

広島市立大学博士審査学位論文(Hiroshima City University Doctoral Dissertation)

Preventing Violent Conflicts: The Case of the Bawku Conflict in Northern Ghana

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Doke Victor Kofi Afetorlom

Declaration

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis is in its original form and the ideas in this thesis are my own work carried out by me. The research findings also in this thesis are my own work written by me, Doke Victor Kofi Afetorlom. The information in this thesis is adequately referenced and gathered through primary and secondary sources of information which include personal interviews, telephone interviews, scholarly materials, and reports by international and local agencies.

Signature.....

Date: 2021

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Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
BEWDA	Belim Wusa Development Agency
BIEPC	Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee
BMA	Bawku Municipal Assembly
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
CLGF	Commonwealth Local Government Forum
CMT	Community Monitoring Team
CSCPF	Continental Structural Conflict Prevention Framework
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
ECOSOCC	Economic, Social and Cultural Council
ECOWARN	ECOWAS Warning and Response Network
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECPF	ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework
EU	European Union
GAF	Ghana Armed Forces
GSS	Ghana Statistical Services
MCPMR	Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
NPC	National Peace Council
NPP	New Patriotic Party

OAU	Organization for African Unity
PSC	Protracted Social Conflict
PSD	Peace and Security Department
RCC	Regional Coordination Council
SADC	South African Development Community
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UN	United Nations
WANEP	West Africa Network for Peacebuilding
WARN	West African Early Warning and Early Response Network/Warning and Response Network
WPR	World Population Review

Abstract

Violent armed conflicts are one of the difficult challenges that many countries are confronting. In the current field of conflict resolution, prevention is important to curb the recurrence of armed violence. Stakeholders, including Track I, II, and III actors, are involved in playing different roles at different stages to prevent and resolve armed conflicts through the implementation of various measures such as early warning, among others. In the realm of conflict resolution, the conflict-prevention and conflict-management activities overlap, depending on the context in which they are implemented.

Ghana has a reputation as a peaceful country; nevertheless, it has experienced pockets of violent ethnic conflicts. Conflicts periodically occur in some parts of Ghana because of various reasons, particularly chieftaincy succession, ethnic identity, and land use. The Bawku inter-ethnic conflict between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people has been characterized by recurrence of armed conflict surrounding the chieftaincy. The objective of this study is to analyze the prevention measures implemented against recurrence of violent armed clashes in Bawku by stakeholders at different levels – namely, the state agencies (Track I), civil society organizations (CSOs) (Track II), and community representatives (Track III) – as to what lessons can be drawn from the case of Bawku for the conflict prevention literature within the conflict resolution realm.

The research questions for this study include the following: (i) What kinds of prevention measures against armed violence have been implemented in the Bawku case? (ii) Which of the prevention measures implemented against armed conflict were direct or structural? (iii) Which of the prevention measures against armed clashes were implemented by the state agencies, CSOs, and representatives of the community, and what were their roles? (iv) Which issues were these prevention measures implemented against? (v) What are the perceptions of the state agencies,

CSOs, and community representatives about these prevention measures? (vi) What are stakeholders' perceptions about those who played a role in implementing each prevention measure? and (vii) What are the perceptions of the state agencies, CSOs, and community representatives regarding the necessary approaches for preventing potential recurrence of armed violence?

This study uses a qualitative methodology of investigation. The notion of direct and structural prevention is applied to analyze: (i) What kinds of prevention measures against armed violence have been implemented in the Bawku case? (ii) Which of the prevention measures implemented against armed conflict were direct or structural? and (iii) Which of the prevention measures against armed clashes were implemented by the state agencies, CSOs, and representatives of the community? This study utilizes both primary and secondary data. Primary sources of data first of all were collected from field research that was conducted in Ghana (including Bawku) from August to October, 2019. In September, 2020, due to COVID-19, telephone interviews were conducted to complement the fieldwork.

Key respondents were identified within the stakeholders through personal contacts. Stakeholders were grouped into the following three categories: (i) state agencies (Track I), namely the National Peace Council (NPC) and the Bawku Police; (ii) CSOs (Track II) such as West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA); and (iii) community representatives (Track III), namely the *Bawku Naba*, his elders, the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) and representatives of women and youth groups whose reflections were echoed by the BIEPC. The author's field findings show the NPC plays the role of a technical backstopper and facilitates capacity building for the BIEPC to find amicable ways to prevent armed clashes and resolve the conflict.

Prevention measures (direct measures) such as mediations, early warning system, and peace education were initiated by the NPC against armed clashes. The Bawku Police initiated direct measures such as peace education, early warning, and security provisions to curb armed violence. These direct prevention measures have been implemented in Bawku by the state agencies against armed clashes at the early stages. It is the assertion of the state agencies that recurrence of armed violence may be possible even if outstanding issues are not resolved, including the performance of the Okro stick ceremony, which would declare the conflict over. The necessary approaches to curb armed violence would be improving on the early warning system and sustained engagements.

The BIEPC is the local peace infrastructure, which acts as the mouthpiece that represents all ethnic groups in Bawku and works under the auspices of the NPC. The institution (i.e., BIEPC) leads negotiations towards prevention of armed clashes. Direct prevention measures, such as an alert call system, embargo, and an early warning system, were initiated by the community representatives – BIEPC – to investigate rumors of planned attacks on festivities and to settle farmland issues to avoid court litigations. The direct prevention measures implemented by the BIEPC in Bawku against violent conflicts have contributed to the sustained peace. The necessary approach to curb armed violence would be improving on the early warning system, alert call system, and periodic peace education.

WANEP plays the role of technical backstopper and capacity builder. The institution initiated direct prevention measures such as an early warning system to detect and monitor signs of potential armed clashes in Bawku. WANEP also implemented mediations (direct measure) against recurrence of armed clashes. BEWDA, on the other hand, plays the role of a peacebuilding facilitator. The organization initiated prevention measures (direct prevention) such

as peace education, mediations, and negotiations against recurrence of armed violence. WANEP and BEWDA facilitate capacity building for the BIEPC, as well as sustained and extensive engagements against recurrence of violent armed conflicts in Bawku. Their roles in preventing potential armed violence in Bawku have been aimed at offering technical and financial assistance, and facilitating early response to armed clashes. The CSOs' role augments the efforts of the state agencies such as NPC and has contributed to preventing armed violence. The CSOs envisage further sustained and extensive engagements would resolve the Bawku conflict, and the necessary approach to curb armed violence would be sustained engagements, relying on the early warning system, and peace education.

This study explored details of cooperation efforts among the stakeholders towards preventing armed clashes. The study shed light on direct prevention measures, and these results are expected to contribute to developing arguments focused on preventing violent armed conflicts at the early stage within the conflict resolution realm. This study, per the author's field findings, has established that direct prevention activities have been implemented by: (i) state agencies (the National Peace Council (NPC) and the Bawku Police – Track I actors); (ii) CSOs (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) – Track II actors); and (iii) community representatives (*Bawku Naba* with his elders and Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) – Track III actors) against violent conflicts in Bawku. The direct prevention activities were implemented at the early stages against violent conflicts and were reliable, considering the uncertain nature of the Bawku conflict. From the analysis of prevention measures implemented by the stakeholders, this study shows that prevention measures (structural prevention) were not implemented against recurrence of violent conflicts because stakeholders have aimed to curb potential armed clashes at an early stage to sustain

peace, corroborating the argument that prevention measures implemented at the early stages in the short term are important.

Introduction

1. Violent Armed Conflicts and Its Prevention

The nexus of this section is to provide a general view on violent armed conflicts, their adverse effects and how it is prevented. The introduction shares some explanations on the general view of armed violent conflicts to argue the need for prevention; a brief general reputation of Ghana as a peaceful country is presented to understand the conflict dynamics with regard to how the country has not experienced a civil war. Some of the Bawku conflict's features, such as violence and a historical perspective are also presented. The objective of the study is then presented, which leads to presentation of the academic originality of this study (explaining the essence of the conflict prevention concept and then describing how this perspective is lacking in previous studies), which leads to the research questions. Finally, the study's method is explained, including the data collection. Then, the profile of stakeholders is reviewed. This part also provides background on the target organizations.

The African continent is perceived to be the source of the majority of the world's ongoing conflicts (Boulden, 2003). According to Yacob-Haliso (2018), Africa is known to be a vast and varied continent, having different histories and also geographical attributes. The argument is that, because Africa is diverse and complex, the sources of conflict in Africa reflects or supports the argument that sources of conflict are also diverse and complex (Yacob-Haliso, 2018). Conflicts reportedly became widespread in Africa in the 1990s after the Cold War (Ottoh, 2018). It is reported that more than six million deaths have been recorded since the end of the Cold War (Forsberg et al., 2005). These conflicts formed part of the bipolar struggle or were resolved by

way of interventions from former colonial powers, superpowers, or powerful neighbors (Engel and Porto, 2010).

According to Boulden (2003), Africa's struggle with long-standing, intractable conflicts is a testament to the international community's inability to deal with the situation. By assertion, "many if not most current conflicts stem from the failure of political, economic and social institutions and there is a need to pay sufficient attention to the grievances and perceived needs of significant groups in the population" (Ramsbotham, 2005: 122). The *Agenda for Peace*, in a number of proposals on mechanisms for dealing with conflict, came up with the suggestion that support should be given to regional organizations to alleviate the burden of the United Nations (UN) efforts to deal with conflict (Boulden, 2003).

However, a new pattern has emerged which sees conflicts erupting and being allowed to spiral and recur whilst appropriate interventions are sought (Engel and Porto, 2010). Although most conflicts in Africa are often termed as domestic, these conflicts are deeply embedded in regional and cross-border contexts (Engel and Porto, 2010). Taking into consideration such cases as Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and more recently Sudan (Darfur)/Chad, most conflicts in Africa have the tendency to spill over into neighboring countries or draw regional actors into what are understood as regional war-zones rather than simply domestic conflicts (Engel and Porto, 2010). This pattern leads to a much greater role for action and intervention at the regional level by affected neighboring countries and by regional organizations (Engel and Porto, 2010).

Conflict, according to Mitchell (2005), arises due to a mismatch between social values and the social structure of a particular society, including distribution of political, economic, and social goods. Conflict is "a universal feature of human society" (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 9) and

manifests itself in different ways including “conflict between religions, races, and ethnic groups” (Ottoh, 2018: 341). Conflict “becomes overt through the formation of conflict parties, which come to have, or are perceived to have, mutually incompatible goals” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 9). Ramsbotham et al. (2016: 9) posit that conflicts can be dynamic because they escalate and de-escalate, “and are constituted by a complex interplay of attitudes and behaviors that can assume a reality of their own.”

Violent conflicts are not unavoidable but can indeed be prevented. In order to do this, the potential sources of conflict need to be identified and analyzed with regard to early resolution, and steps taken to curb armed violence (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). Armed conflict denotes conflicts where two parties resort to the use of armed force (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). The result is a protracted cycle of destructive conflict and institutional deformation (Miall, 2004). Violent conflict, according to Bukari and Guuroh (2013), threatens human security, causes humanitarian tragedies (e.g., internal displacement and refugees), causes instability with regards to socio-economic activities, breaks social cohesion, and causes poverty. It is also argued that violent conflicts are an impediment to socio-economic development (Bukari and Guuroh, 2013). Some of the African states whose developmental agenda (social, economic, and political development) has been affected because of violent conflicts are Burundi, Sudan, Somalia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, just to name a few (Bukari and Guuroh, 2013). In Liberia for example, about 250,000 lives were lost and properties worth millions destroyed because of the violent conflicts that ensued (Bukari and Guuroh, 2013). These states have not only been affected with regard to social development but also in the area of politics and stability (Bukari and Guuroh, 2013).

According to a report on *The Typology of Conflict Prevention Approaches* by the Igarape Institute (2018: 22), most conflicts including those in Africa consist of different and

various/intertwined layers of drivers, “from the local to the sub-national to the national and the regional, as well as transnational factors.” The institute sought to “distinguish between underlying or root causes of conflict, and the more immediate disputes and escalation dynamics that can erupt in armed violence” (Igarape Institute, 2018: 21). According to Pettersson and Wallensteen (2018), in 2014, there were a record number of 40 active armed conflicts in 27 locations worldwide, representing an increase of 18% compared to the 34 conflicts reported in 2013. The Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) recorded a total of 670 non-state conflicts since 1989 and a yearly average of 37 active conflicts (Pettersson & Eck, 2018). In 2017, non-state conflicts increased to a new peak of 82 active non-state conflicts, with fatalities increasing concurrently (Pettersson & Eck, 2018).

More than half the countries in Africa and 20% of the population were affected by conflict as of 2000 (Ottoh, 2018). Africa saw a large increase in non-state conflicts in 2017 compared to 2016, from 35 to 50 and recorded an almost 50% increase of deaths in 2017, mainly due to the armed clashes in the Central African Republic (CAR) (Pettersson & Eck, 2018). It is noted that 13 out of 16 countries in the sub-region have been engaged in various levels of conflicts, from low-level intensity conflicts in Guinea and Nigeria to devastating civil wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Côte d’Ivoire (Kabia, 2015).

Kabia (2015) argues that, the armed conflicts experienced after colonialism with regard to the African sub-region created the underlying causes of conflicts in the sub-region, along with various triggering factors that transformed these conflicts into violent and protracted civil wars. The lumping of various ethnic groups together by the Europeans in the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885 resulted in armed conflicts among ethnic groups (Ottoh, 2018). This partition obviously never took into consideration the already existing ethnic and natural borders in Africa

(Kabia, 2015). Most conflicts in West Africa, Central Africa, the Great Lake region, and East Africa have been associated with recurrent violent clashes centering around ethnicity, struggle for control of natural resources, political power/authority, and identity.

In line with violent armed ethnic conflicts, violent armed conflict has been the grounds for the civil war in Nigeria since independence in 1960, drawn along clear ethnic lines and to a process of majority-minority ethnic competition which saw a total of 600,000 deaths (Wunsh, 2003). Furthermore, on April 6, 1994, the Hutu majority ethnic group set out to exterminate the Tutsi minority at a rate unprecedented in history with regard to the Rwanda conflict (Wunsh, 2003). The armed violence that ensued recorded between 800,000 and one million dead in 100 days; this was an average of 8,000 to 10,000 persons killed every day (Wrage, 2003). In the majority of cases, these armed conflicts are fought in the name of identity and claim to power mostly on the basis of labels (Kaldor, 2005).

In view of Africa's many challenges, these conflicts have contributed to worsening of the living conditions and stalled development (Ottoh, 2018). According to Iroanya (2018: 243), "instability has remained a major feature of African politics since the dawn of independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s." The dynamics and unpredictability of conflicts in the sub-regions has posed significant challenges to the practice of interventions (Kabia, 2015). Recurrence of violent conflicts is one of the difficult challenges that many African countries are confronting (Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

The governments of various nations and international organizations, such as the United Nations, insist on the importance of preventing the emergence/recurrence of violent conflicts (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). Although the onus of conflict prevention lies in the hands of the individual states, there are stakeholders such as the civil society organizations (CSOs) who are

called upon to contribute to conflict prevention (Aten and Abazaami, 2016). *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (2002) posits that, the CSOs play an important role by building the capacity with regard to conflict prevention. According to Aten and Abazaami (2016), CSOs have been internationally recognized as key actors in conflict prevention. CSOs engage and scrutinize the state power and legitimize the powers of the state authority when state actors are in conformity with rule of law (Seteolu & Okuneye, 2018).

Cooperation between states, civil society, and private sector entities is required in conflict prevention (Igarape Institute, 2018: 23). CSOs employ various strategies “to achieve immediate, long-term conflict prevention efforts” (Amao et al., 2014: 82). CSOs also engage in early warning, preventive diplomacy, interactive dialogue workshops, mediation, negotiation, networking, and cross-cultural understanding initiatives, as well as relationship building (Amao et al., 2014: 80). In West Africa, the emergence of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) brought with it an important aspect of ECOWAS engagement with civil society groups (Kabia, 2015). The West African Civil Society Forum was created in 2003 by ECOWAS in cooperation with the local and international NGOs to act as a platform for interaction between civil society and ECOWAS decision makers (Kabia, 2015). This people-centered approach enabled the civil society to play active roles in matters of regional peace, helping develop the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) alongside the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) towards enhancing the ECOWAS early warning capacity (Kabia, 2015).

2. Overview to the Bawku Conflict in Northern Ghana

This section focuses on the Bawku inter-ethnic conflict in the Northern part of Ghana and it is used as a case study to investigate the kinds of conflict-prevention measures implemented against potential armed conflict. First, a brief profile of Ghana as a peaceful country will be presented followed by a brief explanation of the Bawku inter-ethnic conflict. This will give an idea about the case of Bawku and what previous literature has found in relation to the conflict and its causes.

According to the Institute for Economic and Peace Global Peace Index 2019 Report, *Measuring Peace in a Complex World*, Ghana is ranked high, with a score of 1.796 and placed at number 44 in the world (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2019). According to Issifu (2017), Ghana is one of the few African states not to have experienced any large-scale armed conflict or civil war, such as the case of the Liberian civil war, Rwandan genocide, and many others. Since 1992, Ghana has successfully organized peaceful political elections and ensured peaceful transitions from one government to the next (Issifu, 2017). The peaceful organization of the general elections in 1992, 1996, 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012, and 2016 has labeled Ghana as one of the most peaceful countries in Africa, unlike her neighboring countries who experience violent conflicts on a national scale (Arthur, 2008; Issifu, 2017; Bukari, 2013a). In addition to that, the 2020 general election accordingly was successful with the incumbent president declared the winner according to a report by The Africa Report and The Economist Intelligence Unit.¹

¹ General information from the official website of The Africa Report titled: “Ghana elections 2020: Nana Akufo-Addo declared winner” posted on Wednesday 9 December, 2020 and written by Anne-Marie Bissada. The URL is <https://www.theafricareport.com/54276/ghana-elections-nana-akufo-addo-re-elected-for-second-term/>. See also report on website of The Economist Intelligence Unit, “Ghana Report”. The URL is <https://country.eiu.com/ghana>. (Accessed on January 23, 2021)

Ghana, according to Issifu (2017), is noted to have assisted in pivotal roles with regards to resolving violent armed conflicts and sustaining peace in some of the states in the West African sub-region. The Ghanaian Armed Forces (GAF) assisted and contributed to the peaceful settlement of the armed conflicts in Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Mali, and Côte d'Ivoire, among others (Issifu, 2017). Ghana, through the central government and the GAF, has also played pivotal roles in peacekeeping assignments in Rwanda, Lebanon, and Cambodia (Issifu, 2017). Ghana's duty within the African sub-region has led to hosting externally-displaced persons/refugees from Liberia, Sudan, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire who fled their respective countries because of armed conflicts (Issifu, 2017).

Conflicts periodically occur in some parts of Ghana due to reasons such as chieftaincy succession, struggle for ethnic identity, religion (between Christians and Muslims), land, or political elections, and these conflicts are associated with armed violence (Bukari, 2013a; Kendie et al., 2014). Land- and chieftaincy-related conflicts are rampant and can turn violent in Ghana (Kendie et al., 2014). The situation has caused a response from the government of the day to keep the peace by deploying security forces (military and police) to the affected areas to keep the peace and proceed to initiate conflict resolution through the National Peace Council (NPC), including prominent and eminent politicians in the country who all try to resolve the conflict through mediation and negotiation (Kendie et al., 2014). Most importantly, these conflicts have involved mediation efforts of the CSOs, because the state is often perceived as not being neutral by the conflict parties (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013). The CSOs have been very important in these conflicts with their resolution efforts to find amicable ways to restore peace (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013; Tsikata and Seini, 2004).

In northern Ghana around the town of Bawku in the Bawku Municipal District, a series of violent armed clashes erupted between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people in 2000, 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2009 (Awedoba, 2009; Bukari, 2013a). The conflict is deeply rooted in the area's traditional authority and antipathy between the two major ethnic groups (the Kusasi and Mampurusi), which can be traced back to the colonial era in the 1930s. The arrival of the British in the northern part of Ghana and their practice of indirect rule facilitated the interest of the Kusasi ethnic group in chieftaincy, per the narrations (Kendie et al., 2014; Bukari and Guuroh, 2013). The Kusasi were not a centralized authority in practicing chieftaincy until the benefits of chieftaincy, such as traditional power and control of agricultural land, became evident to them (Kendie et al., 2014; Bukari and Guuroh, 2013). During the period of violent armed clashes (e.g., 2000, 2001), the locals' properties were destroyed and the UCDP pegs the total number of deaths related to the Bawku conflict at 144 from 2000 to 2010, when the conflict was captured in the UCDP non-state conflict data.²

Although various stakeholders such as the national/local government, CSOs, and community-based organizations have worked towards resolving the conflict, it is challenging to determine whether the seeds of these violent armed conflicts have been completely removed, according to previous studies (Awedoba, 2009; Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014). The fact that armed violence recurred, despite various efforts to mitigate the threat, raises the question: Why does this conflict remain unresolved, even though it occurs within a relatively peaceful country? The Bawku conflict has not been declared over by the stakeholders, and they are still making efforts to find amicable ways to resolve it. In the current field of conflict resolution, prevention is important because once observable strife has been resolved, violent events will

² See information from the official website of the UCDP. The URL is <https://ucdp.uu.se/nonstate/5268>.

often reignite. Therefore, not only is it essential to stop armed conflicts, but also the root causes must be removed to prevent the recurrence of violence.

3. Objective of Research

Regarding the Bawku case, the objective of this study is to analyze the prevention measures implemented against recurrence of violent armed clashes in Bawku by stakeholders at different levels, namely, the state agencies (Track I), CSOs (Track II), and community representatives (Track III). This research focuses on the prevention measures implemented by each organization to argue the importance of the preferred measures in Bawku. When the prevention measures are clarified, this study will delve into stakeholders' roles, as well as their reflections concerning the prevention measures. This study will contribute to lessons that can be drawn from the case of Bawku toward augmenting the conflict-prevention literature in the Conflict-Resolution discipline.

4. Academic Originality

Ghana is not a popular country in the realm of conflict resolution, prevention, or peacebuilding, which means that the Bawku case is not studied by many scholars. Previous studies (e.g., Awedoba, 2009; Bukari, 2013a; and Kendie et al., 2014) have probed into the causes and effects of the Bawku conflict, but the prevention measures, with emphasis on the early warning systems and alert-call system initiated to curb potential armed clashes at the early stages, which were initiated by stakeholders, were neither mentioned nor analyzed from the perspective of conflict prevention. There are various important aspects with regard to conflict prevention, one being the early warning system. The early warning system, from a review of

previous literature, was not included or identified against violent armed clashes in 2000 or recurrent hostilities in 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2009. This study will depict the importance of the prevention measures but also place emphasis on the systems in place to detect escalation of potential armed violence (e.g., early warning system and alert call system).

