicts and canvassing for peace are parts of human character and cannot be separated. Under the foregoing, one realises that human beings are, therefore, confronted daily with conflict and peace matters and the quest for peace will continue as long as we live.

At this stage, I pause to reflect on my findings, surveys, analysis and evaluations, concerning Nigeria, I noticed that in every part of the country, there exists one conflict or the other. The presence of negative peace surpasses that of positive peace in the country. For instance, while there is officially an absence of war, there exists no peace in the country. My contentions can be summarised below:

- In the northern part of Nigeria, there is a terror group called Boko Haram, causing unrestricted terroristic mayhem across the region,
- The activities of the Herdsmen (animal husbandry) from the northern indigenes led to clashes with farmers down in the southern region.
- In the old Middle Belt – North Central, one discovers the Nigerian Indigenous Nationalities Alliance for Self-Determination (NINAS). They are seeking Secession given the negligence of the ruling class.
- In the Southeast, one finds the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), calling for secession,
- In the Southwest, is a group calling for the establishment of the Oduduwa Republic and finally,
- In the South-south, operates the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), with the ultimate aim to control the natural resources in their domain.
- All over the country, we have banditry and kidnapping groups for ransoms, as well as the activities of unknown gunmen in various parts of the country.

### **8.1. Questions from the Lessons Learned**

- ✓ How did all the instances ongoing in the regions of the country or the subject matters in the foregoing reflect on peoples' lives?
- ✓ What can be done to avoid the conflicts and all other components?
- ✓ How and what will the *Peace Advocates and Practitioners Organisation Nigeria European Headquarters Austria (PAPONEHA)* do to make unprecedented contributions that will last the test of time- sustained peace and

de-escalate conflicts and radicalisation of evils around Nigeria's territory and across the World?

The aforementioned points are part of the reasons why the establishment of the *Organisation PAPONEHA* came into being. To work with same-minded *Peace Ambassadors* all over the world to deter conflict and value peace.

Finally, let me end this work with an interesting incidence of conflict matter I discovered during the research work. It goes this way:

## 9. Conclusion with a Video Click

Audio Video Starts to Play



**PEACE BE UNTO YOU ALL!**

**Note:** Part of this work is taken from the Lecture presented by the Author on “Understanding Conflict to Value Peace” at the second Summit of the Peace Advocate and Practitioners Organisation Nigeria European Headquarters Austria on Saturday, 02.03.2024 in Vienna, Central Europe.  
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