The key novelty of this study, however, involves analyzing this case by applying the idea of direct and structural prevention in the realm of conflict resolution as major analytical keywords, which will be presented in chapters 4 and 5 of this study. Thus, this study depicts prevention measures such as alert call system, early warning system, and provision of security, and the results are expected to contribute to developing an argument that is focused on preventing recurrence of armed conflicts at an early stage. This study also discusses the roles of various stakeholders according to their classifications, namely state agencies, CSOs, and community representatives, with emphasis on the CSOs.

This study will clarify (i) which stakeholders fall under the respective Track, focusing on their prevention roles and measures and argue (ii) whether the activities of the stakeholders in Bawku corroborates the Track I-III concept. These ideas are discussed in relation to the role of stakeholders and the implementation of prevention measures, respectively. Once the expected roles for each stakeholder in each classification are explained in the context of conflict prevention in the realm of conflict resolution, this study will investigate the actual roles that they played, according to each category.

Although previous literature discussed stakeholders and their activities with regard to managing the conflict and implementing conflict-resolution attempts to end the conflict, the literature did not analyze the case from the perspective of prevention or mentioned measures implemented by the stakeholders at different levels to either detect signs of armed violence or

promote measures against armed clashes at the early stages. Furthermore, this study explores the details of cooperation among stakeholders at different levels. This study is original because it delves into the conditions upholding the successful cooperation involved with prevention and the factors that may impede this positive relationship.

5. Research Questions

This study's major research question asks what lessons can be drawn with regard to prevention measures implemented by stakeholders from the case of Bawku toward the conflict-prevention literature within the conflict resolution discipline. To assist in answering that, the specific research questions for this study include the following:

1. What kinds of prevention measures against armed violence have been implemented in the Bawku case?
2. Which of the prevention measures implemented in Bawku against armed conflict were direct or structural?
3. Which of the prevention measures against armed clashes were implemented by the state agencies, CSOs, or representatives of the community, and what were their roles?
4. Which issues were these prevention measures implemented against?
5. What are the reflections of the state agencies, CSOs, and community representatives about these prevention measures?
6. What are stakeholders' reflections about those who played a role in implementing each prevention measure?

7. What are the reflections of the state agencies, CSOs, and community representatives regarding necessary approaches for preventing potential recurrence of armed violence?

Since this study is based on field research data, it is expected that all of these arguments will contribute to enhancing the general understanding of prevention measures' reliability in curbing armed violence in relation to the Bawku conflict. Also it is expected that this study will provide updated knowledge with respect to this case.

6. Research Method

This study's field research findings were obtained in the Bawku Municipality in the Northern part of Ghana, specifically the Upper East region. This case study uses a qualitative methodology of investigation. The qualitative methodology used in this study is case study approach. The case study approach allows for specific concentration on a specific instance or situation to identify general information of facts and findings (Bell, 1999). The narrative inquiry approach was also employed in this study which allowed the respondents enumerate the facts for follow-up to be made. More specifically, in this study, there are detailed explanations, descriptions, and presentations of the kinds/types of prevention measures initiated by the stakeholders against violent armed clashes in Bawku. The prevention measures in this study are judged based on the stakeholders' reflections.

The idea of direct and structural prevention measures is applied to analyze: (i) what kinds of prevention measures against armed violence have been implemented in the Bawku case; (ii) which types/kinds of prevention measures implemented against recurrence of armed violence

were direct or structural; and (ii) which prevention measure was implemented by which kind of stakeholder. In the analysis, emphasis will be placed on the measures implemented to detect signs of potential escalation of violence (e.g., early warning system) and the roles of the state agencies (Track I), CSOs (Track II), and community (Track III) in that regard. This will highlight the importance of detecting and monitoring signs of potential violent clashes in Bawku.

7. Data Collection

This study utilizes both primary and secondary data; the latter entails information that is collected from academic literature such as journals, published articles, reports, and public media outlets, like newspapers and magazines, among others. Primary sources of data, however, first of all are collected from field research that has been conducted in Ghana (including Bawku) from August to October, 2019. Second, In September, 2020, the author conducted telephone interviews to compliment the fieldwork due to COVID-19 pandemic. Primary data was gathered with the aid of a research assistant lecturing at the University of Development Studies (UDS), and at the same time, he was a native of Tamale in Northern Ghana, with first-hand knowledge of Bawku town. The observation and participation of these respondents was conducted in a manner that that was appropriate to the situation.

There are multiple stakeholders involved in preventing violent conflict, including initiating measures to curb violence. Thus, key respondents were identified within the stakeholders through personal contacts. Primary sources of data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Stakeholders were grouped into the following three categories using the idea of Track I, II, and III actors: (i) state agencies (the NPC and the Bawku Police); (ii) CSOs (West Africa

Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA)); and (iii) community (*Bawku Naba* with his elders and Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) members and representatives of women and youth groups). The women and youth representatives in this study were from the Kusasi and Mamprusi divide. They are the recognized leadership of the respective groups and their remarks reflect the entire group they represent. They each independently gave their accounts; however, their accounts have been echoed by the BIEPC, which represents all the ethnic groups in Bawku.

The respondents from the state agencies and CSOs are all senior officers and officials occupying managerial positions in their respective organizations. In total, 44 key respondents were identified: Three officers from the state agencies – two senior officers from the NPC (Greater Accra and Northern region) and one senior officer from the Bawku Police Headquarters (Bawku) who has vast knowledge in the conflict; Two respondents from the CSOs – comprising one senior official each from WANEP (Northern region office) and BEWDA (located in Bawku) who have been involved with the conflict since 2001; and finally, 39 community representatives – comprising the *Bawku Naba* with his 15 elders, two senior members of the BIEPC who are knowledgeable with regard to the conflict, and 21 members of the Bawku community comprising two Mamprusi elders, two representatives each from the Mamprusi and Kusasi women groups, four Kusasi youth representatives and 11 Mamprusi youth representatives.

With respect to the Bawku conflict, the state remains the central focal point with regard to resolution of the conflict (Lund, 2003). It is in this regard that the government of Ghana, having identified that the country has potential for war, has established a state agency: the NPC, with nationwide offices (Kendie et al., 2014). The NPC (Track I) was established in 2009 by the government of Ghana and were tasked to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts towards

sustainable peace. The organization has been involved in the Bawku case since 2009. The Bawku Police (Track I), located in the heart of Bawku town, provide security and deploy officers to keep peace. Both the NPC and Bawku Police liaise and cooperate with all the major stakeholders mentioned below.

Two notable CSOs, WANEP and BEWDA (Track II), play important roles with regard to preventing armed clashes in Bawku. The WANEP and BEWDA have been involved in the Bawku case around the 2000s, attempting to resolve the conflict. WANEP is a regional NGO network, implementing and operationalizing peacebuilding programs in 15 countries in the African sub-region. WANEP has its head office in Accra and a regional office in northern Ghana. BEWDA is a local NGO in Bawku which restructured its strategic direction to include conflict- and peacebuilding-related issues in their thematic areas. By doing so in 2001, they became a stakeholder in the conflict, also helping to end the conflict. They cooperate closely with the NPC and BIEPC as well as WANEP.

The BIEPC (Track III) was formed in 2009 by the state as a local peace infrastructure to enable participation of the conflict parties themselves to come up with solutions and solve the conflict. The committee works under the auspices of the NPC, and cooperates with other NGOs towards sustaining the peace in Bawku.

8. Organization of the Study

The structure of this study comprises seven parts, as follows.

After the introduction, the first chapter presents the literature review. It begins by introducing the concept of conflict in contemporary times, ethnic conflict, conflict resolution and actors in that realm (i.e., Track I, II, and III actors) along with their roles. Further on, some CSO roles and

activities are depicted, focusing on West Africa to delineate the importance of the involvement of CSOs in conflict prevention in this study.

The second chapter presents a review of the subject matter of conflict prevention and how it fits into the realm of conflict resolution. Based on previous studies, conflict prevention, conflict management, and conflict resolution are defined in order to clarify their importance and effectiveness for this study. Also, some subcategories (e.g., direct prevention and structural prevention) are introduced with specific examples. Finally, the concept of early warning is defined and discussed, and some characteristics of this concept are highlighted to clarify its importance for detecting and monitoring escalation of violent conflicts, which is key to this study.

In the third chapter, general information about the case is provided, such as the Bawku's geography and people. The chieftaincy institution in the northern part of Ghana with emphasis on Bawku is described in this chapter. Further on, the historical causes of the conflict (the root cause in a series of violent conflicts) are also depicted. Also, the history of the claim for the chieftaincy in Bawku is presented. Next, an explanation is provided about how the violent events recurred in Bawku, despite various attempts to build peace and find a lasting solution to the conflict. The effects of the conflict on the socio-economic development in the area are explained. Finally in the chapter, the conflict resolution attempts made in the past to find a lasting solution to the conflict are presented. To confirm that previous studies did not analyze the Bawku case from the perspective of prevention, and focusing on the aspect of early warning, prior research is analyzed, including the timeframes involved and the specific measures that were taken (including who took them).

The fourth chapter presents an overview of conflict-prevention activities initiated by the NPC, Bawku Police, and BIEPC, respectively. The chapter shows the results of the field research with

regard to facts about the stakeholders' roles, prevention measures initiated, their reflections, and necessary approach for the future. Furthermore, the chapter provides an analysis, including the tendencies of the prevention measures and which organizations initiated them. The fourth chapter is related to the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh research questions.

The fifth chapter consists of the results of the field research with regard to facts about the prevention measures initiated by WANEP and BEWDA against armed violence in Bawku. The chapter presents details of the CSOs' roles, their reflections, and necessary approaches for the future. Finally, the chapter presents an analysis, including the characteristics and tendencies of the prevention measures that were implemented in the Bawku case and the organizations that initiated them. The fifth chapter also, is related to the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh research questions.

A final conclusion is drawn in light of the research objectives. The analyses from the previous chapters are summarized, and the answers to the major question and seven research questions are confirmed. The concluding section argues for the importance of prevention measures initiated against recurrence of armed violence in Bawku. It presents a complete summary of this study including the introduction, method, and the concept of conflict prevention within the realm of conflict resolution. The conclusion also highlights some key issues that are relevant with regard to the prevention measures and specifically CSOs' roles in preventing armed violence.

Chapter 1: Conflict Resolution and Its Actors

This chapter will first review literature to examine the terms conflict and violent conflict, as well as explaining how conflicts in contemporary times are viewed and the characteristics associated with these conflicts. This study will use the terms armed conflict and violent conflict interchangeably, but more frequently will refer to violent conflict. Further on in this chapter, explanations of the nature of contemporary conflicts are depicted. Next, the chapter explains the roles of actors involved in conflict resolution. The roles of civil society organizations (CSOs) in conflict prevention are outlined to show their importance in this study.

1.1. The Concepts of Conflict and Ethnic Conflict

Since conflicts have been established to be part of human nature, this section will talk about their transformation to violence and how the ethnic dimension plays a part in contributing to armed violence.

Conflict is a universal feature attributed to human society and seen as “the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 34). Conflict exists because of “the existence of incompatible goals or the means to achieving these goals between individuals or identifiable groups” (Aten and Abazaami, 2016: 17). Contemporary conflict refers to the prevailing pattern of violent conflicts (Miall et al., 1999) and a majority of the contemporary conflicts are domestic or intrastate conflict, fighting over government, which often results in conflicts being fought over ethnic lines of that particular society (Basedau, 2011). The causes of conflicts stem from incompatibility of goals. (Reimann, 2004).

Violent or deadly conflict is synonymous with armed conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). It is also argued that violent conflict “includes one-sided violence such as genocide against unarmed civilians and violence associated with domestic and international criminality” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 34). With regard to the term violence, it consists of “actions, words, attitudes, structures or systems that cause physical, psychological, social or environmental damage and/or prevent [people] from reaching their full human potential” (Fisher et al., 2000: 4). It is stated by Buakari (2013a) that violent conflicts pose threats to peace, stability, and social and economic activities. He went further to explain that violent conflict is one major impediment to socio-economic development, reducing economic growth and prosperity because of its tendency to spill over to neighboring borders (Bukari, 2013a).

If the groups in a conflict choose suppression and armed violence as their strategies, a conflict may become destructive (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). Destructive conflicts cause damage to the conflict actors and civilians, and destroy the economic and social order of the state (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). They could also result in a more dependent and exploitative pattern of development leading to the further denial of basic needs (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). Some scholars in the peace and conflict research field have long been preoccupied with uncovering the sources of what were variously termed deep-rooted conflicts, and/or intractable conflicts, (Ramsbotham, 2005).

Major changes that are large-scale in nature, sudden changes which takes place abruptly, unexpected changes without any indication, rapid changes that take place within a short time, and irreversible changes that cannot return to the status quo have a telling effect on the protracted nature of a conflict and also determine if the conflict will result in adverse effects or in moving towards peace (Mitchell, 2005). These changes can range from economic disparity, deprivation,

and discontentment, among others, all of which can determine the dynamics of a conflict resulting in armed violence (Mitchell, 2005). The violent nature of conflict is due to the variables within each type of setting: International, intra-national, and/or local (Mitchell, 2004).

It is noted that ethnic conflicts can be violent or sometimes peaceful (Basedau, 2011). The problem of ethnic conflicts has stirred up debates in academia for decades in respect to what can be done to resolve and/or avoid such conflicts (Basedau, 2011). Ethnicity is said to be any conflict involving at least two ethnic groups that are opposed with regard to incompatibility in access “to power and resources or more symbolic incompatibilities such as discourses on history” (Basedau, 2011: 6). In other words, “an ethnic conflict is a violent conflict between ethnic groups or between an ethnic group and government forces that consist of one or more different ethnic group” (Byman, 2002: 5). Some of the ethnic conflicts that have been associated with armed violence which ended up in bloodshed (Acheampong, 2010).

Ethnicity is an important factor in explaining conflicts and wars in Africa (Ottoh, 2018). For example, in the Central African Republic (CAR), a new pattern of intra-Muslim violence sprang up between the ex-Seleka alliance and Muslim Fulani people. After an unsuccessful attempt to unite the mainly-Muslim groups that used to be part of the ex-Seleka alliance, these mainly-Muslim groups attacked groups based among the mainly-Muslim Fulani people, asserting they were foreigners (Pettersson and Eck, 2018). In the same vein, there was widespread violence pitting Muslims against Christians, and this led to an increasing number of non-state conflicts (Pettersson and Eck, 2018). Yacob-Haliso (2018) argues that ethnic identities resulted in conflict manifesting into many consequences and displacement. The ethnic diversity as asserted by Basedau (2011) may likely be associated with violent conflict because of socio-psychological

inter-group dynamics. He further states that “a positive in-group identity is necessarily associated with a more negative perception of the out-group” (Basedau, 2011: 6).

1.2. Conflict Resolution and Its Actors

The goal of conflict resolution – which will be further discussed in the next chapter – is to seek the root cause of the conflict and transform the conflict structure, making the conflict constructive rather than destructive. As mentioned in the previous section, conflicts involve parties pursuing incompatible goals and fighting each other. And, because the incompatibility emerges within a defined relationship, resolving conflict will require transforming the existing relationship between the parties in conflict that has been marred (Aten and Abazaami, 2016).

Miall (2004: 12), presenting his argument on the general approach to conflict resolution by stakeholders, states that conflict resolution involves “varied actors including state, inter-governmental organizations, development and humanitarian organizations, international and national non-governmental organizations in conflict resolution fields and groups/parties to the conflict who all aim to find a lasting peaceful end to the conflict.” Conflict resolution “implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and transformed” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 34). The entry of a third party changes the conflict structure and enables communication, dialogue or other approaches that allow the third party to reflect back the opinions, attitudes, and behavior of the conflict actors (Miall et al., 1999). Conflict resolution involves the intervention by third parties, unofficially working with parties in the conflict aiming at new thinking and new relationships (Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

To reach a peaceful resolution, there is a need to disengage parties' entrenched positions regarding their interests and wants (Miall, 2004). Recommendations are that parties must be willing to clear up misunderstandings through communication (Mitchell, 2004). There has to be a critical look into the needs and interests of both parties to identify the incompatibilities fueling the conflict (Mitchell, 2004). New ideas have to be introduced that will carry forward a long way toward sustaining peace (Mitchell, 2004). Conflict resolution has been perceived as assisting protagonists who see their situation as "zero-sum (Self's gain is Other's loss) to re-perceive it as a non-zero-sum conflict (in which both may gain or both may lose), and then to assist parties to move in the positive sum direction" (Miall et al., 1999: 13). It is argued by Miall et al. (1999: 11) that "conflict resolution itself is changing and developing, as it must, to deal with the changing nature of conflict."

Miall (2004) posits that the aim of conflict resolution is to develop processes that appear to be acceptable to the parties in a dispute and effective in resolving the conflict. The challenge has always been to search for new possible conflict-resolution approaches and mechanisms that are effectual both at the local and national levels (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). It is the primary responsibility of the affected state to respond to and resolve conflicts (Miall et al., 1999). Apart from the state, it is noted that three types of actors play an enhanced role in the resolution of a conflict: the United Nations (UN), regional organizations, and NGOs (Miall et al., 1999). The UN has become an instrument through which the international community attempt to defuse crises and de-escalate disputes (Miall et al., 1999). UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in the Secretary General's Report titled *Agenda for Peace* proposed to the UN that the organization should be involved in conflict resolution in four categories – ranging from the

earliest stage of conflict prevention to the stage of post-conflict reconstruction – thus focusing on: prevention, peace-keeping, peace-making, and post-conflict peacebuilding.

Regional organizations make up the second tier of external actors in conflict resolution (Miall et al., 1999; Engel and Porto, 2010). According to Engel and Porto (2010), regional organizations are often better than multilateral efforts at addressing conflict prevention as well as conflict reconstruction. It became mandatory for the Organization for African Unity (OAU) to reinvent, reposition, and restructure itself, due to the extreme form of violence in Somalia and Rwanda (Engel and Porto, 2010). The OAU implemented the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution (MCPMR) to provide assistance to states affected by conflict (Miall et al., 1999). The reshaping of the OAU into the African Union (AU) was intended to address African conflicts through African solutions and was “supported by the international community, in particular Western powers” (Engel and Porto, 2010: 19). Other bodies with relevant roles include the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which has had a role in dispute resolution in West Africa, and the South African Development Community (SADC), which has accepted a regional peacekeeping role (Miall et al., 1999). NGOs involved with conflict resolution increased rapidly in the 1980s, as development agencies, aid donors, and governments became willing to fund their conflict-resolution activities (Miall et al., 1999).

1.2.1 Track I Actors

Mitchell (2005) posits that, with regard to conflict resolution, there is involvement of high-powered practitioners and international organizations, with other most-influential actors needed. These various actors (e.g., state officials and political actors) play roles that relate directly to the conflict parties, and he describes those actors as Track I actors who implement official and

formal approaches (Miall, 2004). In a similar vein, the roles of state officials (e.g., Ministers) and actors – such as political, military, or representatives of conflict-party leaders act as mediators – are goal- and outcome-oriented, with strategies such as arbitration, mediation, non-coercive measures like facilitation, and negotiation aimed at conflict resolution (Reimann, 2004).

According to the *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (2002), then Secretary-General Kofi Annan stated that conflict prevention is the primary responsibility of states, considering their full authority and control. The primary responsibility for responding to contemporary conflict no doubt lies within the affected states. According to Fisher et al. (2000), the role the local government and security forces play to prevent escalation of conflict into violence is very important (Fisher et al., 2000). Reimann (2004), Miall (2004), Mitchell (2005) corroborate the conclusion by Fisher et al. (2000); thus, in the Conflict-Resolution discipline, the state and its actors – such as political leaders, military, and/or representatives of conflict-party leaders – play roles as mediators and/or negotiators toward curbing conflicts. The state has the authority to govern and to use force whenever necessary to regulate the society, protect citizens, and provide collective goods (Woodhouse et al., 2015). The state, by definition, is an institution which is required with its influence to meet the needs of its people, and is labeled as an organized and autonomous body with full authority and control (Holton, 1992).

1.2.2. Track II Actors

Informal and non-official efforts by nongovernmental actors, from private individuals and professionals to local NGOs, engage in process-oriented and use non-coercive measures – which involve problem solving, facilitation, and consultation to try and end the conflict (Reimann, 2004). They are referred to as Track II actors (Reimann, 2004). Aside from conflict prevention

being the state's responsibility, the *Prevention of Armed Conflict* (2002) also posits that the CSOs also play an important role by building the capacity in that regard.

According to Anheier et al. (2001: 17), a civil society organization “is the sphere of ideas, values, institutions, organizations, networks, and individuals located between the family, the state, and the market and operating beyond the confines of national societies, politics, and economies.” Amao et al. (2014) state that CSOs are not only as active from outside the state or a formal political arena, but as agents that can also be drawn on during a political crisis, particularly as agents of conflict prevention or resolution.” CSOs are “employed to refer to a ‘third system’ of agents, namely, privately organized citizens as distinguished from government or profit seeking actors” (Price, 2005: 361). According to Kabia (2015), CSOs are increasingly playing active roles in ensuring conflicts are prevented and managed. A wide range of people – such as scientists, technical experts, human rights activists, and actors in conflicts – depend on CSOs for their legitimacy and reputation as “providers of objective expertise as neutral third parties whose information and claims can be trusted” (Price, 2005: 368; Seteolu and Okuneye, 2018).

Amao et al. (2014: 79) identify the following four principal characteristics of CSOs:

- (i) its ability to maintain absolute autonomy from both social interests and the state;
- (ii) its capacity for collective action and promotion of the interests and passions of the broader society;
- (iii) its being devoid of all intensions to seize power; and
- (iv) its ability to act in concord with civil rules through the conveyance of mutual respect.

CSO is used as “an umbrella concept that includes NGOs, social movements, and grass-roots organizations” (Anheier et al., 2001: 195). NGOs, on the other hand, are defined as professional organizations, sometimes with formal memberships, and often dependent on a few donors, including governments (Anheier et al., 2001). According to Anheier et al. (2001), CSOs engage in dialogue and negotiation with each other and with various governmental actors, national and local, as well as the business world. CSOs such as Oxfam, Campaign for Good Governance (Sierra Leone), and CEDE (Liberia) have been advocating against proliferation and use of illegal arms in West Africa (Aten & Abaazami, 2016). Some other activities related to CSOs are as follows: supporting/sustaining local groups and social movements, building peace, engaging in early warning, conducting preventive diplomacy, networking, promoting cross-cultural understanding initiatives, building relationships, strengthening capacity, and training (Reimann, 2004; Miall, 2004; Mitchell, 2005; Amao et al., 2014).

In general, CSOs employ a varied number of approaches to achieve immediate and long-term conflict-prevention efforts (Amao et al., 2014). In their application of long-term conflict-prevention approaches in the community, CSOs are noted to apply interactive peace dialogues amongst stakeholders, awareness raising, advocacy, and problem-solving workshops (Amao et al., 2014). In terms of their contribution to knowledge and information about prevention, CSOs also collect data, engage in data analyses and dissemination, and develop peace-and-conflict indicators (Amao et al., 2014). As repositories of information, they are key actors to provide early warning information (Amao et al., 2014). CSOs, according to Amao et al. (2014), play an important role not only in continental and regional early warning and response systems, but also at the national level. CSOs have always been called upon to contribute to conflict prevention and

have responded positively with a number of conflict-prevention measures at both national and community levels (Aten & Abaazami, 2016).

1.2.3. Track III Actors

In conflict resolution, Track III actors (e.g., grass-roots organizations at the community level) ensure that all processes and structure-oriented initiatives undertaken at the grassroots level involve capacity building, human-rights work, development, and grassroots training (Reimann, 2004). The third-parties/actors must consider efficient approaches or measures, and their role changes the dynamics of the conflict (Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

Daekin (2001: 59) defines community as that which “includes those based on kinship and geographical neighborhoods (‘territorial communities’), those based on common occupations, religions or skills (‘communities of interest’) and those formed round other attachments.” In the community, members seek a kind of commitment and retain stronger linkages across time and space (Daekin, 2001; Kaviraj & Khilnani, 2001). Community members are noted to generate a lot of commitment towards a collective goal (Kaviraj & Khilnani 2001). The activity of the community in conflict resolution consists of capacity building, development, and grassroots training (Reimann, 2004; Miall, 2004; Mitchell, 2005). To prevent escalation of conflict into armed violence, it is important to consider initiatives that foster a cohesive representation of all the ethnic or clan groups to find ways to deal with the issue (Fisher et al., 2000).

1.3. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to understand the term conflict and highlight the importance of actors, including Track I, II, and III actors, involved in resolving armed conflicts. This chapter explained that addressing contemporary conflicts (i.e., violent conflicts) requires conflict-resolution approaches and the participation of Track I, II, and III actors involved in playing different roles at different stages resolving these conflicts through the implementation of various measures such as negotiation and other peacebuilding mechanisms. Thus this chapter gives an understanding into the roles of the stakeholders (i.e., Track I, II, and III actors) mentioned in this study towards preventing armed conflicts and finding amicable ways to end them. The next chapter will examine the term conflict prevention.

Chapter 2: Conflict Prevention and Early Warning System

This chapter will review the literature to examine terms such as conflict prevention and early warning. Explanations of some terminology within the conflict resolution discipline – such as conflict management and conflict prevention – are outlined to give a clear picture of this study’s scope. Much emphasis is placed on conflict prevention, which is the key to this study. Discussions on the two categories of conflict prevention namely direct and structural prevention and some examples are included. Early warning systems, an important aspect of conflict prevention, are used to detect and monitor signs of potential violence. Explanations are given on early warning and its characteristics are also explained in this chapter to support the argument of its importance within the conflict prevention realm and in the broader sense of conflict resolution, which are both related to this study.

2.1. Conflict Resolution and Conflict Management

The discipline of conflict resolution has always been controversial in that it draws “persistent fire from critics at different points along the political and intellectual spectrum” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 7). A divide within the conflict resolution is seen between conflict resolution and conflict management.

Conflict resolution concerns how parties can move from zero-sum, destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum, constructive outcomes (Miall 2004). Put differently, conflicts need to be reframed in positions towards a win-win outcome. Conflict resolution involves processes that recognize the probable need for far-reaching structural changes and changes in relationships as part of any durable solution (Mitchell, 2004). Conflict resolution, according to Hwedie and

Rankopo (2012), is a healing process which requires all the stakeholders to contribute positive energy towards a solution. In short, a conflict resolution approach aims to address “the causes of conflict and seeks to build new and lasting relationship between hostile groups” (Fisher et al., 2000: 7).

From the stance of conflict management, Miall (2004) asserts that conflicts cannot be solved, but interventions can be found to settle them through well-known actors who have the means (power and resources) to coerce the parties to resolve their differences. According to Miall (2004: 3), conflict management is “the art of appropriate intervention to achieve political settlements, particularly by those powerful actors having the power and resources to bring pressure on the conflicting parties in order to induce them to settle.” Conflict management is also described as the process of designing appropriate institutions to guide the inevitable conflict into proper channels (Miall, 2004). Conflict management understands that a conflict is ineradicable due to various differences in values and interests between the protagonists (Miall, 2004). “Conflict management aims to limit and avoid future violence by promoting positive behavioral changes in the parties involved” (Fisher et al., 2000: 7).

Reimann (2004) presents some examples of conflict management strategies, such as power mediation, and conflict resolution strategies, exemplified by facilitation or dialogue workshops. The quality and quantity of these combined methods are highly dependent on the conflict stage within which they are employed (Reimann, 2004).

In sum, conflict management is ensuring conflicts are managed and do not become violent, while conflict resolution addresses the deep-rooted sources/causes of conflicts and involves third parties from state agencies, CSOs, and the communities (Miall et al., 1999). Hwedie and Rankopo (2012) use slightly different terms to elaborate on this point by using the terms

preventive and corrective. The preventive goal of conflict resolution, according to Hwedie and Rankopo (2012), consists of approaches that aim to increase the level of peaceful co-existence by convincing individuals and groups in the conflict to choose to negotiate on issues rather than disagree. Corrective goals, on the other hand, deal with measures initiated to resolve conflicts that are already in existence “with less violence and more understanding of human nature” (Hwedie and Rankopo, 2012). Preventive seems to be in line with conflict management, while corrective seems to be in line with conflict resolution. Put differently, conflict management can be perceived as a first step toward conflict resolution.

The discipline of conflict resolution – divided between conflict resolution and conflict management camps – is regarded as a defined specialist field and has come of age in the post-Cold-War era in war-torn regions such as African continent, as humanitarian agencies and development workers saw the need to factor in conflict as an integral part of their activities (Miall et al., 1999). It is within this context that the term conflict prevention came to be used by both practitioners and researchers, and this is because “[p]reventing violent conflict has been a central purpose of conflict resolution” (Ramsbotham et al. 2016: 144).

2.2. Conflict Prevention

In the past two decades, some developing countries have experienced violent armed conflicts, terrorism, political instability, political uprisings, and political insurgencies (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). This situation has brought the need to implement/initiate conflict-prevention measures because of the security challenges and huge costs to the nations involved (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). Scarce resources which otherwise would be used for socio-economic development in

these conflict-affected countries are channeled into peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). Conflict prevention has been the preferred approach in recent decades because its benefits far outweigh those of armed violence (Yelyang, 2016). It is estimated that the impact of containing/dealing with violence in 2012 was \$9.46 trillion, which represented 11% of the Gross World Product (Aten & Abazaami, 2016).

The UN and World Bank report *Pathways to Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict* (2017: 18) posits that “preventing recurrence of violent conflict is paramount.” The general consensus seems to be not only that conflict prevention will lead to the prevention of violent recurrences, but also that it may be easier to tackle conflict at the initial stages before escalation into violence (Aten & Abazaami). Preventing violent conflict was declared by the UN Secretary-General to be a “central goal for the international community in the new millennium” and has become a widely accepted nexus in addressing conflicts in contemporary times (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 7). Furthermore, the cost involved in prevention is lesser compared to that of post-conflict reconstruction (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). Conflict prevention has been a major dominant issue in the realm of peace and international security since the end of the Cold War (Aten & Abazaami, 2016).

Many definitions have been given to prevention, with scholars developing different ways of understanding the concept and approaching it from different angles. The fundamental point to be mentioned here is the definition of the term conflict prevention. Conflict prevention, according to Fisher et al. (2000: 7), “aims to prevent the outbreak of violent conflict.” Similarly, in a similar vein, conflict prevention by Zartman (2015: 6) denotes “measures to inhibit actions that can lead to deadly violence.” From the definition of conflict prevention provided by the authors (i.e.,

Fisher et al., 2000; Zartman, 2015), the main thrust of conflict prevention in this study, as it is deduced, is to ensure violent conflicts are curbed at any stage of a conflict.

Conflict prevention requires (i) understanding the conflict actors, (ii) identifying mechanisms, clues/signals of escalation and structures available, as well as new ones needed to solve specific issues, and (iii) thinking creatively about new ways to act (Fisher et al., 2000). Some factors to be considered to prevent a situation from becoming violent include the following: (i) investigating incidents to clarify who is involved and what happened; (ii) controlling rumors to correct misunderstandings and malicious reports; (iii) facilitating dialogue with people on each side; (iv) shuttling between opposing sides; and (v) building confidence and trust between opposing sides (Fisher et al., 2000).

Globally, governments and international organizations such as UN and CSOs have all set the agenda for prevention of armed conflicts and emerging conflicts, managing existing ones to avoid recurrences, and spending hugely on post-conflict reconstruction (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). While Chapter VII, Article 33.1 of the UN Charter clearly projects the importance of prevention (Zartman, 2015), conflict prevention has become an important concept in ensuring that violence and destruction, which is mostly associated with conflicts, does not spiral or recur. The recognition by states and the international community of the importance of conflict prevention is partly a reaction to the events that took place in Rwanda and Srebrenica during the 1990s, a realization that it would be easier to tackle conflicts earlier before they reach the point of armed conflict or mass violence (Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

2.3. Direct and Structural Prevention

There are two categories of prevention, namely direct and structural prevention. Direct prevention (also referred to as operational or light prevention) (Ramsbotham et al., 2016; Igarape Institute, 2018) deals with measures that are “aimed at preventing short-term, often imminent, escalation of a potential conflict” (Swanstrom and Weissman, 2005: 19). Direct prevention consists of measures such as mediation, monitoring, confidence building, or negotiation by a trust-building, respected third party; conciliation; and peacemaking efforts by local actors, among others (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). Mediation involves the intervention of a third party and consists of a voluntary process where the parties retain control over the outcome (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). According to Fisher et al., (2000), negotiation could be referred to as a structural process to engage in dialogue between the opposing sides, in most cases takes place with only the opposing without a third party and takes place either in the early stage of the conflict, when communication channels are broken between then the sides have not yet been broken down or the later stages when attempting to reach an agreement.

Further measures regarding operational prevention according to the Igarape Institute (2018: 23) include “the early warning system and early response, and facilitation, preventive diplomacy and good offices.” According to Fisher et al., (2000), negotiation could be referred to as a structural process to engage in dialogue between the opposing sides, in most cases taking place with only the two opposing parties (without a third party) and either in the early stage of the conflict, when communication channels are blocked between the sides but have not yet completely broken down, or in the later stages when attempting to reach an agreement. These actions are not solely the responsibility of the state (Track I); CSOs (Track II) and the

community (Track III) also have a role to play (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). When conflicts are close to violence, “direct prevention comes into play” (Ramsbotham et al., 2016: 157), and the reliance on timely messages from people in areas of conflict has transformed the scope of early warning and early response, which is vital when a conflict is about to escalate.

In contrast, structural prevention (also referred to as deep prevention) focuses “on more long-term measures that address the underlying causes of a potential conflict along with potentially escalating and triggering factors” (Swanstrom and Weissman, 2005: 19; Igarape Institute, 2018). Increased political participation, sustainable economic development, addressing discrimination, tackling human rights abuses, addressing horizontal inequalities, alleviating poverty, tackling corruption, and creating opportunities for adequate political and economic inclusiveness are some examples of structural prevention mechanisms (Swanstrom & Weissman, 2005; Ramsbotham et al., 2016). Structural prevention measures also include natural resource management, sustainable development, policies for inclusive growth, rule of law, strong institutions, and social policies (Igarape Institute, 2018). Implementing the operational/direct and structural prevention measures requires the collaboration of a wide variety of stakeholders (Igarape Institute, 2018). Cooperation among states, civil society, and private sector entities is required in conflict prevention (Igarape Institute, 2018: 23).

2.4. The Early Warning System and Conflict Prevention

Early warning is one of the many tools for conflict prevention. According to Amao et al. (2014: 80), early warning system “refers to any initiative focused on the systematic collection of data, its analysis and/or the formulation of recommendations, including risk assessment and

information sharing; regardless of whether the topic is quantitative, qualitative or both.” Founders of the conflict-resolution discipline (e.g., Kenneth Boulding, Johan Galtung, and Morton Deutsch) envisaged developing a conflict early warning system that includes: (i) identifying the type and location of the conflicts that could become violent and (ii) monitoring and assessing progress with a view to assessing proximity to violence (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). These founders, however, were not able to realize it due to heightened tension between the US and former Soviet Union during the Cold War. This development can be explained using terminologies such as first, second, and third generation of early warning systems:

The first generation Early Warning systems had their entire Early Warning mechanism (including conflict monitoring) based outside the conflict region (namely, in the West). The second generation amended this approach by basing the monitoring mechanism in the conflict zones, namely by having the field monitors [...] gather primary event data. The analysis, however, still remained conducted outside the conflict region. The third generation Early Warning systems are entirely located in the conflict regions. (Matveeva, 2006 cited in Amao et al., 2014: 81)

Quantitative and qualitative methods are known to be the two major ways of categorizing an early warning system, since the 1950s (Amao et al., 2014). The quantitative methods are related to statistical analysis (Ramsbotham et al., 2016)³; they involve the use of structural indicators

³ See Report by Palli, Sofia. 2017. *Early Warning Systems as a Conflict Prevention Tool: Recommendations for the Arab Region*. United Nations-Beirut URL is https://www.unescwa.org/sites/www.unescwa.org/files/page_attachments/early_warning_systems_as_a_conflict_prevention_tool.pdf

variables to analyze potential conflicts. In contrast, the qualitative method for early warning indicators includes intelligence information, diplomatic reports, economic and security shocks, academic/scholarly analyses, and media reports (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). There has also come to be a reliance on mobile-phone data, crowd sourcing, and messages from people in areas of conflict, and all these have transformed the scope of early warning and early response (Ramsbotham et al., 2016).

The Continental Early Warning system (CEWS) was established in 2006 by the AU as part of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) to act as an observation and monitoring center to disseminate information gathered to the Peace and Security Council to alert them about potential conflicts and threats to the peace and security in Africa and equally make some recommendations on actions to be taken (Amao et al., 2014). The West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) set the stage for the provision of early warning signals on the African continent, “with a civil society-based initiative called the Warning and Response Network (WARN) expected to operate in 12 of the 15 member countries of the ECOWAS” (Amao et al., 2014: 80). The ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) is known to be operating in partnership with WANEP and ECOWAS, and this partnership has improved early warning within West Africa (Amao et al., 2014).

The concept of early warning is seen in Africa as a response to the recurrent violent crises (Amao et al., 2014). Some characteristics of the early warning system include the following: (i) ability to identify a potential armed conflict at an early stage, (ii) initiation of prevention measures to curb or resolve the conflict situation, (iii) estimation of the magnitude and timing of the potential conflicts, (iv) analysis of the nature of the conflict, and (v) cooperation with stakeholders to analyze warning signs for bilateral consultations (Amao et al., 2014).

It is also argued that, early warning signals can provide good indications of where crises are more likely (Clarke, 2005). In short, the first point in identifying a conflict that is about to erupt is through an early warning system which needs to be in place for stakeholders to act rapidly to avoid armed violence (Ramsbotham et al., 2016). The most distinguishing characteristics of the early warning system are its ability to detect and monitor a perceived potential armed conflict at a very latent stage and take steps to reduce, resolve or transform the conflict situation into a new peaceful order (Amao et al., 2014). The system is seen as a channel to alert the recognized authorities (e.g., individual states, regional organizations like the AU) to a potential threat in order to implement prevention measures and restore peace at an early stage (Amao et al., 2014). Early warning not only includes gathering data, but also evaluates the conflict situation with a view to developing a mechanism/measure to prevent conflict (Amao et al., 2014). The most important argument for the early warning system is the purpose it serves as a potential warning medium within conflict areas (Amao et al., 2014). Early warning provides information in a form that is easily digested by conflict stakeholders, serving as a first step in planning conflict prevention (Clarke, 2005).

2.5. Conflict Prevention in West Africa

Intrastate-armed conflicts characterized much of West Africa in the 1990s, such as in Liberia and Sierra Leone (Aggad & Miyandazi, 2017). In response to these conflict situations there has been a major expansion in research and extensive practical effort to reduce violent conflict (Fisher et al., 2000). These experiences and the cost incurred in managing crises have led to a re-focusing on preventing violent conflict, rather than waiting to respond after armed violence has

already escalated (Clarke, 2005). This concept is not entirely new, although the strong focus on it only emerged at the end of the twentieth century.⁴ The spate of armed conflicts in West Africa also required regional intervention to deal with the issue, and member states in Africa signed and adopted the Protocol for the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, and Resolution, which tackles all aspects of conflicts (Aggad & Miyandazi, 2017).

The ECOWAS in 2008 initiated the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework towards promoting peace and security in the West-African Sub-region (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). ECOWAS, with regard to the conflict prevention framework, has involved the CSOs to play roles in the sustenance of peace and security in member states (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). The Conflict Prevention Framework of the ECOWAS also seeks to involve CSOs with regard to conflict prevention, especially in areas where the individual states cannot reach (Aten & Abazaami, 2016).

According to Engel and Porto (2010: 2), the legal-institutional framework adopted in the form of the Constitutive Act of the AU brought expansion to the sources of authority of the organization and created “a civil society pillar, the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOC), whose objective is to forge strong partnership between Governments and all segments of African civil society.” The AU engaged in conflict management and conflict resolution, from conflict prevention and peacebuilding in addition to peacekeeping (Engel and Porto, 2010). The Protocol with regards to Peace and Security in Africa by the African Union (AU) has recognized conflict prevention is vital to the promotion of peace and stability in Africa (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). The AU after its transformation from the OAU brought with it a

⁴ General information from the website of Melander, E & C. Pigache. Conflict Prevention: Concepts and Challenges. Online https://www.bundesheer.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/konfliktpraev_02_concept-challenges_e_melander_c_pigache_10.pdf (Accessed on December 18, 2020)

change in focus and strategic direction with regard to the institution's peace-and-security agenda, moving from conflict management to conflict prevention (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). This change in focus and strategic direction presented new challenges for the institution (AU), hence the involvement of CSOs and other stakeholders to realize the agenda in conflict prevention (Aten & Abazaami, 2016).

The AU in 1993 established the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution against conflicts in Africa (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). In the Peace and Security Council (PSC) protocol of the AU, Article 20 of the regulations of the council encourages the participation of CSOs in the promotion of peace, security, and stability in Africa (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). Similarly, the AU also in its Protocol (i.e., Peace and Security) recognized and involved CSOs in the domain of peace and security (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). Furthermore, article 20 of the Peace and Security Protocol of the AU makes reference to the CSOs' role in participating in and discussing solutions with regard to the conflict (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). AU and ECOWAS called for the inclusion and participation of CSOs in the agenda for political stability, especially at the local level (Aten & Abazaami, 2016). Apart from playing roles in conflict prevention, CSOs also play a number of roles in peacebuilding towards constructing a positive relationship between feuding sides, healing wounds, empowering moral agency, and enhancing equity and justice in the society, among others (Issifu, 2017).

Due to the occurrences of armed conflicts across some states in Africa in the 1990s, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) developed the Protocol relating to the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security, among others, to deal with armed conflicts in the sub-region (Aggad & Miyandazi, 2017). ECOWAS – from experience in dealing with armed conflicts initially through conflict

management – considered an approach to prevent conflicts from emerging by developing a strategy called the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework (ECPF) in 2008 (Aggad & Miyandazi, 2017). Further on, the ECPF, according to Kabia (2015), aimed to provide an understanding into conflict prevention, provide the capacity for conflict prevention in the sub-region through ECOWAS, and inculcate existing initiatives and mechanisms within ECOWAS institutions geared towards conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The ECPF employed both direct and structural means of preventing conflicts across the sub-region and sought to facilitate conflict-prevention mechanisms in the sub-region (Aggad & Miyandazi, 2017).

2.6. Conclusion

The chapter looked at the definitions of the various concepts including that of conflict prevention. The purpose of this chapter was to understand the meaning of conflict resolution and highlight the importance of conflict prevention. Most importantly, curbing armed clashes at the early stage requires conflict actors to implement conflict-prevention measures. The concept of an early warning system explained in this chapter was also to clarify its essence and importance to conflict prevention and its relevance to this study. This chapter has been able to show the importance of these concepts to argue that with regard to preventing violent conflict, both short-term and long-term approaches have to be considered.

The next chapter (chapter three) will provide general information about the case of Bawku conflict.

Chapter 3: The Bawku Inter-Ethnic Conflict

With regard to perennial violent conflicts resulting from chieftaincy issues, the Bawku chieftaincy dispute comes to light as the focus of this chapter. This is because of its intractable nature, spanning over six decades, and apparent resistance to conflict-resolution efforts. This chapter discusses the Bawku chieftaincy conflict in detail. It focuses on the historical antecedents of the Bawku conflict. The history of the claim for the chieftaincy, the causes of the armed violence in the past, and triggers of recurrent armed clashes are described in this chapter. Explanations of the effects of the conflict on the socio-economic development of the area are presented, and then the conflict-resolution measures initiated by stakeholders in their attempt to manage and resolve the conflict are also depicted. The discussions in this chapter will highlight the importance of conflict-prevention measures (e.g., early warning system and alert call system), against armed violence in Bawku.

3.1. Profile of Ghana

Ghana is one of the first former colonies (British colony) in sub-Saharan Africa that gained independence in 1957 (Kabia, 2015; Arthur, 2009). Ghana became a constitutional republic in 1960.⁵ Ghana experienced *coup d'états* post-independence (in 1966, 1972, 1978, 1979, and 1981) that destabilized the country (Arthur, 2008; Issifu, 2017). After the 1980s when the *coup d'états* ended, the economic and political situation in Ghana improved and the country embarked on a

⁵ General information from the official website of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). "The Local Government System in Ghana." The URL is https://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Ghana.pdf (Accessed on December 15, 2020).

democratic transition and consolidation (Arthur, 2009). Ghana has been labeled as a stable democracy and has been described as a relatively peaceful country in Africa that plays an important role with regard to assisting on conflict-related issues in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) (Issifu, 2017; Danso & Osei-Tutu, 2015). As a country usually described as one of the best African states in relation to functioning democracy (Danso & Osei-Tutu, 2015), it has also often been labeled in both local and international circles as a peace-loving nation located on a continent noted for violent intra-state conflicts (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013).

Ghana has a population of 31,098,000 (2020 estimate) with a land area of 227, 540 km².⁶ Ghana is situated on the Atlantic Ocean in the western part of Africa.⁷ It is bordered to the west by the Ivory Coast, to the north by Burkina Faso, to the east by Togo, and to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Guinea.⁸ With regard to religion, there are about 71% Christians and 17% Muslims.⁹ The southern part of Ghana is filled with grasslands and shrub lands including forests.¹⁰ The northern part of Ghana experiences a dry season from the start of the month of December through March, with dry, hot winds blowing.¹¹ The southern part also experiences wet seasons from the start of April until the middle of November.¹²

⁶ General information from the official website of the World Population Review. The URL is <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

⁷ See URL <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

⁸ See URL <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

⁹ See URL <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

¹⁰ See <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

¹¹ General information from the official website of the World Population Review. The URL is <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

¹² See URL <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/ghana-population> (Accessed on January 7, 2021).

According to the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF) report, *The Local Government System in Ghana*, Ghana has two spheres of government, namely: (i) national and (ii) local.¹³

According to Kendie et al. (2014), notable causes of conflicts in Ghana are due to the desire of humans for power and control of resources alongside territory. Some examples of the conflicts are ethnic conflicts between Nanumba and Kokomba; Nkonya and Alavanyo; Konkomba and Gonja, Dagomba, Nanumba; and Gonja and Vagla, among others, as well as chieftaincy conflicts in Winneba, Dagbon, and Gushiegu. Chieftaincy has been the most resilient Ghanaian tradition to have survived interference from both colonial and post-colonial governments (Bukari, 2016). Chieftaincy, which is a traditional political position based on ethnicity, has been identified by some scholars as the root cause of most conflicts in Ghana (Acheampong, 2010). Chieftaincy is a traditional institution in the Ghanaian state (Adjei, 2015). According to the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, Article 277, a chief is “a person who, hailing from appropriate family lineage, has been validly nominated, elected or selected and enstooled, enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.” The chief serves as the symbol of the cultural heritage of his people and has custodianship over all traditional lands held in trust on behalf of the community (Salifu, 2018).

The chief is seen as a symbol of honor, who bestows respect on deserving members of the community for acts of bravery during warfare or distinguished service to the community (Salifu, 2018). He can also appoint sub-chiefs and mobilize his subjects for the construction of local infrastructure, such as roads, schools, clinics, markets, or other projects (Salifu, 2018). In the

¹³ See official website of the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF). “The Local Government System in Ghana.” The URL is https://www.clgf.org.uk/default/assets/File/Country_profiles/Ghana.pdf (Accessed on December 15, 2020).

pre-colonial era, the chief passed laws and formulated policies in his jurisdiction (Salifu, 2018). He also presided over courts and adjudicated cases brought to him by the sub-chiefs or community members (Salifu, 2018). Chiefs function as the custodians of culture and heritage and serve as fatherly figures in their communities (Salifu, 2018). Due to the importance attached to the chieftaincy institution currently in Ghana, chiefs continue to play vital roles in assisting with regard to the local governance structure (nominating district/municipal chief executives) of the country (Salifu, 2018). Chiefs are conferred with titles such as *Nana* by the Akan ethnic group, *Togbe* by the Ewe ethnic group, and *Naa* or *Naaba* by the people of Northern Ghana (Salifu, 2018). These titles are highly symbolic; they have meanings that mark the traditional status of the particular chief as the embodiment of the society's identity and heritage (Salifu, 2018).

3.2. Some Armed Conflicts in Northern Ghana

The Northern region is the largest administrative region of Ghana (Awedoba, 2009). Many people revere their traditional leaders and institutions in spite of the fact that they have been taken over by representatives of the modern nation-state (Tonah, 2007). Northern Ghana, according to Salifu (2018), is the generic term for three administrative regions, namely the Upper-West, the Upper-East, and the Northern Region. The Northern region, according to Kendie et al. (2014), was originally occupied by traditionally centralized states¹⁴ (i.e., Dagbon, Gonja, Nanum, Mamprugi), and the Upper East region was inhabited by a-cephalous societies.

¹⁴ With regard to the centralized states the chiefs are traditionally recognized as the rulers with authority to rule over the people. The chiefs also wield power and wealth.

Kendie et al. (2014) explain that a-cephalous societies recognize the powers of the *Tendaana* and local leader/s,¹⁵ whilst the centralized states have high regard for chiefs.

This meant that in each society, their system of rule/traditional practice was absolutely different (Kendie et al., 2014). However, the colonial masters (British) imposed a system of administrative control by instituting chieftaincy in the a-cephalous societies (Kendie et al., 2014). This has been partly responsible for the abject poverty and violent armed conflicts in the Northern region (Kendie et al., 2014). Salifu (2018) corroborates the assertion by Kendie et al. (2014) and argues that historically most of the conflicts in Northern Ghana are concomitants of the British Colonial administration.

Similarly, the root causes of the conflicts surrounding the region, according to Kendie et al. (2014) and Tanoh (2007), center on succession to skin disputes (skin is used to refer to the chieftaincy title in the northern region), land control and ownership, superiority, pride, and discrimination against ethnic minorities. Despite the existence of elaborate rules and regulations, the recurrence of chieftaincy conflicts in some parts of the country, particularly in Northern Ghana, is a testament to the existence of a much bigger problem that goes beyond the constitutional and customary provisions (Salifu, 2018).

The northern part of Ghana in particular experiences the most ethnic conflicts over chieftaincy successions or land ownership, and it is said to have experienced more recurrent ethnic conflicts between the 1980s and 2005 (Yelyang, 2016). An example is the Dagbon

¹⁵ The *Tendaana* is regarded as the spiritual landowner with regard to the a-cephalous states. Their traditionally role is to protect the land for the use of the populace. The local leader was not recognized as a chief and thus could not exercise authority. The *Tendaana* act as fetish priests, perform traditional rites, and are not recognized in a hierarchy among themselves because each village is autonomous. See Awedoba, A. K. (2009). *An Ethnographic Study of Northern Ghanaian Conflicts: Towards a Sustainable Peace*. Sub-Saharan Publishers, Accra.

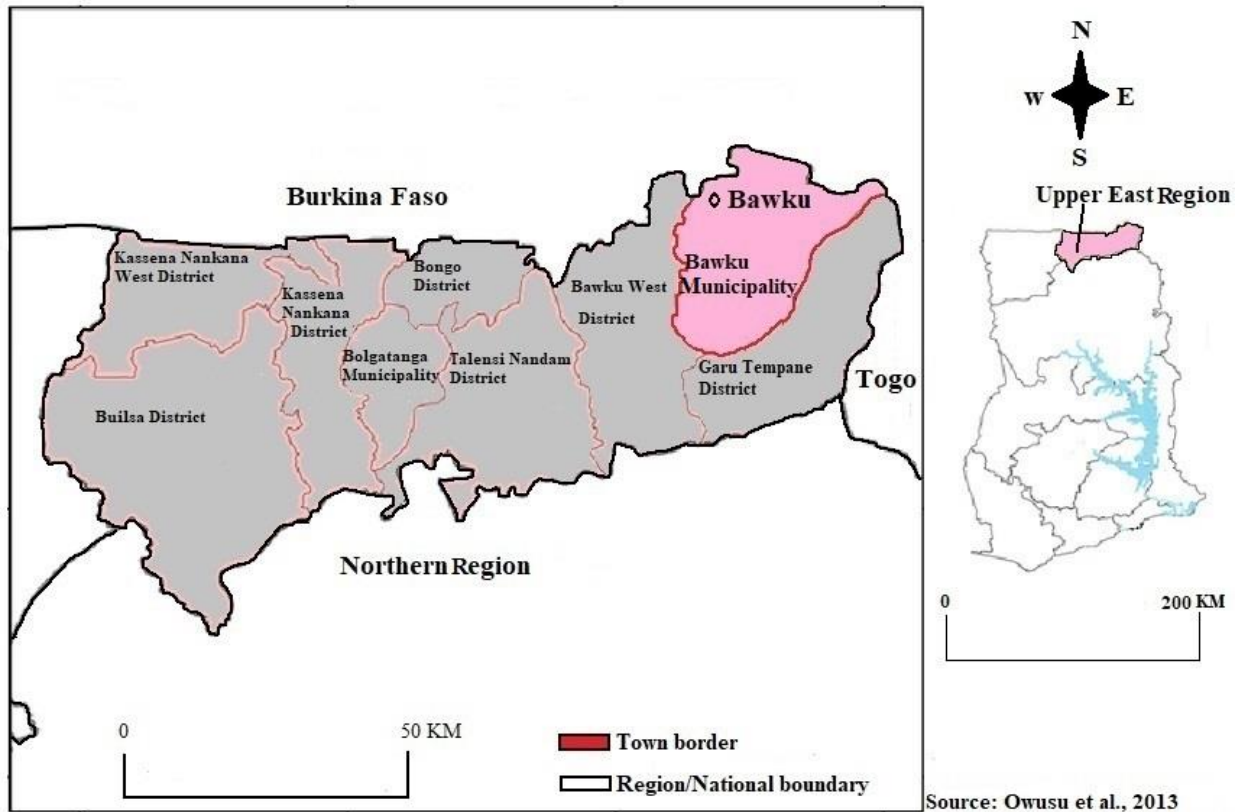
chieftaincy¹⁶ conflict between Andani and Abudu people (Danso & Osei-Tutu, 2015). In a similar vein, the ethnic conflict between the Konkomba and Nanumba over land ownership resulted in the loss of 2,000 lives and 18,900 animals; over 500,000 tubers of yam destroyed; 60,000 acres of crops set ablaze; 144 farming communities set on fire; 78,000 people displaced; and properties worth millions destroyed (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013). In another example, the Konkomba and Bimoba ethnic groups fought wars in 1984, 1986, and 1989, which resulted in over 60 deaths and several houses destroyed (Yelyang, 2016). The armed conflict between the Nawuri and the Gonja at Kpandai in 1991 over land rights resulted in the destruction of property and the death of 78 persons (Tanoh, 2007).

3.3. Profile of Bawku

Bawku is the administrative capital in the Bawku Municipal District, Upper-East Region, in northern Ghana (See, Figure 1). Bawku is bordered to the north by Burkina Faso, to the south by the East Mamprusi District, to the west by the Talensi-Nabdam District, and to the east by Togo (Bukari, 2013a). It is the home and seat from where the *Bawku Naba* rules (Bukari, 2013a; GSS, 2014). The Bawku municipality was upgraded from the status of a district through the Local Government Instrument 1989 (L.I. 1439); it is part of 13 administrative districts in the Upper East Region (GSS, 2014). According to the Ghana Statistical Service's (GSS) *Population and Housing Census Final Results Report* compiled in 2010, the Upper East Region has a

¹⁶ The Dagbon chieftaincy conflict is said to be the most publicized chieftaincy conflict in Ghana. The conflict ensued between the Andani and Abudu sides of Dagbon in Northern Ghana. Disputes over the succession erupted into armed violence and trickled into the celebration of their festival – the Bugum festival. The armed conflict resulted in the killing of the king (*Ya Na*), together with some members of his family and his supporters. See more details in Tanoh, S. (Ed., 2007). *Ethnicity, Conflicts and Consensus in Ghana*. Woeli Publishing Services, Accra.

Figure 1: Map of Bawku Municipality



population of about 1,046,545 (GSS, 2012a), representing 4.2% of Ghana’s population (GSS, 2012b). The Upper East region consists of the Builsa district (92,000 people), Kasana Nankana district (70,663 people), Kasena Nankana district (109,944 people), Bolgatanga municipal (131,550 people), Talensi Nabdam District (115,020 people), Bongo District (85,545 people), Bawku West District (94,034 people), Garu Tempene District (130,003 people), and Bawku Municipality (217,791 people) (GSS, 2021a).

Bawku Municipality covers three towns in the Upper East region, namely Bawku Municipality, Bawku West District, and Garu-Tempene District (GSS, 2014; Bukari, 2013a). The municipality also covers 150 communities in the town (GSS, 2014). Bawku Municipality

with its population (i.e., 217,791) has a total land area of 8,842 sq. km² (GSS, 2014; Owusu et al., 2013). The major ethnic groups in the Upper East Region fall under the broad category of the Mole Dagbani ethnic group, comprising about 74.7%, along with Grusi (8.5%), Mande-Busanga (6.2%), and Gurma (3.2%) (GSS, 2014; Kendie et al., 2014). Bawku consists of heterogeneous ethnic groups, which include the Kusasi, Mamprusi, Bissa, Hausa, Bimoba, Dagomba, and Mossi people (Acheampong, 2010; GSS, 2014; Kendie et al., 2014).

The major languages of the region are Kusal, Mampruli, Nankani, Buile, Gurene (Frafra), Kasem, and Bisa (GSS, 2014; Kendie et al., 2014). The population of the Kusasi people is estimated to be around 47.6%, making them the largest group (Acheampong, 2010; GSS, 2014). The population of the Mamprusi people is estimated at around 3.7% making them a small minority (Acheampong, 2010). The other ethnic groups constitute about 18.9% in the municipality (mostly non-Ghanaians) (Acheampong, 2010).

The Kusasi people speak the Kusal language and their traditional religion recognizes belief in the *Tendaana* (earth priests), who serve as the intermediary between their people and the gods of their ancestors represented in objects like rivers and hills (Awedoba, 2015; GSS, 2012a; Awedoba, 2009). They are located in the outskirts of Bawku and celebrate the *Samanpiid* festival annually in December, expressing their gratitude to the gods for a good bumper harvest year (Acheampong, 2010; GSS, 2014). The Mamprusi people, on the other hand, are located in the central part of Bawku where socio-economic activities are vibrant (Acheampong, 2010; GSS, 2014). They speak the Mampruli language and their religion is Islam (Awedoba, 2015). However,

some of the Mamprusi people also believe in Christianity. They celebrate the *Damba* festival between July and August to commemorate the birth of the prophet Mohammed.¹⁷

Bawku lies in the savannah woodlands, characterized by grass that is susceptible to bushfires in the dry season (Bukari, 2013a). It is located at the highest point of the Upper East Region with the land formations generally low and slightly undulating with heights between 120-150 meters above sea level (GSS, 2014). Bawku is underlain by Birrimain and granite rock sediments; borders the basins of the White Volta River and its tributaries; and is generally low altitude with slightly undulating heights of 105 to 120 meters above sea level (GSS, 2014). The town is also made up of a series of plateau surfaces (GSS, 2014). Bawku is noted to be part of the continental climate zone, which is characterized by a prolonged dry season and a rainfall pattern that is characterized as erratically spatial in duration (Bukari, 2013a; GSS, 2014).

Similar to some other parts of northern Ghana, Bawku's climate consists of two seasons (i.e., dry and rainy/wet) within the year. First, the dry season spans from late November to mid-February/early March – mostly long and characterized by warm, dusty, and dry winds (*harmattan*) (GSS, 2014; Bukari, 2013a).¹⁸ The wind associated with the dry season blows from the northeast across the entire municipality from the Sahara desert (GSS, 2014). The temperature in the area is moderate during the dry season, ranging between 26 and 28 degrees Celsius (GSS, 2014). The second season, the rainy/wet season, spans from May/June to September/October. During this period, the whole of the West African sub-region, including Bawku, is influenced by

¹⁷ The information on Prophet Mohammed and the *Damba* festival was obtained from a documentary produced with the Chief of Nanton Area. URL is <https://youtube.be/-Ynicf8WnE> (Accessed on January 12, 2020).

¹⁸ Rainfall is absent during this period, but there is a relative humidity that exceeds 20 percent in the daytime and rises to 60 percent in the night and early morning. See Ghana Statistical Service. 2014. *2010 Population and Housing Census District Analytical Report*. Accra, Ghana Statistical Service. URL is <https://www.statsghana.gov.gh> (Accessed October 15, 2018).

a deep tropical maritime air mass and rising convection currents that provide rain (GSS, 2014; Bukari, 2013a). The two seasons are influenced by two oscillating air masses (GSS, 2014).

Bawku is noted for its commercial activities through trade in foodstuffs (such as sweet potatoes and watermelon), manufactured goods, and livestock (GSS, 2014). Trade is conducted by use of donkey carts traveling to Burkina Faso, Northern Togo, Mali, and Niger on market days, due to the proximity of these neighboring states (GSS, 2014). Because of its commercial activities with the border towns, Bawku is regarded as the commercial hub of the region and many people in the region and its environs prefer to trade in Bawku (Bukari, 2013a). Economically, agriculture is the major occupation and the largest employer of the people in Bawku, representing 47.0%, 23% in services and sales; 12.7% engaged in craft and related trade; 6.6% as managers, professionals, and technicians; and 9.9% engaged in other occupations (GSS, 2014). People grow millet, sorghum, maize, rice, groundnuts, and cash crops such as onions, pepper, tomatoes, and soya beans (GSS, 2014). Livestock and poultry production is common in the area; goats, sheep, donkeys, local poultry, pigs, cattle, and guinea fowls (GSS, 2014).

The local government authority is represented by the Bawku Municipal Assembly (BMA), which provides administration at the local level and is made up of the municipal chief executives (GSS, 2014; Bukari, 2013a).¹⁹ The BMA sees to the daily administration and development of the district (Bukari, 2013a). The *Bawku Naba* is currently Naba Abugrago Azoka II – a Kusasi – with 23 sub-chiefs under his authority. His jurisdiction (that is his authority to rule) covers the entire area of the Bawku Municipal District, and he is also the leader of the Bawku Traditional

¹⁹ Governance in the municipality is represented by both the local government authority and the traditional authority. The traditional authority is represented by the Bawku Traditional Council under the leadership of the *Bawku Naba* (Chief of Bawku). See Ghana Statistical Service. 2014. *2010 Population and Housing Census District Analytical Report*. Accra, Ghana Statistical Service. URL is <https://www.statsghana.gov.gh> (Accessed October 15, 2018).

Council (GSS, 2014). He enjoys a sense of prestige, pride, benefits (from visits by businesses, government dignitaries, politicians, and ordinary individuals), and courtesies that come with being the chief in Bawku (Awedoba, 2009). The *Bawku Naba* also controls all the agricultural land (Kendie et al., 2014) and has a say in the political appointments of local government representatives (Bukari, 2013a).

A new development is the politicization of the conflict in recent years with the two major political parties in Ghana – the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP) – manipulating the ethnic groups and chieftaincy differences for political gain (Kendie et al., 2014). With regard to political affiliation, it is noted that the Mamprusi people are aligned with the NPP, whilst the Kusasi people are known to support the NDC (Bukari, 2013a). Politically, there is more animosity between the two ethnic groups because they have aligned themselves with one of the two major political parties in the country.²⁰ This does not allow for cohesion in their approaches to development of the town and the country at large (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b, Bukari, 2013c; Bukari & Guuroh, 2013).

3.4. History of the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Conflict

The first *Bawku Naba* – Prince Ali, son of the Nayiri (Nayiri is the titled name given to the Mamprusi king) – in the sixteenth century (1721) was enskinned as chief in Bawku by the Nayiri (Bukari, 2013a; Awedoba, 2009). The Nayiri – king of the Mamprusi people living in Nalerigu (a town in the Northwest of Northern Ghana) – was instrumental in the installation of the Mamprusi chiefs in Bawku in 1931 (Bukari, 2013a; Awedoba, 2009). Prince Ali was tasked by

²⁰ General information obtained from an interview conducted with a respondent of BEWDA on September 23, 2019.

the Nayiri to establish military outposts in six Kusasi localities – Bawku, Binduri, Teshie, Sinibaga, Tanga, and Warikambo – to guard trade routes in Nalerigu, Tenkudugou in Burkina Faso, and Gambaga towns against some Kusasi burglars who robbed Mamprusi traders of their wares (Awedoba, 2009). The Kusasi people, who claim they were the first to settle in Bawku, had only the *Tendaanas* (earth priests), who were their leaders (Bukari, 2013a). The Kusasi were thus under the authority of the Mamprusi chiefs after 1931 (Awedoba, 2009).

The British then in Ghana practiced indirect rule and needed administrative aides to assist them; hence they appointed the Mamprusi chiefs to act as aides under the British administration in Bawku (Awedoba, 2009). In 1931, the British made the *Bawku Naba* (Chief of Bawku; then a Mamprusi), at the time a paramount chief, the overall chief superior to other sub-chiefs, thereby elevating the importance of the chiefship in Bawku (Awedoba, 2009). According to the Kusasi people, the *Bawku Naba* – then a Mamprusi – and his sub-chiefs were imposed on them by the colonial masters for administrative purposes (Awedoba, 2009); thus, they went ahead to appoint their own *Bawku Naba* (*Naba Abugrago Azoka*) in the year 1957 (Bombande, 2007).

Competing claims ensued in 1957 over the situation of having two people as *Bawku Naba*, which “led to some disturbances and intensified the claim over” the chieftaincy by the Kusasi and Mamprusi people (Bukari, 2013a: 30). The Opoku-Afari Committee was set up in the same year by then-Governor General Lord Listowel to investigate the cause of the disturbances, and the committee ruled that the Kusasi *Bawku Naba* was legitimate in accordance with Kusasi tradition (Bukari, 2013b). The committee also concluded that installing a Mamprusi as the *Bawku Naba* was undemocratic and dictatorial (Bukari, 2013b). The Mamprusi elders in the same year (i.e., 1957) then filed a writ at the divisional court to squash the decision by the Opoku-Afari Committee and won, but President Kwame Nkrumah never recognized the

legitimacy of the Mamprusi as *Bawku Naba* but rather the Kusasi (Bombande, 2007). According to the Mamprusi people, this incident infuriated them and resulted in disagreements between them and the Kusasi (Bombande, 2007; Awedoba, 2009).

In 1958, the Kusasi people regained the chieftaincy after they contested a divisional court ruling at the Appeals Court; the court upheld the decision of the then-Governor General (Bukari, 2013b). After Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown in a coup in 1966, the Chieftaincy Amendment decree 112 was implemented by the National Liberation Council (NLC) and restored a Mamprusi as *Bawku Naba*, who reigned till 1980 (Bombande, 2007). In 1981, the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) overthrew the NLC in a coup and replaced NLC decree 112 with PNDC law 75 (Chieftaincy Restoration Law) (Awedoba, 2009), which restored a Kusasi as *Bawku Naba*, whose lineage has been ruling in Bawku till the present time (Bukari, 2013a).

The trends in recurrence of the conflict point to the fact that the root cause of the conflict has not been dealt with, one of which is for the Nayiri and the Mamprusi people in general to recognize the current *Bawku Naaba* as the paramount chief of the land (Kendie et al., 2014). The *Bawku Naba* is currently a Kusasi called Naba Abugrago Azoka II, who is also the paramount chief of all sub-chiefs in Bawku (Awedoba, 2009). There is an uneasy anxiety amongst the minority Mamprusi people that they would not be given a fair share of the agricultural land for either farming or livestock rearing and other purposes (Kendie et al., 2014). This uneasy anxiety and the quest to regain the chieftaincy led to tensions that triggered the recurrence of armed clashes experienced in the past (Kendie et al., 2014). The current status in the Bawku conflict is akin to that of a “two kings, one kingdom situation,” and this is because the Mamprusi people currently have a regent who occupies a de facto chieftaincy position whilst the *Bawku Naba* (a Kusasi) is serving as the paramount chief (Salifu, 2018).

3.5. Recurrence of Armed Clashes Between Kusasi and Mamprusi

The events of 1981, according to Bukari (2013a) and Awedoba (2009), resulted in recurring armed clashes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people. For example, in December 2000, there were violent armed clashes recorded in Bawku, triggered by disagreements over the election results between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people who were affiliated with the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and New Patriotic Party (NPP), respectively (Bukari, 2013a). Counting of ballots after local elections prompted disagreements over the results between the NDC and NPP supporters, which escalated into a heated argument about who exactly had won (Lund, 2003). The argument resulted in a shoot-out between the Kusasi and Mamprusi, resulting in the death of 68 people (from both sides) and 200 houses burnt (belonging to both sides), with an estimated 2,500 people internally displaced (Lund, 2003).

In 2001, the violent armed clash between the two groups was triggered when a mini-shop belonging to a Mamprusi was burnt down, allegedly by some Kusasi youth, which resulted in fierce armed clashes that saw three people killed.²¹ A retaliatory attack by Mamprusi youth on a Kusasi mini-shop also resulted in the death of 18 people, 21 wounded, and over 30 houses burnt (Kendie et al., 2014).

The armed violence recurred in 2007, triggered by provocations from the Mamprusi people towards the Kusasi people during celebration of the *Samanpiid* festival. Some Mamprusi youths were casting insinuations at the Kusasi people that Mamprusi people are the original owners of

²¹ General information from the official website of the media house, GhanaWeb (2001) with the caption “Interior Minister Briefs Parliament on Bawku conflict.” The URL is <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Interior-Minister-briefs-Parliament-on-Bawku-conflict-20044>. (Accessed on July 1, 2019).

Bawku. This incident led to armed clashes; however the number of casualties was not known.²² In 2008, violent armed clashes were triggered by arguments over the chieftaincy between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people, which resulted in the burning of 104 houses, 16 people injured, and the death of eight people. Further armed clashes were triggered by arguments over the chieftaincy in 2008 and resulted in 23 houses burnt down and three people injured (Kendie et al., 2014). The armed violence in 2009, also triggered by arguments with regard to the rightful occupant of the chieftaincy, resulted in the death of five people (Kendie et al., 2014).

3.6. Effects of the Armed Clashes in Bawku

Bukari (2013a) points out that continuous recurrence of violence in Bawku has impacted negatively on socio-economic development, namely in the areas of education, public health, security, commerce, and agriculture. For example the impact of the conflict on agriculture (extension services), according to almost all the farmers surveyed (96.7%), resulted because no extension officers had visited farms since 2007 (Bukari, 2013a). Farm labor was also lacking (93.3%) and this was as a result of the armed violence and the unwillingness of people to come to Bawku to work (Bukari, 2013a). Farm produce was affected because there was no transportation of donkey carts or motto cycles to convey the goods to the market (Bukari, 2013a). In fact, as a conflict-affected area, it is known to have among the “lowest income (80% living in extreme poverty) and literacy (26.3% of adults functionally literate) rates in the country” (Hughes 2003: 57). The loss of human lives over the years has led to a lack of contribution to the

²² General information from the official website of Zakaria Alhassan-Tamale. “The Bawku Conflict...1st major conflict erupted in 1983”. The URL is <https://zakalhassan.blogspot.com/2008/06/bawku-conflict1st-major-conflict.html> published on June 8, 2008. (Accessed on June 3, 2019).

socio-economic development of the town (Bukari, 2013a). The socio-political relations, economic life, and social institutions have been affected by the conflict (Bukari, 2013a).

With regard to the effects of the conflict on commerce, the once vibrant commercial activity in the town has eroded (low sales, low profit and income margins, and no access to financial institutions to aid their businesses) due to the recurrence of armed clashes between the two sides (Bukari, 2013a). In a similar vein, 21 sheds at the Kola Market were burnt down in 2007 during the armed clashes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi, and the membership of the kola traders dropped from 43 to 17 (Bukari, 2013a). Educational institutions have been destroyed; young children of school-going age have relocated to neighboring towns to avoid the conflict (Bukari, 2013a). Teachers (about 79) and other professionals in the education field migrated to other neighboring towns to avoid the armed clashes (in 2007 and 2008), and others refused career posting to the area (Bukari, 2013a). Food barns were burnt down, leaving the populace to go hungry, coupled with no economic activity to showcase farm produce after harvesting (Bukari, 2013a). Farmlands were razed to the ground in retaliatory responses between the two sides (Bukari, 2013a).

The economic outlook has been affected since many people relocated during the conflict to neighboring towns to ply their trade and have not since returned or still prefer to do business in other nearby towns for fear the conflict could recur (Bukari, 2013a). The livelihoods, socio-economic development, education, commercial activities, agriculture, and all aspects of social life in the area are lagging behind because of the conflict (Bukari, 2013a). Both local and foreign investors feel reluctant to invest in such a volatile area, due to the protracted nature and uncertainty of the conflict (Acheampong, 2010). Most of the vibrant industries in Bawku have relocated to the nearby towns, such as Bolgatanga or Zebilla (Acheampong, 2010). Acheampong

(2010) asserts that this may have contributed to the high unemployment level among the youth in the formal sector in the area.

With regard to revenue mobilization, internally generated funds (e.g., property taxes, market tolls, road tolls) declined more than 40% between 2007 and 2008 (Bukari, 2013a). Mamprusi and Kusasi men, who are generally assumed to be the main perpetrators and combatants in the Bawku conflict, have also suffered deaths and had their human rights violated (Acheampong, 2010). They have either been chased out of their homes by persons who want to take revenge or fled their homes out of fear of being killed (Acheampong, 2010). There is an increase in female-headed households in Bawku due to the death of the men who were the breadwinners, and this shows how vulnerable men are in conflict situations (Acheampong, 2010).

At the peak of the armed clashes in 2007 to 2009, Bukari (2013a) states that around 120 people sustained injuries, with gunshot wounds recorded as the highest form of injury.²³ A majority of women from the two sides have become widows and single mothers; others have been divorced (husbands were from the other side and divorce was a way to protect themselves), and their businesses have collapsed (Acheampong, 2010). The women have incessantly been at the mercy of armed groups in the classroom, hospital, farms, marketplaces, and even their homes (Acheampong, 2010). In general, the conflict has affected the *Baku Naba's* efforts to attain lasting peace, stalled his development agenda, and caused further mistrust between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people because the Mamprusi people still do not recognize the authority of the chief.²⁴

²³ This figure according to Bukari (2013a) was obtained from the Bawku Presbyterian Hospital, which could not give actual statistics.

²⁴ General information obtained from an interview conducted with the respondent of the Bawku Naba on September 23, 2019.

3.7. Attempts Made by the State and CSOs to Manage and Resolve the Conflict

Kendie et al. (2014) posit that peace efforts have focused mainly on curfews implemented by the state security forces. In 2000, the Upper East Regional Police command was deployed to restore order by imposing a curfew to halt the violent clashes (Kendie et al., 2014). After the violence had occurred, mediations and negotiations to find a lasting end to the conflict were initiated by the state officials of the national government (Kendie et al., 2014).

In 2001, a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed by the Upper East Regional Security Council after the violent clashes. Government officials, the then-President J.A. Kufuor and Vice President Aliu Mahama held talks with the leadership and opinion leaders of the feuding parties (Kusasi and Mamprusi) to restore calm (Kendie et al., 2014). In furtherance to that, the then Upper East Regional Minister, Mr. Mahami Salifu inaugurated a 13-member crisis-management committee to manage the Bawku crisis and oversee the humanitarian crises in the region.²⁵

In 2007, the Upper East Regional Security Council also mediated in peace efforts in an attempt to halt the clashes that ensued (Kendie et al., 2014). The council deployed a total of 400 security personnel (police, military, and Rapid Response Air-Borne Force) to maintain order (Bukari, 2013a). Government officials, including the then-president of Ghana John A. Kufour, invited the Kusasi and Mamprusi leaders to the castle (then the seat of Ghana's government) to broker peace between them (Bukari, 2013a). In 2008, President John A. Kufuor, in an attempt to lead the two sides of the conflict through mediations, tasked the NPC to facilitate the mediations (Bukari, 2013a). The NPC also drew a roadmap towards peace, but the main issue (the root cause

²⁵ General information from the official website of Ghana news agency. URL is [www.ghananewsgency.org/\(2001\)](http://www.ghananewsgency.org/(2001)). (Accessed on June 3, 2019).

of conflict) was not dealt with (Bukari, 2013a). The government then deployed more than 400 security personnel to sustain peace in the area (Bukari, 2013a).

In 2009, the then-President John Evans Atta Mills and his Vice president John Dramani Mahama mediated in the conflict (Bukari, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). The government of the day deployed security forces (military and police) to keep the peace by imposing curfews through the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) and Municipal Security Council (MUSEC) (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari 2013b; Bukari, 2013c). Former President John Evans Atta Mills, on May 28, 2009, established the BIEPC and empowered the institution to find amicable ways to end the conflict (Bukari, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c). WANEP facilitated the process to find ways to end the conflict with support from the NPC. In the same year the then-Vice president John Dramani Mahama followed up with a visit to hold talks with the two sides to end the conflict (Bukari, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c).

The state remains the central focal point with regard to the resolution of the conflict, but may not be capable of resolving the conflict in the foreseeable future (Lund, 2003). The state's efforts have been interpreted as partisan by the Kusasi and Mamprusi people to favor either side, depending on which government is in authority (Lund, 2003). Awedoba (2009) also stressed that mediations initiated by the state to resolve the conflict are seen by the feuding parties as partial, rather than neutral, because of interference from state officials affiliated with either of the protagonists.

In an attempt to find ways to solve the conflict, CSOs – for example, WANEP, Action Aid Ghana, Advocacy Peace Group, Catholic Relief Services, Christian Council of Ghana, and BEWDA – have attempted to find amicable solutions to end the conflict (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013). They have made a number of attempts since 2001 to end the conflict through

peacebuilding and conflict-resolution mechanisms such as mediations (Issifu, 2017; Bukari & Guuroh, 2013). The conflict-resolution and peacebuilding approaches such as sensitization programs, mediations, community-based peace-education programs, peace talks, organization of inter-ethnic games, the signing of peace agreements, and awareness raising employed by the CSOs have enabled the feuding parties to engage in attempts to resolve issues (Issifu, 2017; Bukari, 2013b; Bukari & Guuroh, 2013).

The CSOs facilitated and supported the establishment of the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) in an attempt to resolve the conflict themselves (Bukari & Guuroh, 2013; Issifu, 2017). These peacebuilding activities were aimed at educating the populace about the effects of armed violence (Issifu, 2017; Bukari, 2013b; Bukari & Guuroh, 2013). According to Bukari (2013a), the approaches by WANEP and BEWDA managed the situation but could not resolve the conflict because of the entrenched positions taken by the Kusasi and Mamprusi people.

Despite the efforts by the CSOs to find an amicable solution to resolve the conflict, their success still remains to be seen whilst the feuding parties are yet to come to a compromise (Bukari and Guuroh, 2013). The failure to resolve the conflict, as pointed out by Bukari and Guuroh (2013), poses a question regarding the efficacy of the conflict-resolution attempts and peace activities by the CSOs, including the NGOs, in Bawku. Moreover, political interference by politicians in and around Bawku exacerbates the situation and leads to further recurrence of armed violence (Bukari, 2013a). Awedoba (2009) asserts that NGOs do not have the expertise to resolve the issue, but their coalition building should be sustained, even without any tangible results. The Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee's (BIEPC) efforts in negotiations among themselves to resolve the conflict were also ineffective (Kendie et al., 2014).

3.8. Conclusion

This chapter depicted the pattern of acrimony of traditional practice by the Mamprusi and Kusasi ethnic groups. The chapter showed that the Kusasi people in the past did not have chiefs but have now come to understand the institution of chieftaincy. They have solidified their position in that regard, whilst the Mamprusi are claiming to have a better understanding with regard to the chieftaincy. It is unclear what actually would lead to a potential recurrence of armed clashes, since the two sides appear to mobilize to engage in armed violence at the least provocation. The Mamprusi have a regent while the Kusasi also have a *Bawku Naba*, but the issue to contend with between these two ethnic groups is about the paramouncy, as the Mamprusi people do not recognize the authority of the Kusasi *Bawku Naba* (Acheampong, 2010).

The chapter shows that, per the previous literature, conflict resolution measures and conflict management activities have been initiated by the stakeholders in an attempt to end the conflict. These measures have to some degree achieved the intended goal from the analysis of previous literature, but the main issues (root causes) still need to be resolved. In that regard, this study focuses on prevention activities to be implemented at the early stages to curb armed clashes, since the conflict has not been declared over.

The next chapter concerns the prevention measures that were implemented against potential violent armed conflict in Bawku by each stakeholder. The roles of the stakeholders will be discussed, and the target group and activities involved in the prevention measures will be explained. The chapter answers the first, second, and third research questions and reveals facts about the prevention measures initiated in Bawku against potential recurrence of armed violence.

Chapter 4: Conflict Prevention Activities Initiated by State Agencies (Track I) and Community Representatives (Track III)

In this chapter, stakeholders are grouped into the following two categories: (i) state agencies, namely the National Peace Council (NPC) and the Bawku Police (Track I); and (ii) community representatives, such as the *Bawku Naba* and Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) (Track III). The BIEPC is presented in this chapter along with the state agencies because, as already mentioned in the introduction section, the BIEPC (Track III) was formed in 2009 by the state as a local peace infrastructure and thus work under the auspices of the NPC and cooperate with other NGOs toward sustaining the peace in Bawku. The BIEPC is presented in this chapter as a Track III actor because through the NPC, the committee has been reconstituted and re-inaugurated, thus paving the way for the reactivation of the peace process.

Using information retrieved from interviews with each stakeholder in 2019 and telephone interviews in September 2020, this chapter presents, first of all, an overview of the roles played by the state agencies followed by the community representatives in preventing armed clashes. Second, an overview of conflict prevention measures by these actors (See tables 1 and 2) will be presented. The tables show the stakeholders have taken steps towards preventing recurrence of armed violence. The chapter delineates the various perceptions among the stakeholders on the prevention measures, as well as the respective roles of the stakeholders in ensuring sustained peace in Bawku, considering their cooperation efforts. Their reflections regarding the roles of the stakeholders, prevention measures, and necessary approaches for preventing armed violence are also presented. Finally, an analysis of the characteristics and tendencies of the type of conflict-prevention measures initiated by the state agencies and community representatives is presented.

The idea of direct and structural prevention is applied to argue which measures were either direct or structural.

4.1. The Roles of the NPC and Bawku Police (Track I) in Preventing Armed Clashes

As already stated in Chapter one, the NPC was established in 2009. Its objective is to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts toward sustainable peace. The organization has been involved in the Bawku case since 2009 and plays the role of technical back-stopper. Per the explanations provided by the NPC, as a technical back-stopper, the institution provides financial assistance (when funded by the central/local government) and technical capacity for the BIEPC to function. In 2014, during the reconstruction and re-inauguration of the BIEPC, the NPC provided some funds through the support of development agencies to get the BIEPC to work again. The agency facilitates training in: (i) communication skills, (ii) negotiation and dialogue, (iii) detecting early warning signs, and (iv) managing land-related conflicts. The NPC also facilitates community engagement, confidence-building, and teambuilding to enhance the technical knowledge (in negotiation and communication) of the BIEPC. According to an NPC official, the NPC are in the vanguard of preventing recurrence of armed violence with regard to the Bawku conflict.

Their role is also to equip the BIEPC with resources (financial support and technical expertise) for the committee to own the peace process, work for peace, and sustain it. The NPC further engages in periodic consultative meetings with the BIEPC towards prevention of armed conflicts. The NPC liaises and cooperates with BEWDA and WANEP to prevent recurrence of armed clashes in Bawku. The Bawku Police, on the other hand, are located in the heart of Bawku town and play a role as the main state agency that deploys police officers to provide security to

prevent recurrence of armed clashes. The police ensure their presence in the town is felt through their strategy of deploying personnel at visible locations to deter criminals from causing tensions that could escalate into armed violence. Both the NPC and Bawku Police liaise and cooperate with all major stakeholders towards preventing a recurrence of armed clashes in order for the peace in Bawku to be sustained. The Bawku Police cooperate with the BIEPC on a professional level to assist in making arrests where necessary to avoid tensions that could lead to recurrence of armed violence (e.g., in 2019, the police effected some arrests with regard to some persons who had intended to instigate trouble).

4.2. The Role of the BIEPC (Track III) in Preventing Armed Clashes

For any amicable solution to succeed in resolving the Bawku conflict, it should be owned by the feuding parties and implemented by themselves with assistance from other stakeholders. Ownership and the capacity to implement solutions toward prevention or resolution of a conflict are particularly relevant to local actors in the prevention and peacebuilding processes. The BIEPC was established in 2009 by the then central government to represent the Bawku community. Thus, the BIEPC plays the role of community representative and mouthpiece for all ethnic groups with regard to the Bawku conflict. The committee is a local peace infrastructure, required to create a calm environment for dialogue and negotiations to be facilitated. The committee aims also to ensure or enable the conflict parties themselves to come up with solutions to prevent a recurrence of armed clashes and resolve the conflict. They ensure that issues such as outstanding farmlands, celebration of festivals, and others that can escalate into armed clashes are resolved promptly.

The committee was set up to find amicable ways to resolve the conflict themselves and ensure the peace in Bawku is sustained. The composition of the BIEPC comprises representatives from all the ethnic groups in Bawku. This happened due to a broader acceptance of all the ethnic groups through extensive consultation. Although the committee (BIEPC) initially consisted of only Kusasi and Mamprusi representatives, it was suggested that other ethnic groups – Hausa, Mossi, Bisa, and Dangomba people – be included and contribute as neutral referees toward finding a lasting solution to the conflict. The committee is currently made up of 20 members, including two co-chairs (a Kusasi and a Mamprusi); the committee members consist of 12 representatives (six from the Kusasi and another six from the Mamprusi people), along with the Bisa, Dagomba, Mossi, and Hausa people having eight representatives (two from each ethnic group). The committee works under the auspices of the NPC, but cooperates and liaises with the CSOs (WANEP and BEWDA) towards preventing potential recurrence of armed clashes and sustaining peace in Bawku.

4.3. Prevention Measures Initiated by the NPC (Track I)

Prevention measures by the NPC are summarized in Table 1. In cooperation with BEWDA, the NPC initiated the following actions: an early warning system, peace education, and mediation (in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019).

The early warning system entails detection of potential danger by informants who live in Bawku. They identify and report various signs (e.g., sporadic gunshots at night, rumors of attacks during festival celebrations, or any disturbances) to the NPC and/or any of the

stakeholders, who are then able to respond accordingly. The system was notably active in 2009 (after armed violence in that year), 2010, and 2015.

The peace education (educating the people about concepts and skills for preventing conflict and for promoting peace) to prevent violent clashes targeted, first of all, the 20-member BIEPC, including the sub-committees. The NPC then periodically facilitated media outreach by using the media (radio station) to reach a larger proportion of the youth and inhabitants of the area concerning the need to prevent violent clashes. The peace education entails community sensitization on the need to maintain or sustain the peace at all times and use appropriate channels – such as the BIEPC, BEWDA, or Bawku Police – to express their concerns. The initial target of the peace education was the BIEPC members, who in turn educate their respective communities comprising the youth and women through the media (radio). Peace education is initiated especially during election periods – since tensions tend to increase along political party lines – but also during celebrations of festivals and whenever deemed necessary.

In 2016, the NPC engaged with many groups (including the BIEPC members, youths, women's groups, political parties, and the traditional authority) and organized further peace education. The peace education provides an avenue to celebrate festivals peacefully, and the youth on either side reportedly respond positively to peace messages by avoiding clashes and provocations. The NPC provides periodic technical support and financial assistance to the BIEPC to engage in extensive peace education for the community as and when resources are provided by the national/local government. This is intended to ensure the BIEPC meets their prevention targets – but currently that financial support is lacking.

In 2011, the NPC conducted mediations involving meetings with the BIEPC members to discuss various issues that centered on the peace process and preventing recurrences of conflict

in the area. The NPC met with the 20-member BIEPC to interact and come up with new ideas to deal with two outstanding issues: (i) farmland-related issues concerning some Mamprusi farmers having lost their farm lands during periods of violent clashes; and/or (ii) a traditional ceremony involving the protagonists to mark the end of a conflict, known as the Okro stick ceremony²⁶ (both in 2015 and 2016). In 2014, mediations were again initiated. NPC carried out shuttle consultation from Greater Accra to the Ashanti region with the aim of organizing a meeting with about 50 representatives of the two sides toward the reconstitution of the BIEPC after it went dormant in 2010-2011, when the Mamprusi people initially withdrew, citing: (i) their inability to celebrate the *Damba* festival, and (ii) mistrust and unequal treatment meted out to them.

The mediation led to the introduction of additional members from the Kusasi, Mamprusi, Bissa, Hausa, Dagomba, and Mossi sides to increase the BIEPC membership. This mediation by the NPC resulted in the reconstitution and re-inauguration of the Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) in May, 2015. After the reconstitution and re-inauguration of the BIEPC, the NPC facilitated a road map (action plan for the BIEPC for the period of October, 2015, to December, 2016), a review and planning meeting with BIEPC members (in September, 2015), and all these efforts were geared towards preventing potential recurrence of armed clashes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people.

In 2017, the BIEPC was supported to facilitate community engagement for about 50 youths to desist from acts that escalate the tensions and lead to armed violence in Bawku. A review of

²⁶ The Okro stick ceremony is a traditional rite of purification and cleansing accomplished by burying an Okro stick to signify the end of conflict. This symbolic ceremony requires that the two factions be involved to signify an agreement (the use of civilized means rather than guns) to end the conflict. After the ceremony, anyone – either Kusasi or Mamprusi – who ignites conflict with respect to the chieftaincy in Bawku will face the wrath of the gods. The ceremony was to take place in April, 2019, but was canceled. The Mamprusi people explained that firstly, they would not participate in the ceremony because it was not in line with their culture. Secondly, according to them, the ceremony has no relation to conflict, but rather is intended to settle matters on infidelity in marriage. Without the two factions, the ceremony is meaningless. (Information obtained through interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019.)

the community engagement was conducted afterwards, during the same year. However, in 2018-2019, the NPC was not able to support the BIEPC to undertake many preventive activities, due to lack of funds which were no longer coming in from the central/local government or benevolent donors. The NPC further engaged, through mediation with the BIEPC members and the sub-committee on festivals, to negotiate over peaceful means to celebrate the festivals.

The NPC actively engaged in mediations with the 20-member BIEPC on issues related to celebration of festivals, elections, and farmland (in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019) – which had escalated into violence in the area (in 2000, 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2009). In the Bawku area, festival celebrations are apt to create tensions because it is easier for the Kusasi people to celebrate their *Samanpiid* festival (important festival celebrated annually in December to express gratitude for a good bumper harvest year in farm yields), while the Mamprusi people would have to go through documentation and many legal processes before they can celebrate their own festival. This is partly because the Mamprusi people do not recognize the *Bawku Naba's* authority, and thus do not want to ask his permission to celebrate the festival.

The Mamprusi people see this action as paying homage to the *Bawku Naba*, which they never want to do. On the day of celebration of the *Samanpiid* festival itself, it is claimed that the Kusasi people especially are noted to sing provocative songs to spite the Mamprusi people, and this heightens the tension and could easily escalate into violence. There have been attempts to cause violence as indicated by an official of the NPC, but due to a quick response by the informants in relaying information, the NPC with cooperation from BEWDA can quickly become engaged, cooperate with the Bawku Police to investigate, and make arrests where necessary.

4.4. Prevention Measures Initiated by the Bawku Police (Track I)

Prevention measures by the Bawku Police are also summarized in Table 1. The Bawku Police initiated conflict-prevention measures (i.e., peace education, an early warning system, and provision of security) in their own unique way (in 2010, 2016, 2018, and 2019). Police also cooperated with other stakeholders (e.g., BEWDA) by taking part in peace education during the election period as happened in 2016 through the media (radio). According to the Bawku Police, their officers cooperate with BEWDA, assembly members, political party leaders, and opinion leaders, who use the media (radio stations) to air peace messages (stressing the need to maintain the peace) during election periods, as they did in the year 2016, and this has been one of the reasons for the absence of violence in the area.

Further, they also engaged both Kusasi and Mamprusi people to desist from provocative gestures and dances during celebration of their respective festivals, which has been adhered to, as evidenced by the peaceful events in 2016, 2018, and 2019. The police in 2016 initiated an early warning system to monitor rumors of attacks during the festival celebrations. According to the Bawku Police, some early signs of potential violence include the absence of donkey carts conveying goods from Bawku to Burkina Faso and Togo on market days, people not able to attend political rallies, insults during political campaigns, children not attending school in neighboring communities, and absence of women trading in key parts of the town, all of which they see as major signs there could be violence in the offing. For example, when these donkey cart activities are not visible, the police would quickly act to verify and investigate with cooperation from the BIEPC members.

The police provide security (i.e., direct conflict prevention), which directly deters possibilities of armed clashes by deploying their personnel for ranging escort duties to prevent any violence during *durbars* or festival celebrations, as they did in 2019, and election periods (in 2016). In view of that, provision of security by the Bawku Police for Kusasi and Mamprusi people during the celebration of the *Samaanpid* and *Damba* festivals, respectively, has reportedly deterred provocative gestures that could lead to violence. In addition, the police have cooperated with the BIEPC festival-planning committee to know the routes to escort the respective people to the *durbar* grounds, as was done in 2016, 2018, and 2019.

Providing security to prevent election-related violence between the two parties is very important, considering past violent clashes relating to elections as seen, for example, in 2002 and 2016. In 2016, the police swiftly prevented an incident from turning violent during the election; for two consecutive days, counting was still ongoing at the collation center, and this raised tension. The Bawku Police intervened and prevented the sympathizers (Mamprusi and Kusasi) from both political parties – NPP and NDC – from mobilizing to engage in violence. The police evacuated the electoral officers and political party candidates to the Bolgatanga Regional Coordinating Council to finish the collation and declare the winner.

Table 1: Conflict Prevention Measures by State Agencies in Bawku (Track I)

Year	Actor	Type of Activity	Details	Target	Location
2009	NPC	Early Warning System	Engagement to counter rumors of planned attacks during festival.	BIEPC	Bawku
2010	NPC	Early Warning System	Engagement to counter rumors of planned attacks during festival.	BIEPC	Bawku
	Bawku Police	Peace Education	Peace message dissemination prior to the elections.	BIEPC	Bawku community
		Early Warning System	Engagement to counter rumors of attacks during the festival celebrations and <i>durbar</i> occasions.	Bawku	
2011	NPC	Mediation	Revitalization effort for BIEPC to become active after its dormancy in 2010.	BIEPC	Bawku
2014	NPC	Mediation	Reconstitution of BIEPC to include other ethnic groups and bring in new members.	Elders & youth (Kusasi & Mamprusi)	Greater Accra and Ashanti region

2015	NPC	Early Warning System	Engagement to counter rumors of planned attacks during festival.	BIEPC	Bawku
		Mediation	Settlement of litigation relating to farmland and to performing the Okro stick ceremony to end the conflict	BIEPC sub-committee on farmland	
2016	NPC	Mediation	Settlement of litigation relating to farmland and to performing the Okro stick ceremony to end the conflict	BIEPC sub-committee on farmland	Bawku
		Peace Education	Peace message dissemination prior to the elections for peaceful elections	BIEPC	
	Bawku Police	Peace Education	Peace message dissemination prior to the elections.	BIEPC	Bawku
		Early Warning System	Engagement to counter rumors of attacks during the festival celebrations and <i>durbar</i> occasions.	Bawku community	
2018	NPC	Mediation	Peaceful organization of festival celebrations.	BIEPC	Bawku
	Bawku	Provision of	Escorting participants during	<i>Bawku Naba</i>	Bawku

	Police	security	the festival celebrations and <i>durbar</i> occasions. Enhancement of visibility to deter criminal acts.	Bawku community	
2019	NPC	Mediation	Peaceful organization of festival celebrations.	BIEPC	Bawku
	Bawku Police	Provision of security	Escorting participants during the festival celebrations and <i>durbar</i> occasions. Enhancement of visibility to deter criminal acts.	<i>Bawku Naba</i> Bawku community	Bawku

Source: Compiled by the author based on information collected during 2019 fieldwork in Ghana.

4.5. Prevention Measures Initiated by the *Bawku Naba* and the BIEPC (Track III)

The prevention measure by the *Bawku Naba* is shown in Table 2. In 2010, the *Bawku Naba* placed an “embargo on farming” – a directive which bars any farming activity by the Mamprusi people until the Okro stick ceremony is conducted. The embargo was initiated as a preventive measure, according to the *Bawku Naba*, to keep unknown assailants from attacking the Mamprusi people who tend to their farms located in or near Kusasi territory. In addition, the embargo is also meant to ensure the Mamprusi people participate in performing the Okro stick ceremony, which would signify the end of the conflict, after which he can lift the embargo. Prevention measures by the BIEPC are summarized in Table 2. The BIEPC has also initiated conflict-prevention measures such as the alert call system, an early warning system, peace education, and negotiations (in 2016, 2017, 2018, and 2019).

The alert call system entails calling by phone to investigate or enquire about the veracity of rumors or any incident that can lead to armed violence. The call is made by the BIEPC to the Bawku Police and other members of the community. The alert call system helped curb a near-fatal violent clash between the youths of the Kusasi and Mamprusi in 2018 when rumors spread in the Mamprusi camp of a Kusasi-planned attack against them. In a similar vein, the Bawku Police in 2018 engaged an armed robbery gang in an exchange of gunshots, which caused people to panic, and Kusasi and Mamprusi youths started mobilizing to engage in battle because there were rumors about either side mobilizing to engage in armed confrontation. The BIEPC

members communicated²⁷ using the alert system and found out that the police were responding to a crime and that was the cause of the shooting.

The alert call system has enabled members of the BIEPC to set up emergency meetings and come up with peace messages that are broadcasted through the media (radio stations) to call for calm during the celebration of festivals to prevent violent clashes. The alert call system has created an effective communication channel between the BIEPC members, Bawku Police, and BEWDA, which never existed previously, according to the co-chairmen. This has generated a spirit of co-existence among the BIEPC, which has trickled down to the community as a whole. In the long run, it is expected that the BIEPC will find a channel to extend the alert call system to the youth in the community and rely on them to report any incident that could threaten the peace in Bawku.

The early warning system gathers danger signs within the community, which are later relayed to the Bawku Police, NPC, BEWDA, and WANEP for further prevention measures. An early warning sign, according to the co-chairmen, would be any time families start packing and leaving, especially away from the center of town where Mamprusi people are dominant, because that may be a sign there could be impending planned attacks. In addition, on market days (every third day of the week), when very important personnel and traders, especially the Kusasi traders, do not turn up to conduct business, that could also be a sign. Further, when the Mamprusi traders cross borders into Togo and Burkina Faso for business purposes and their Kusasi counterparts are not around, it means violence may be in the offing. Hearing indiscriminate shooting of

²⁷ The communication is initiated to investigate the source of gunshots, find out who are involved, and verify the authenticity of any rumors of planned attacks. The high-ranking BIEPC members engage among themselves together with the representatives of the youths from the two sides. The cause of gunshots with regard to the 2018 incident had no connection with the conflict, but due to the unpredictable nature of the conflict, any gunshot is deemed as a signal for potential armed clashes. (Information obtained through interview with BIEPC on September 19, 2019.)

weapons is also a way to know there could be an impending clash. People spread rumors that they might have heard gunshots on either side of town, and that is a major sign that people are testing their weapons in view of an impending clash. The BIEPC members would then meet to establish dialogue and address these concerns before any violence occurs.

The peace education implies the use of the media (radio stations) to broadcast messages promoting peace at all times and the use of civilized means rather than guns to address grievances in the area. The BIEPC encourages the youth to maintain a level of caution when discussing issues of a sensitive nature, such as elections and farmlands, as was done in 2017.

The BIEPC conducts negotiations to interact within the committee and agree on a common alternative to prevent armed clashes or peaceful ways to celebrate the respective festivals. At the time of the field research, the BIEPC was not meeting regularly. This is because the BIEPC only meet when deemed necessary, due to financial constraints on members to travel to the meeting venue. The efforts of the BIEPC have borne fruit with respect to preventing recurrence of violence through their cooperation in agreeing to negotiate and settle outstanding farmland issues amicably out of court, and through sustained engagement and financial support, the outstanding issues would be resolved. All the members of the BIEPC need to be fully committed to peace and encourage the youth and the community members of Bawku to use the channels available (e.g., the police, BEWDA, and BIEPC leadership) to address grievances related to any other matter, according to the co-chairmen.

There were negotiations in 2019 among the BIEPC and opinion leaders in the community towards sustaining the peace and finding amicable ways to resolve the conflict. In the same vein, concerning the burial-of-the-Okro-stick ceremony, which will signify the end of the conflict, progress (cleansing rites in areas where blood was spilled or people were killed and financial

support provided by the state) has been made because of the negotiations among the leadership of the two parties, and this has prevented unnecessary bickering, although there is still more to be done in that regard. Further, at the time of the field study, the Mamprusi representatives in the BIEPC were engaging with their elders regarding an alternative to the Okro-stick ceremony, since the one proposed by the Kusasi is not in line with their culture.

The CSOs' cooperation in Bawku is having a highly positive impact, as their neutrality encourages some trust within the BIEPC, and they are considered agents of conflict prevention. The WANEP and BEWDA are commended by the BIEPC for their technical support, which has enhanced their knowledge and encouraged the maintenance of peace in Bawku.

Table 2: Conflict Prevention Measures by Community in Bawku (Track III)

Year	Actor	Type of Activity	Details	Target	Location
2010	Bawku Naba	Embargo on farming activities	Suspension of farming activities to stop killings on farmland by unknown assailants, encouraging the Mamprusi to participate in Okro stick ceremony and resolve conflict.	Bawku, (Mamprusi people)	Bawku
2016	BIEPC	Alert call system and early warning system	Investigation of rumors of attack during festival, <i>durbar</i> , election periods, and sporadic shootings at night and other incidents.	BIEPC Bawku community	Bawku
2017	BIEPC	Early warning system	Monitoring of peaceful festival celebrations, <i>durbar</i> , and signs and rumors of planned attacks.	Kusasi and Mamprusi community	Bawku
		Peace education	Community sensitization on peace and advocating use of appropriate channels to address grievances.	Bawku community	

2018	BIEPC	Alert call system and early warning system	Investigation of rumors of attack during festivals, <i>durbar</i> , election periods, and sporadic shootings at night and other incidents.	BIEPC Bawku community	Bawku
2019	BIEPC	Negotiation	Undertaking of the Okro stick ceremony to signify end of conflict.	<i>Bawku Naba</i> BIEPC	Bawku

Source: Compiled by the author based on information collected during 2019 fieldwork in Ghana.

4.6. Reflections of NPC and Bawku Police on Conflict Prevention Activities Initiated

The author's study in the field found that the early warning system is heavily relied on and has contributed to curb pockets of incidents that could have escalated into armed violence. The assertion by the officers is that the early warning signs gathered from informants have enabled quick responses against armed violence. The NPC through its cooperation with WANEP and BEWDA to assess early warning signs has fostered a sense of urgency regarding early detection and early response to curb potential armed clashes in Bawku. The NPC official stated that "cooperation's [sic] have yielded results with regard to prevention and this effort is being maintained in the long term towards resolving the conflict."

The officer also added:

We have not heard of eruptions not because people have not attempted [them] but because the BIEPC and informants have been proactive and also other support systems like WANEP who have their own early warning system everywhere including the region which they share with NPC and relay to the appropriate stakeholder (BIEPC, Police or the Municipal Assembly) to act on. (Interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019)

According to the officer, cooperation with WANEP and BEWDA with regard to the early warning system and subsequent responses at the early stages against recurrence of armed violence have contributed to the sustained peace. In addition to the early warning signs the officer said:

The good thing is that most of the members of the committee are in Bawku and know the ins and outs of the community, hence share early warning signs with the police who in turn act to verify and make arrests where necessary. (Interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019)

The officers assert that the peace education should be maintained and organized periodically. The inhabitants in Bawku have adhered to peace education to desist from armed clashes during election periods and festival celebrations according to the NPC and Bawku Police officers. The officers stated that there were engagements with politicians through meetings for peace education to send the message to the people that peace is the best way to approach the conflict. The NPC officer believes that, when the BIEPC is resourced, there will be frequent peace education programs and they would resonate well with the youth. “If there were financial support the process would have come far,” according to the officer. The officer added that:

If the BIEPC is enabled to perform their activities, the armed recurrence would be remote because the people listen to the BIEPC when they educate them, but when there are intermittent activities the populace are not educated enough on peace education and peace building and they would forget and go back to engage in violence, and that is what is happening in all our conflicts; prevention is always prioritized last, but if prevention is prioritized, the BIEPC can take that role and put in more preventive measures. (Interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019)

One of the NPC staff stated:

We should not only look at the elections as the main time to start engaging to prevent violence but to start now so to achieve a lot, so we are thinking of doing that, but because of our financial problems, we take advantage of key events in town and further engage all segments of the population on some of these issues to prevent recurrence of violence. (Interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019)

Mediations, according to the officers, have been helpful, and without them, there would not have been progress made with regard to some issues like farmlands. Mediations, according to the NPC officer, enabled a series of meetings for the BIEPC to arrive at the decisions that were taken in 2015 to re-inaugurate the BIEPC. Arguing for the positive impact of the mediations, the NPC officer added that it was mediation with the BIEPC that led to the decision to broaden the committee to include the youth representatives in other regions such as the Ashanti region and its environs, namely Techiman and the Greater Accra region (Ashaiman and Tema). Mediations with the BIEPC tended to address issues that could have led to recurrence of armed violence.

Regarding whether there is a potential for recurrence of armed clashes, the NPC and Bawku Police officer said, “definitely, recurrence of armed violence can happen.” Anything can trigger a recurrence of armed clashes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi people. The factors that could enable violent recurrence include (i) non performance of the burial of the Okro stick ceremony, (ii) outstanding farmlands issues, (iii) the situation of the Mamprusi still having a regent

(equivalent to a chief in Mamprusi culture), and (iv) political elections (presidential and parliamentary). The Mamprusi people have taken an entrenched position not to recognize the *Bawku Naba* as the paramount chief of Bawku.

Highlighting the burial of the Okro stick ceremony, one NPC officer said:

For the fact that the burial of the Okro stick has not been performed yet, there is nothing to tell you that things have ended because they are saying that if that process had taken place, that would signify the end of the conflict, so traditionally the conflict is still pending and anything can spark it. (Interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019)

What makes recurrence of armed clashes possible, according to the police officer, is the fact that the two factions have ‘community weapons’ purchased by some elders in the community and used in the violence. The weapons are still in the system; the same NPC officer emphatically stated, “we do not know where the weapons are coming from.” This makes the situation very unpredictable; however, the NPC officer believes that dialogue and extensive engagements will enable the situation to remain calm.

With regard to necessary approaches to prevent a recurrence of armed violence, one NPC officer asserted:

The Municipal Assembly (BMA), Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), and central government need to support the BIEPC to organize [the] Okro stick ceremony which symbolically ends the conflict. The Bawku peace process should

be seen as work-in-progress that needs sustained support. (Interview with NPC officials on September 18, 2019)

Both officers explained that a necessary approach would be to improve the early warning system through support from the central/local government. One NPC officer claimed their unit has the capacity to curb future armed violence and, despite their financial challenges, to facilitate periodic prevention measures such as peace education. Bawku is peaceful because of the various prevention measures initiated and the cooperation among the stakeholders at different levels. According to a Bawku Police officer, intelligence gathering by the police from community leaders, members of the BIEPC, traditional actors, opinion leaders, and persons who are not interested in the conflict but are affected by the violence would be improved. The police officer pointed out that “most of the violence experienced was because there were no prevention measures and prevention was never a priority,” and “the priority should be prevention at the early stages and not [action] initiated after violence is recorded.”

They also mentioned that cooperation efforts towards prevention among the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, and BEWDA have resulted in enhanced capacity building through training for the BIEPC members to find amicable ways to resolve the conflict. The NPC officer, however, bemoaned the fact that a lack of resources does not help to prevent another recurrence of armed violence. The lack of resources from the central and local government undermines the state’s commitment to find an amicable solution to end the conflict. The officer claims that “the NPC is doing its best but lacks resources from the national/local government to monitor activities; the last monitoring to assess the effectiveness of the peace education and other measures was conducted in 2018.” A lot more still needs to be done to prevent armed violence in Bawku. This

includes enabling the BIEPC to truly function as local peace structure by supporting it with funds to undertake community engagement and function as an early warning and response mechanism to be able to collect and analyze data. The officer stated, “all stakeholders (Bawku Police, NPC, and BIEPC) have the desire to do a good job, maintain the relative peace, with the technical ability which is available, but the major problem is funding which means regular engagements cannot happen.”

4.7. Reflections of the *Bawku Naba*, the BIEPC, Youth, and Women Representatives

The *Bawku Naba*, speaking through his spokesman, stated that the embargo was necessary to prevent armed clashes, and for him to achieve that, he initiated the embargo. This yielded the expected results and prevented sporadic threats against farmers who tend to their farms. The alert call system and the early warning system have created a good communication channel between the BIEPC members, the Bawku Police, and BEWDA, which never existed before. The BIEPC members attested to the advantage of the peace education and negotiations initiated and explained that it has contributed to curb incidences that could have escalated into violence. The committee members mentioned,

In 2016 presidential/parliamentary elections we came out with a lot of peace education activities, engaged the political parties and the youths; we even organized a football event between youths from all the twenty (20) electoral areas in Bawku. Anytime the football begins, the BIEPC uses fifteen minutes to

sensitize the youth on peace and experiences of party politics, which has helped much in relation to the conflict. (Interview with BIEPC on September 19, 2019)

The potential for a recurrence of armed violence is 30% to 70%, according to the BIEPC. The BIEPC members also mentioned that the proliferation of illegal weapons in the system could lead to the potential recurrence of armed clashes. According to them, “the weapons are still in possession of individuals because members of the feuding sides do not trust each another.” The BIEPC added,

The feuding sides are suspicious of each other, even though there is relative peace and some people are also finding it difficult to hand over their weapons to the security services (police) because of the level of mistrust. Upon all these, we still have not believed that it is over; we have some suspicions, though we do not know what or who will start any provocation leading to armed violence. That is why people are still in possession of their weapons. We should try and prevent conflict because it doesn't help anybody. (Interview with BIEPC on September 19, 2019)

They also added that the approach to prevent violence will be to rely in the early warning system, alert call system, training with regard to peace education, and negotiations. With respect to the chieftaincy issue, the Kusasi elders (decision makers) clearly stated it is non-negotiable and not up for discussion again, but the Mamprusi elders referred to it as an outstanding issue which cannot be resolved through violence. The committee stated that WANEP and BEWDA

have done well in facilitating peace talks among the Kusasi and Mamprusi people, creating the opportunity and platform for communication towards conflict resolution. The BIEPC regard WANEP and BEWDA as reliable organizations whose goals in preventing armed violence and technical assistance are needed to end the conflict. According to the committee, the WANEP and BEWDA have been very supportive financially, and their presence has been very significant in sustaining peace. They added that the CSOs have managed to curb cases that could have escalated tensions in Bawku. In 2009 the BIEPC adopted a strategy called the “community entry” initiative, which involved visiting churches and mosques in Bawku and holding seminars on effects of violent conflicts. These were made possible due to the technical and financial assistance received from the CSOs. This gave the committee an understanding of their mandate in preventing armed violence.

The knowledge gained from the training on communication skills and capacity building by WANEP and BEWDA has been valuable for co-existence. Prior to this, there had not been any such engagements for the BIEPC. In 2015, WANEP and BEWDA facilitated training on communication skills and negotiations for the BIEPC, which enhanced the knowledge of the committee. The roles of WANEP and BEWDA have contributed to the peaceful management and celebration of festivals for the past several years. The roles of the CSOs have enabled the committee and community to manage the issue of the Mamprusi people not paying homage to the *Bawku Naba*, which could have easily escalated into armed violence. Their roles have created an enabling environment for awareness raising, sensitization, and dialogue on the devastating effects of violence on lives and property.

Through the roles of the CSOs, some farmland issues have been settled out of court. The BIEPC explained that “a Kusasi had his farm occupied by illegal people and the committee

settled the issue themselves instead of the law courts.” Prevention measures facilitated by WANEP and BEWDA have empowered the BIEPC to take a dynamic approach, implement contemporary ideas, and create new opportunities to find amicable ways to prevent armed clashes. The roles of WANEP and BEWDA are deemed as an added capacity which will prevent armed conflict, facilitate peace processes, and monitor the changing dynamics of the conflict in order to respond appropriately. Since WANEP and BEWDA know the context and history of the Bawku conflict, they can offer the needed guidance, which will go a long way toward resolving the conflict. The members stressed that the national/local government needs to be more supportive in the areas of finances for peace-education activities to compliment the efforts by WANEP and BEWDA.

Cooperation among the BIEPC members, women representatives, and the youth has been productive in generating ideas for sensitization. The BIEPC members stressed that “anytime we have a meeting with BEWDA and the youth, we consider the women because we foresaw that their involvement in engagements yielded much result.” According to the representatives of the youth groups from the Mamprusi and Kusasi sides, exposing troublemakers has been a prevention measure employed by the women and some youths. Anyone with the intentions of fomenting trouble or firing an illegal weapon to cause fear and panic in Bawku is reported to the police and an arrest will be made, leading to prosecution.

On how the youth detect potential armed clashes, they mentioned information gathering and intelligence gathering from informants in the community. The youth groups have expressed the desire to have better employment opportunities for them to desist from engaging in acts that can disrupt the peace. Both youth representatives expressed the desire for infrastructural development (better social services) and to gain meaningful employment to earn a good living.

The women representatives have admonished the men and youths through a peace march to desist from triggering violence, because they are affected the most.

The women's groups from the Mamprusi and Kusasi sides also rely on the means of exposing troublemakers, volunteering information on where the guns are kept, and reporting rumors of any impending attack as prevention measures. According to them, their perception of the conflict is that it has been devastating to them because they lose the breadwinners of the family. The women representatives further explained that they engage in a peace march (as a prevention measure) when it is necessary to send the message of peace across the community. This happens for their voices to be heard and for the youth to desist from engaging in armed violence because the effects of violent actions will produce dire consequences.

The youth and women representatives all recognize and acknowledge the role of the BIEPC in preventing a recurrence of armed clashes. They commend BEWDA and all the stakeholders for playing various roles in sustaining the peace. The women representatives stated that the BIEPC has contributed immensely through training on peace education to form groups to facilitate peacebuilding activities in their various communities. According to them, they do not see any recurrence because they believe people have understood that the adverse effects of the violence are worse. They have pleaded with the government to assist people to set up businesses so as to engage them away from armed violence.

4.8. Analysis of Prevention Measures Initiated by the NPC and Bawku Police

With regard to this study's research question on what lessons can be drawn with regard to prevention measures from the case of Bawku toward the conflict prevention literature within the

conflict resolution discipline, this study has shown that state agencies (Track I) and community (Track III) have implemented various prevention measures in the realm of direct prevention in the Conflict-resolution sphere. The direct prevention measures initiated in Bawku against violent conflict corroborate the argument that prevention has become important in ensuring that armed violence does not spiral and recur.

To corroborate the importance of prevention measures implemented by the state agencies against recurrence of armed violence, it is important to take into consideration definitions of the concept of prevention and categories of prevention, namely direct and structural prevention measures. This will show the corroboration among the field findings, including reflections and comments made by officers of the Track I actors (NPC and Bawku Police), with regard to the measures implemented in Bawku. Highlighting the definitions will also support the argument and analysis of the type of prevention measures, both direct and structural; which organization implemented them; and what issues they were implemented against. It has been established per the field findings in this study that conflict prevention aims at preventing the outbreak of violent conflict at the early stages by the stakeholders.

The argument is that the direct prevention initiated in Bawku deals with measures initiated against short-term, imminent, escalation of armed conflict. Per field findings and comments from the NPC and Bawku Police (Track I), the measures implemented in Bawku have been geared toward curbing potential recurrence of armed clashes at the early stages. The direct prevention measures implemented by the NPC and Bawku Police with regard to the Bawku conflict include: (i) the early warning system, (ii) peace education, (iii) mediation, and (iv) provision of security respectively. Narrowing in on the early warning system, the implementation of this measure in Bawku, according to field findings, is not only relied on to detect and monitor early signs of

potential escalation of violence, but also considered as an approach for preventing recurrence of armed violence. This corroborates the conclusion by Ramsbotham et al. (2016) that to identify whether a conflict is about to erupt into violence, an early warning system needs to be in place for stakeholders to act rapidly. Additionally, the early warning system implemented by the NPC and Bawku Police in Bawku shows that preventing armed violence involves creative thinking or ideas in identifying clues of escalation and initiating appropriate measures.

From the field findings, it has also been established that direct prevention measures limit the escalation of conflicts at an early stage. This is evident per field findings of the various types of direct prevention measures initiated in 2009, 2010, 2011, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019 against recurrence of armed clashes. Preventing conflict from escalating into armed violence requires actions that deal with the conflict at an early stage to prevent it from becoming violent. According to the field findings and the reflections of the officers from the NPC and Bawku Police, the priority is to curb the recurrence of armed clashes by implementing measures at the early stages and to sustain the peace in Bawku, hence implementation of the direct prevention measures. Further on, the field findings show the NPC and Bawku Police, as depicted in chapter four of this study, have implemented various direct prevention measures against recurrence of armed violence at the early stages, thus corroborating the argument on the need for implementing these kinds of measures to curb short-term, imminent escalation of armed conflict.

Based on the field findings from this study, structural prevention measures were not implemented by the NPC and Bawku Police (Track I). This indicates that the state agencies are focused on prevention of armed clashes at the early stages and counting on the performance of the Okro stick ceremony to end the conflict. According to the findings, direct prevention measures were implemented toward pertinent issues such as outstanding farmlands because of

their potential to trigger a recurrence of armed clashes. Despite the fact that the national government established the NPC to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts towards a sustainable peace, the state's efforts with respect to prevention of armed violence have been inadequate according to the NPC officer, and this further corroborates the facts stated in the preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) with respect to the unsuccessful attempts to end the conflict in the past.

This supports the statement by the Bawku Police officer that prevention measures were not prioritized in the past, hence the recurrence of armed violence. The direct prevention measures, according to the officers from the state agencies, show how the Bawku conflict is of a protracted nature and how unstable the situation is. It is the hope of the officers that the direct measures initiated will all positively influence the actions of the protagonists to maintain the peace and in the long term find amicable ways to end the conflict. In sum, the Track I actors (NPC and Bawku Police) have implemented direct prevention measures, which are used in the short term against recurrence of violent conflict in Bawku.

4.9. Analysis of Prevention Measures Initiated by the *Bawku Naba* and BIEPC

In their quest to prevent recurrence of potential armed violence, the community representatives, according to field findings, implemented direct prevention measures at the early stages to address issues that have the potential to trigger armed clashes. In view of that, this section regarding analysis of the measures by the community (Track III) has answered the fundamental question centering on the lessons that can be drawn with regard to prevention measures from this case study toward the conflict prevention literature within the conflict-resolution sphere.

The implementation of direct prevention measures (i.e., embargo, alert call system, early warning system, peace education, and negotiations) has contributed to the sustenance of peace in Bawku, according to field findings. Structural prevention measures, according to the field findings with regard to the community representatives, have not been the focus of the actors. The implementation of direct measures indicates that the main agenda is to curb any recurrence of armed violence and eventually find amicable ways to resolve the conflict.

Per the field findings, the BIEPC and the *Bawku Naba* are expectant that the direct prevention measures will be reliable against any recurrence of armed violence and maintain the peace in Bawku. Their assurance is confident despite the different reflections by the Kusasi and Mamprusi on the chieftaincy, the existence of the Mamprusi regent, and unresolved outstanding farmland issues. According to the author's field findings, the embargo implemented by the *Bawku Naba* has curbed the sporadic attacks against farmers, especially from the Mamprusi side, during farming seasons, stressing the importance of the role of the community towards preventing violent conflicts at the early stages. This direct prevention measure, according to field findings, not only curbed recurrence of armed violence but also led to the Mamprusi people negotiating for an amicable solution to end the conflict, since they are not participating in the Okro stick ceremony. In sum, the direct prevention measures (e.g., embargo) implemented by the *Bawku Naba* and the BIEPC (Track III) reflect the unpredictable nature of the conflict. The implementation of the direct measures also corroborates reflections by officials of WANEP and BEWDA that the conflict is in hibernation.

The direct prevention measures implemented (i.e., the alert call system, early warning system, peace education, and negotiation) not only confirm the importance of early prevention of armed violence in Bawku, but also confirm efforts that have been made by the community – the BIEPC

especially – in the area of prevention, which is important. To clarify more on the early warning system and the alert call system, these direct measures show not only how prepared the BIEPC is with regard to early detection and monitoring of armed violence, but also their awareness and preparedness for quick response in order for the problem to be solved.

The alert call system corroborates the assertion that investigating incidents to clarify who is involved and controlling rumors to correct malicious reports are required in preventing armed conflicts. The BIEPC has endeavored to enhance the potentials of the alert call system and the early warning system to investigate rumors of potential attacks, sporadic shooting, and other incidents that have the potential to trigger armed violence. The early warning system corroborates the assertion of how the system is a fundamental part of conflict prevention. Due to the mistrust among the two sides, some of the youths reportedly have in their possession the weapons which they will use to defend themselves if the need arises. This situation proves and gives cause for the BIEPC to implement direct measures to entreat the youth to desist from provocations during celebration of festivals, *durbars*, election periods, etc.

With regard to such direct measures as peace education and sensitization, the field findings show that the Track III actors (community) have done a lot of work towards preventing armed clashes in Bawku. This analysis has shown that the BIEPC has implemented various measures which provide direct prevention against various issues that could trigger armed clashes. This seeks to answer questions asked in this study relating to the types/kinds of prevention measures implemented (direct and structural), which organization implemented them, and what issues they were implemented against. Overall it does answer the main question on the lessons to be drawn with regard to conflict prevention and this case, focusing on the vital roles the community plays in preventing violent conflicts. Thus, conflict-prevention measures have been deemed important

by the Track III actors. This ensures that the members have a decisive role to play by pursuing moderate and constructive strategies with regard to the direct prevention measures to defuse tensions that could trigger a recurrence of armed clashes. According to field findings, negotiations (i.e., direct measure) implemented for the performance of the Okro stick ceremony offer a way to keep all parties actively engaged, especially the youth representatives.

It is imperative to mention that, through cooperation among the BIEPC members, their membership has expressed concerns for full commitment to peace – encouraging the youth and the community members of Bawku to use the channels available (e.g., the police, BEWDA and BIEPC leadership) to address any grievances related either to the chieftaincy or any other matter. Thus, according to the field findings, the situation in Bawku has improved because of cooperation among the stakeholders.

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the roles and prevention measures initiated by the Track I and III actors, including the NPC, Bawku Police, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC, in preventing armed clashes. The author's field study found that prevention measures were initiated by Track I and III actors at the early stages against armed violence, and this is one aspect to corroborate arguments made on the importance of prevention and also contributes to lessons to be drawn from this study with regard to the main research question. As part of the study's originality, this chapter presented through tables (1 and 2) various prevention measures initiated in Bawku against armed conflict to show the type of prevention measures, which were all direct measures; the organization that implemented them; and the issues they were implemented against.

The state agencies (NPC and Bawku Police) and community representatives (BIEPC) have played vital roles in sustaining the peace in Bawku for the past decade and this is another key lesson to be drawn with regard to what exactly are expected to be the roles of conflict actors to ensure resolution of a conflict and sustain peace. The stakeholders have similar reflections; thus all conflict-prevention measures seem to be perceived positively. The possibility of a recurrence of armed violence, per narrations by the stakeholders, is divided, but largely the NPC, Bawku Police, and BIEPC do not rule out a recurrence of armed violence if the existing issues are not resolved. The author's study in the field found that the NPC, Bawku Police, and BIEPC are all committed to preventing armed violence through further engagements, and this also is another lesson with regard to the long-term prevention measures.

The Mamprusi people's position of having a regent who does not recognize or pay homage to the *Bawku Naba* adds to the concerns expressed by the NPC and Bawku Police with regard to a possible recurrence of armed violence. Direct prevention measures such as early warning systems, peace education, and mediations are the most prominent to have been initiated by the NPC, Bawku Police, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC at early stages against armed violence. The question now is: how can the youth desist from armed violence when they still do not trust each other and have in their possession illegal weapons?

The next chapter will focus on prevention activities initiated by the CSOs, their roles, reflections, and perceived necessary approaches for the future, while analyzing the characteristics and tendencies of the type of prevention measures implemented by them.

Chapter 5: Conflict Prevention Activities Initiated by Civil Society

Organizations (CSOs) (Track II)

In this chapter, details on the CSOs – namely West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) (Track II) – will be shown. Using information retrieved from interviews with WANEP and BEWDA in 2019 and telephone interviews in September 2020, this chapter presents: (i) an outline of the roles played by the CSOs in preventing armed clashes; (ii) a presentation of conflict-prevention measures by these actors (see Table 3); (iii) their reflections on the measures initiated, cooperation efforts among them, and the necessary approaches to curb violence; and (iv) an analysis of the characteristics and tendencies of the type of prevention measures initiated by the CSOs. The table shows the CSOs have taken steps towards preventing recurrence of armed violence.

5.1. The Roles Played by WANEP (Track II) in Preventing Armed Clashes

WANEP is a regional NGO network implementing and operationalizing peacebuilding programs, with a presence in 15 countries in the African sub-region including Ghana. WANEP is financed by donors, namely the European Union (EU) and international governments like the Canadian and Australian governments, through direct funding. WANEP-Ghana, established around 1998-2000, has a head office in Ghana-Accra and in the Northern part of Ghana (regional representation). The organization is a capacity-based institution that provides and facilitates capacity building and technical guidance in the areas of human security and peacebuilding. WANEP-Ghana specifically plays technical roles in peacebuilding towards preventing armed

conflicts and sustaining peace. WANEP acts as an advisory council that offers technical advice, provides information, and informs stakeholders such as the NPC, BEWDA, and BIEPC. The organization's objective is to facilitate early response to structural and proximate causes of conflicts at all levels – and facilitate technical guidance in governance at the national and regional levels in Ghana. With regard to the Bawku conflict, WANEP plays the role of (i) a technical backstopper and (ii) a capacity builder. In Bawku, a five-member Community Monitoring Team (CMT) based there relays information to officials at the regional office for bilateral consultations.

5.1.1. WANEP as Technical Backstopper

The technical backstopper role entails offering guidance and assistance on how to organize peace-and-dialogue workshops and coordinate peacebuilding activities. In 2010, WANEP facilitated the Peace Accords at Kumasi (a town in the Ashanti region of Ghana) for dialogue processes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi to reach a mutual decision that would allow them to resolve the conflict. WANEP held dialogue sessions with about 20 Kusasi and Mamprusi elders – that is, the 20-member BIEPC – and interacted with them. The goal of the dialogue session was to understand the causes of the conflict and encourage the parties to appreciate the need to engage in communication rather than armed violence. The Peace Accords also aimed to ensure the two sides could discuss the specific issues that were contributing to tensions, such as settlement of outstanding farmland issues and celebration of festivals.

WANEP facilitates sustained and extensive engagements aimed at preventing armed clashes. These sustained and extensive engagements entail one-off meetings (during times of high

tensions that could escalate into armed violence) using negotiations conducted among the BIEPC with regard to outstanding issues (e.g., the Okro stick rite). The goal of this sustained and extensive engagement is first of all to move the 20-member BIEPC toward formulating new ideas to prevent armed clashes. It also aims to encourage the parties to settle any challenges with regard to the performance of the Okro stick ceremony (traditional ceremony to be performed by the two parties) to declare the conflict over. WANEP has offered technical guidance in the area of communication skills for the BIEPC to acquire the needed skills to implement some decisions themselves.

WANEP conducts “protocol researches” (conducted once) when necessary. This involves undertaking conflict analysis, risk assessments, and scoping to identify the needs of the people as a preventive mechanism to curb armed clashes and improve the living conditions of the people. These researches, according to an official, are also intended to identify the issues that cause tensions and escalate into potential violence, so engagements with the BIEPC can commence. The respondents for the research are the BIEPC, youth and women representatives, and all relevant groups. WANEP then engages the respondents technically and practically, based on the outcomes of the research, for dialogue, education, and sensitization processes to be implemented. In 2010, WANEP, through sustained and extensive engagements, constituted a facilitation team that worked effectively towards preventing armed violence. The facilitation team consisted of the BIEPC and a facilitator from the Mossi minority ethnic group to act as a co-chair. The team was put in a frame to discuss issues, dialogue on preventive measures, and find solutions to end the conflict.

WANEP facilitated interactions with key influencers and high-profile individuals, and included them in the peace processes to assist in finding solutions to end the conflict. Their

inclusion helped change the dynamics and issues of the conflict and prevented potential armed violence. An official of WANEP stated that if it were not for such sustained engagements, the conflict could have been worse. WANEP also engaged in extensive dialogue with conflict entrepreneurs (those that influence the conflict negatively) to sensitize them on the effects of their utterances and actions that cause many unfavorable situations, hindering resolution of the conflict. Commenting further, the official mentioned that they were engaging some of the conflict entrepreneurs one-on-one to play various roles (e.g., advisers or negotiators) in preventing a recurrence and assist with the peace processes.

5.1.2. WANEP as a Capacity Builder

WANEP facilitated capacity building and offered technical guidance for the BIEPC to ascertain how to dialogue and find amicable ways to end the conflict. The capacity building and technical assistance for the BIEPC centered on (i) dialogue processes, (ii) Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), and (iii) mechanisms to respond to proximate causes of armed conflict. The capacity building and technical guidance require technical expertise, which WANEP is noted for, to assist the feuding sides and the BIEPC to realize that violence will not achieve their goals. WANEP also builds capacity for stakeholders such as BEWDA to foster mutual cooperation towards dialogue among the BIEPC. Technical guidance by WANEP is geared toward enhancing opportunities for the BIEPC to execute its mandate and find solutions acceptable to all parties in the conflict. The technical expertise by WANEP entails what one official calls “clouds” to sensitize the feuding sides and soften their stance on using illegal means to channel their grievances.

Training aims to equip the BIEPC with the requisite technical capacity and knowledge to resolve all outstanding issues such as disputes over elections, festivals, outstanding seized farmlands, and performance of the Okro stick ceremony. The training modules include election management focusing on peaceful campaigns before, during, and after elections. The modules have also focused on tolerance, communication, and community-level mechanisms to prevent armed violence. These are all composed in a comprehensive manner towards preventing armed violence. WANEP has facilitated an enabling environment for co-existence among the Kusasi and Mamprusi people through awareness, sensitization, dialogue, and peacebuilding. The enabling environment has encouraged the feuding sides to unite and benefit from trade and the use of agricultural land.

An official responding to the question of whether their role in preventing armed violence has contributed to the sustained peace stated, “I will not mince words on our efforts which have contributed to the peace in Bawku. I know what we [WANEP] have done and the monitoring [implemented] when violence was ongoing in the [past].” The official added that WANEP has played significant roles to manage the situation during the periods of armed clashes in 2000, 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2009. In 2019, WANEP facilitated extensive interactions through peacebuilding activities with the BIEPC and other stakeholders to prevent potential armed violence. In that same year, WANEP implemented monitoring to detect potential sources of armed violence. In 2020, WANEP facilitated the implementation of two significant interventions towards preventing armed violence. First, election-awareness-related intervention through the media house (i.e., radio station) engaged the 22-member BIEPC, political party representatives, people with disabilities, women representatives, and youth representatives to sensitize the

community on the need to prevent armed violence before, during, and after the 2020 general presidential/parliamentary elections.

The election awareness was intended to further entreat the youth to engage in issue-based campaigning devoid of insults, thus contributing to an enabling environment to facilitate a successful election in Bawku. Second, WANEP assisted in facilitating an agricultural-governance program with the assistance of some NGOs, namely Action AID Ghana (AAG) and CARE International-Ghana. The program implemented was intended to create an enabling environment and build consensus for agriculture activities and processes to thrive for the people of Bawku to benefit. Other interventions towards preventing armed violence implemented by WANEP include: (i) early response, (ii) engagements in mini dialogue (meeting with the leadership of the two sides and BIEPC representatives), and (iii) building capacity for women representatives and stakeholders such as prominent opinion leaders. These interventions aim to inculcate prevention, peacebuilding practices, and processes against armed violence in people's normal daily lives. The interventions were also intended to educate the people and support structures that can enable the feuding sides to share the land space for their mutual benefit without armed violence.

5.2. The Role Played by BEWDA (Track II) in Preventing Armed Clashes

BEWDA is a local NGO located in Bawku, established around 2000. The organization began as a development agency and was mandated to provide assistance for the welfare of women in Bawku and its environs. BEWDA's name (Belim Wusa Development Agency) literally means "sustained livelihoods for all." The organization's strategic location in Bawku enables it to play a

direct role in preventing the recurrence of armed violence in Bawku. To that end, BEWDA had its strategic direction re-structured, and conflict- and peacebuilding-related issues were included in their thematic areas so the organization would be engaged in the Bawku conflict. BEWDA's peacebuilding activities were incorporated in 2001 to prevent recurrence of armed conflict and find amicable ways to resolve the conflict. A current objective of the organization is to assist the BIEPC to find solutions mutually acceptable to all parties in the Bawku conflict to end the conflict. Funding for conflict-prevention and peacebuilding activities is obtained through proposals which are submitted to various organizations such as Action-Aid-Ghana, among others. The organization is recognized as playing the role of a peacebuilding facilitator.

As a peacebuilding facilitator for the BIEPC, BEWDA facilitates seminars and workshops on communication skills, and promotes sustained and continuous engagement for the BIEPC to find amicable ways to end the conflict. The institution was instrumental in the establishment of the BIEPC and the sub-committees, namely the festival and farmlands sub-committees. In ensuring the BIEPC achieves its prevention targets, BEWDA has two facilitators on the BIEPC to offer technical guidance. In 2009, BEWDA facilitated the inclusion of at least two women into the BIEPC. Their inclusion was necessitated because of the instrumental roles (e.g., peace ambassadors and the ability to reach a wide audience) women play as peacemakers in the community and home. BEWDA mediated and liaised with the BIEPC and youth representatives to promote dialogue for peacebuilding activities to be implemented. BEWDA facilitated seminars and workshops on communication skills so the BIEPC could be equipped with sufficient knowledge to resolve issues they can handle themselves. The seminars and workshops aimed to build a cultural relationship among the 20 members of BIEPC and generate ideas to prevent armed violence. In 2010, BEWDA facilitated community engagement such as peace

sensitization among the youth, women, and the Mamprusi representatives to revive the BIEPC after it went dormant due to mistrust cited by the Mamprusi people.

BEWDA organized training sessions for the BIEPC to reach out to the various communities to sensitize them regarding the need for peace. The organization monitors the prevention activities (e.g., dialogue) among the BIEPC and provides financial assistance where necessary. BEWDA as part of its role ensures a strong partnership with the BIEPC, reviews meetings held by the BIEPC, assists the committee in proposal writing to seek funding for peace activities, and conducts training. BEWDA also offers oversight guidance to resolve long-standing issues such as the outstanding farmland cases and ensuring peaceful celebrations of festivals. The two institutions strategize and formulate peacebuilding and prevention activities together.

BEWDA facilitated sustained and continuous engagement, which entailed periodic dialogue and meetings with the BIEPC and its sub-committees to (i) prevent armed violence and (ii) find amicable ways to end the conflict. Through its own initiatives, BEWDA supported the committee to implement key objectives (outline prevention steps for peaceful festivities and elections and resolving outstanding issues) and offered technical advice (promptly addressing issues without fear or favor) to the sub-committees on farmlands to resolve any remaining issues. In 2020, BEWDA offered guidance to the sub-committee on farmlands to resolve issues surrounding farms being taken over by unidentified people and subsequently reported to the police for investigations to begin. The BEWDA reported that when people see the BIEPC sub-committee is working, it gives them hope that something can be done to address their concerns and trust will be conveyed on them. BEWDA ensures peaceful celebration of festivals by guiding the sub-committee on festivals to sensitize the two sides on the dangers, including the effects of insults and provocative songs by the two sides during the respective festivals.

Specifically, according to the BEWDA, the Mamprusi are perceived as outsiders and their festival reminds the original inhabitants that foreign rulers were imposed on the indigenous people by a colonial power. In the 2020 presidential/parliamentary elections in Ghana, BEWDA implemented sustained engagements together with the media and organized political discussions with political party representatives, the BIEPC, the ethnic groupings at community levels, youth and women representatives, the Zongo caucuses, representatives of the Electoral Commission of Ghana (EC), and communication officers. This event aimed to carry out BEWDA's role in preventing armed violence before, during, and after the 2020 general elections. BEWDA offered technical support for the BIEPC to liaise (establish a working relation and good rapport) with the Regional Coordinating Council (RCC), Regional Security Council (RegSec), and Municipal Security Council (Musec) to deepen their cooperation towards preventing armed violence. BEWDA, according to the official, has played significant roles to manage tensions in Bawku through its preventive measures (e.g., sustained and continuous engagement).

BEWDA's role has also contributed to the stabilization of the Bawku conflict for the past decade, also according to the official. BEWDA has facilitated access to social and economic services, such as access to markets, health, and educational services, to benefit all the ethnic groups.

5.3. Prevention Measures Initiated by WANEP (Track II)

Prevention measures instituted by WANEP are summarized in Table 3. With regard to what they call prevention measures, WANEP implemented an early warning system, mediation, and peace education in 2009 and 2010.

As for the early warning system, WANEP-Ghana's National Early Warning System (NEWS) is a mechanism at the national level customized for conflict monitoring. WANEP-Ghana's NEWS was the second such CSO initiative in West Africa following that of WANEP (in Nigeria) and WANEP (in Benin). WANEP as an organization is also in partnership with the African Union Commission supporting the development of the AU Continental Early Warning System (CEWS). The early warning system (i.e., NEWS) developed by WANEP-Ghana is a mechanism with an interactive electronic-database system and online interface which allows various stakeholders to interact. It also has parallel interpersonal ways of collecting information from various stakeholders and the public, by phone or text messaging.

WANEP-Ghana's NEWS includes early warning systems for monitoring elections in conflict-prone areas. WANEP established what was called Community Monitoring Teams (CMT) in 2009 – comprising a comprehensive group of five community members and a team leader. The CMT members are residents of Bawku who are located in different suburbs/sections in the town so as to cover a substantial geographical area with regard to the information they gather. They have been extensively trained in collecting early warning signs throughout the area. The CMT has gained a lot of experience in collecting information from various stakeholders or the public in the town through phone calls and/or text messages. The CMT then feeds WANEP-Ghana with the information that is gathered and utilized for bilateral consultation, engagement, and mediation with key stakeholders such as NPC, BEWDA, or BIEPC members.

Commenting that “the situation in Bawku is better than before considering the peace which has been sustained for the past years,” the stakeholders (i.e., the Bawku Police officer, NPC, and BEWDA) highly commended the WANEP for the CMT in providing early warning signs. According to the stakeholders, the CMT would need to be sustained at all levels to identify

potential violent incidents and curb rumors about possible attacks during upcoming celebrations of festivals by the Kusasi and Mamprusi people and during election periods, considering the tensions generated by these two occasions.

Furthermore, the system implemented is one of the reasons for the absence of violent clashes for the past decade and is a very important prevention measure according to the stakeholders. Similarly, claims are that the early warning system (i.e., CMT) has helped to identify rumors of future violent attacks alleged to have been planned by either the Kusasi or Mamprusi youth during festival or *durbar* periods including elections. These rumors are picked up by the CMT, who relay the information for urgent action due to the uncertainty of the situation in Bawku.

WANEP-organized mediation, for example in 2010 with the BIEPC to initiate peace processes, encourages attendance at markets by the parties to stop boycotts, prevent any violence, and attempt to resolve conflict. Regarding the non-attendance at markets, WANEP initiated a platform for communication using mediation, and eventually got the members of the community, especially the Kusasi and Mamprusi people, to stop boycotting and agree to start attending the markets to improve commerce in the town. This effort also enabled WANEP to restore calm and trust between the protagonists. However, because the situation in Bawku is still unpredictable, sustained engagement could help solve issues and prevent potential armed violence.

With regard to the peace education by WANEP, peace education and sensitization on sustaining the peace was initiated among the leadership of the youth, women, and all other relevant groups, who in turn educated and sensitized the people in their respective communities. After this initiation, there began to be direct interaction/conversation between key figures from the Kusasi and Mamprusi people towards finding a lasting solution to the conflict, and that has led to sustaining the peace.

An official of WANEP asserted that the community's cooperation with WANEP has also had a positive impact in convincing the youth to desist from engaging in violence, although this was not the case during the period of violent clashes. At the same time, the official of WANEP pointed out that there should be added capacity and technical assistance to support the BIEPC, which would allow them to monitor the dynamics of the conflict, know the context of the conflict, understand the history, and give the most effective guidance.

5.4. Prevention Measures Initiated by BEWDA (Track II)

Prevention measures by BEWDA are also summarized in Table 3. BEWDA, as already stated, is also functioning as a peacebuilding facilitator for the BIEPC. The prevention measures BEWDA initiated include the following: the early warning system, peace education, mediation, and negotiations.

With regard to the early warning system by BEWDA, the system in place is operated through use of informants who detect signs of possible violence, report them in order for dialogue to be initiated, and monitor the situation during the celebration of festivals, which is noted to contribute to heightened tensions, as happened in 2010.

With regard to peace education, BEWDA conducted peace sensitization in 2010 to educate people about peace before, during, and after elections. During the fieldwork, there were positive remarks concerning BEWDA's efforts to prevent violence prior to the 2016 general elections, which brought awareness of the need for responsible campaigning by politicians and encouraged freedom of choice in political party affiliation in the Bawku area. Taking into consideration the

effects of violence, BEWDA periodically engages and cooperates with the BIEPC as a way to keep the committee active and communicate often when necessary.

Mediations and negotiations by BEWDA (e.g., in 2010 and 2016) are mainly among the BIEPC members, and they are centered on the resolution of outstanding issues, such as celebration of festivals, farmland issues, and generating alternative ways to perform the Okro-stick ceremony. Mediations facilitated by BEWDA for the BIEPC have settled tensions and achieved success with respect to celebration of festivals, which could not happen earlier due to (i) the legal struggle the Mamprusi people faced, (ii) contestation of the chieftaincy, and (iii) provocations on festival days that led to clashes in the past. At least for now, the Mamprusi have corroborated reports that they celebrate their festival, although they still do not ask permission from or show reverence for the *Bawku Naba*.

WANEP and BEWDA have cooperated and have made strides in this area due to their constant engagement. The mediations aimed at preventing provocative remarks from either the Kusasi or Mamprusi side during these festival celebrations have been on the increase in recent years. Two issues relating to farmlands have resulted in rising tensions. First, the seizure of Mamprusi farmlands by some Kusasi people during the period of violent clashes and subsequent efforts to retrieve them triggered violence during that period. Second, some Kusasi youths prevented Mamprusi farmers from accessing their farms, especially at the commencement of the rainy season, which led to violent clashes as experienced in the past. According to an official of BEWDA, the organization's prevention and peacebuilding capacity was boosted by the technical support and guidance from WANEP. This statement serves to support the essence of cooperation among the CSOs towards prevention.

Most of the Mamprusi farmers have their farmlands in the outskirts of the main Bawku town (where Mamprusi are dominant), and thus they are located where Kusasi are dominant. All farmland issues are referred to the BIEPC sub-committee on farmlands for negotiations. BEWDA as the mediator of that committee encourages swift response to discourage litigation (since the period of field research, some outstanding farmland-related issues have still remained under negotiation).

Negotiations with the BIEPC are intended to generate new ideas and options to perform the Okro stick ceremony to end the conflict, especially on the side of the Mamprusi people. Currently, this issue also calls for the support of the state through the NPC, since they have been described by WANEP and BEWDA as not playing their complimentary role. Negotiations and cooperation with the BIEPC to use civilized means to resolve the conflict is an initiative BEWDA undertakes periodically, and the sides have adhered to that plea. The situation in Bawku is described by an official of BEWDA as uncertain, because merely a small misunderstanding along ethnic lines can escalate into violence. That is why the sustained engagement is considered essential.

Table 3: Conflict Prevention Measures by CSOs in Bawku (Track II)

Year	Actor	Type of Activity	Details	Target	Location
2009	WANEP	Early warning system	Monitoring of the festivals and <i>durbar</i> celebrations to counter rumors of planned attacks.	BIEPC Bawku community	Northern region (Tamale)
2010	WANEP	Mediation	Ensuring attendance at community markets and starting peace process to resolve the conflict.	Kusasi and Mamprusi representatives	Ashanti region (Kumasi) and Bawku
	BEWDA	Early warning system	Festival and <i>durbar</i> celebration monitoring, to negotiate peace.	BIEPC Bawku community	Bawku
		Peace education	Educating peaceful commitment before, during, and after elections.	BIEPC Bawku community	
		Mediation	Amicable settlement of farmland-related issues, and peaceful celebration	BIEPC sub-committee on farmland	

			of festivals.		
		Negotiations	Undertaking of the Okro stick ceremony to signify end of conflict.	BIEPC	
2016	BEWDA	Peace education	Educating peaceful commitment before, during, and after elections.	BIEPC Bawku community	Bawku
		Mediation	Amicable settlement of farmland-related issues, and peaceful celebration of festivals.	BIEPC sub-committee on farmland	
		Negotiations	Undertaking of the Okro stick ceremony to signify end of conflict.	BIEPC	

Source: Compiled by the author based on information collected during 2019 fieldwork in Ghana.

5.5. Reflections of WANEP and BEWDA on Conflict Prevention Activities

WANEP and BEWDA, according to the officials, perceive that without the early warning system, the situation in Bawku would have been worse. The officials acknowledge the achievements gained in initiating the system, especially the CMT by WANEP. According to officials of WANEP and BEWDA, peace education, mediations, and negotiations are very effective, but a sustained engagement is needed to resolve the conflict and also curb potential recurrence of armed violence. The conflict has been described by the CSOs as being in hibernation, and any misunderstanding could degenerate along ethnic lines and trigger a recurrence of armed violence. The officials explain that the necessary approach to prevent recurrence of armed clashes is to sustain the engagement, sensitization, and education on peace; keep relying on the early warning system; and for the central/local government to play a complementary role to assist the NPC with needed resources for the BIEPC to find an amicable solution to end the conflict. Such approaches must be sustained to lower tensions and lead toward preventing armed conflict. Extensive bilateral engagements with the BIEPC, youth representatives, and women's groups need to be sustained for a solution to be found to resolve all outstanding issues. There should be provision of information to high-profiled personalities for bilateral engagements and communication "so that people will begin to think violence is not an option."

An official of WANEP explains as follows:

WANEP believes in the mutuality of the agreement taken by the two sides and once that is not done, WANEP does not force any decisions on them but provides

the environment for implementation. An authority like WANEP will only create a balance in communication so statements are not taken differently. (Interview with WANEP official on September 22, 2019)

One official explained that WANEP would facilitate dialogue with the central and local government (Bawku Municipal Assembly, BMA) to provide resources for the BIEPC to facilitate negotiations and avoid re-positioning of the factions for potential armed violence. With regard to the expectations of WANEP on outcomes of their role, an official mentioned that it is their “hope that people will begin to get fatigued with the conflict and come together to seek benefits for socio-economic growth and development.” It is also expected that the “interventions and prevention measures per the roles of WANEP will continue to yield results for everyone in Bawku.” He also reported their belief that “people will begin to rethink their positions, their needs, wants – ascend and ascertain whether or not the chieftaincy will shift or not, then accept the outcome and co-exist.” Thus, expectations are that things will normalize and the prevention efforts will be sustained to avoid a parallel chieftaincy in Bawku.

BEWDA’s role with regard to a necessary approach to curb violence involves facilitating periodic seminars, dialogue, and further engagement, and working closely with the BIEPC to ensure they become a permanent standing body that has a secretariat furnished with staff members to tackle issues appropriately and promptly. Sensitizing the two sides to appreciate that the chieftaincy issue extends beyond violence entails convincing them that “violence cannot resolve the chieftaincy conflict”. Advocating for the parties to promote and employ litigation processes as the focal point or primary focus with regard to addressing the chieftaincy issue is being considered. With regard to the Okro stick ceremony, one official said, “the process has

started all over again; the Mamprusi still do not trust the process and this makes the resolution process a bit challenging.” The official then added that he “will not comment on the ceremony beyond what has being said.” Expectations of BEWDA are that the engagements through dialogue with the BIEPC to find amicable solutions to end the conflict will succeed. BEWDA hopes that the committee will facilitate further engagement with the youth to get them to desist from violence and sensitize them to realize that people can achieve their goals without violence.

The BIEPC wants to do more with regard to sensitization and peace activities but lacks funding, and this has limited their activities. In the words of the same official, “The BIEPC is committed to peace but the question is, for how long? Since the members are neither being motivated nor receive remuneration.” According to the official, “the municipal assembly needs to give out funds for activities.” Moreover, “increased funding leads to increased engagements. When dealing with human beings there is a need to constantly engage them for their psyche not to change.” The level of cooperation between BIEPC, BEWDA, WANEP, and other stakeholders such as the Bawku Police, political parties, and traditional authorities towards preventing recurrence of armed violence has been outstanding. In the words of one official, “The respect and confidence has been built through consistent cooperation.”

The officials further explain that, with regard to cooperation, an extensive and sustained engagement with the BIEPC members is paramount at all times with respect to prevention, considering the changing events. That will allow the two sides to come up with options; these options are not just solutions, because BIEPC members will engage in dialogue, negotiations and eventually settle on comfortable options that will lead to mutually-agreed outcomes. The officials also state that cooperation among the CSOs and the BIEPC has resulted in the trust given to them by the BIEPC. The BIEPC members, youths, women groups, and relevant

stakeholders are cooperating with whomever comes to engage in peace education, thus educating them about peaceful means to address conflict-related issues.

According to the CSOs, there will continue to be engagements with the central government to identify the structural causes of the conflict and entreat them to remain neutral in dealing with issues and also ensure development is spread across all sides for the people to feel a sense of relevance. Commenting on the expectations of the state's prevention initiatives, the officials mentioned that "the state should facilitate structural support such as initiating major economic development for the community and the youth to desist from engaging in armed violence." Furthermore, it is their expectation that frequent intelligence gathering by the state security services (e.g., police and military) would quickly detect signs of potential violence for early response and prevention measures to be implemented.

Regarding the sources of a recurrence, the BEWDA official mentioned that festivals, elections, the existence of a Mamprusi regent, and unresolved farmlands issues contribute to a rise of tensions and could lead to recurrence of violence in the future, but in the meantime issues related to farmlands are referred to the BIEPC subcommittee on farmlands to swiftly address the matter. In addition, the official commented that when these issues are addressed, the possibility of a recurrence is likely to be low. The situation is unpredictable and because of that, BEWDA ensures there are engagements with the BIEPC to use civilized means to resolve issues and not violence. The official made it clear that the chieftaincy is a delicate issue and that one needs to be careful when discussing it, because it is a major issue that can trigger recurrence of armed violence. In the official's words, "the Mamprusi people will have to use the law courts to channel their grievances with respect to the chieftaincy."

The Bawku situation is such that:

You can never tell, the least [sensitive] issue [...] for example an argument over loading a bag of millet into a vehicle can spark armed violence, particularly if the argument is between a Kusasi and a Mamprusi. But if the argument is between members of the feuding groups and the other minority ethnic groups (e.g., Mossi, Hausa, Dangomba, or Bissa), there will be no problem. But if it comes up between a Kusasi and Mamprusi, the likelihood of a recurrence of armed violence is high. (Interview with WANEP official on September 23, 2019)

The official further commented:

The civil societies have done a lot of work towards preventing armed violence. The civil society thus the NGOs in particular have [exerted] a lot of efforts and it has never been easy due to the protracted nature of the conflict and the entrenched positions taken by the two factions. For now all the peacebuilding activities and prevention measures have contributed to the sustained peace. This has been made possible through the cooperation with the Bawku police who offer constructive advice. (Interview with BEWDA official on September 23, 2019)

Touching on the subject of illegal weapons, the official mentioned that “the weapons signify power in the community and [are a] symbol of masculinity.” In addition, when there are conflict situations, there are people of power within the factions who supply the weapons. With regard to

a recurrence of armed violence, the official was candid, stating that the possibility of a recurrence of armed conflict would be a result of the teeming numbers of unemployed youth.

The official then added, “the youth engage in violence due to unemployment; if it is possible to create income-generating activities acceptable to empower the youth it will go a long way to stop them at least from engaging in armed violence.” The official also stated, “you cannot rule out the individual in the political sphere who also acquires the weapons for their kinsmen and for some of the cultures the year they have bumper harvest; that’s the year they buy better arms but the key issue is that they are available.” The official mentioned that the state needs to do a lot more with regard to providing capacity building in peacebuilding approaches for the police and military to engage the community to promote co-existence. “The state [central/local government] should stay away from the conflict – not to influence any side (relating to party politics) in the conflict whenever there is a change of government in Ghana.” According to the CSOs, the central government’s efforts to prevent a recurrence of armed violence by bringing the parties together for a day or two hours and telling them to stop the conflict is not deemed as prevention. The official also remarked that “the states’ capacity in suppressing violence is commendable but cannot readily curb indiscriminate firing, should it happen they cannot.”

5.6. Analysis of Prevention Measures Initiated by WANEP and BEWDA

The author’s field study found that the roles played by WANEP and BEWDA (Track II) actors in preventing a recurrence of armed violence seem to be perceived positively by the state agencies and the BIEPC. This corroborates arguments that when CSOs are active and effective, armed violence as a response to conflict is prevented. CSOs have always been known to

contribute towards conflict prevention in the northern part of Ghana, and this is evident in the prevention role being played by WANEP and BEWDA in Bawku.

According to the field findings, the direct prevention measures implemented by WANEP and BEWDA against armed violence are one of the reasons why there is peace in Bawku. Direct prevention measures such as (i) early warning system, (ii) mediation, (iii) peace education, and (iv) negotiations were implemented in 2009, 2010, and 2016 against recurrence of armed violence. According to the officials of WANEP and BEWDA, their role in curbing potential recurrence of armed violence and ensuring the sustenance of peace in Bawku is due to the pro-activeness to implement direct prevention responses to tackle issues that have the potential to escalate into violence. From the definition of direct prevention, it is evident that trust-building, respected third parties (i.e., CSOs), and local actors are involved in implementing various measures against armed violence. In view of this, BEWDA and WANEP, based on field findings, assert their efforts in conflict prevention, and implementation of direct measures augment the efforts of the state agencies (i.e., NPC and Bawku Police) to curb recurrence of armed clashes and sustain the peace in Bawku.

From the field findings, structural prevention does not seem to have been initiated by BEWDA and WANEP. Similarly to the state agencies, the CSOs are focusing on preventing recurrence of armed violence at the early stages due to the changing dynamics of the conflict. The role of CSOs in conflict prevention is much touted all over the globe. Direct prevention measures by CSOs are needed to settle or resolve issues to avoid armed clashes; hence the involvement of WANEP and BEWDA in the Bawku case. The direct prevention measures (i.e., early warning system, peace education, mediation, and negotiation) implemented by WANEP and BEWDA, according to the field findings, are reliable in curbing potential violent clashes

with relation to political elections, celebration of festivals, and outstanding farmlands issues. The results of the field findings corroborate the absence of consideration of direct prevention measures implemented by the CSOs in preceding studies (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) at the early stages to curb the recurrence of armed violence.

The efforts with respect to prevention by the state (central/local government) have been inadequate, as pointed out by officials of WANEP and BEWDA. This corroborates the facts stated in the preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) with respect to the unsuccessful attempts to find an amicable solution to end the conflict in the past. The author's study in the field indicates much emphasis is placed on the early warning system (i.e., CMT). The CMT in Bawku helps to identify the location of potential armed clashes, monitor the situation, and implement prevention measures. The early warning system in Bawku is seen as a way of alerting the CSOs in Bawku of impending danger. The CMT (a direct prevention measure) supports the importance of early detection of potential armed violence for quick response in Bawku.

According to the officials of WANEP and BEWDA, the recurrence of violent clashes in Bawku in the past was attributed to the fact that there was no early warning system to detect and monitor signs of escalation of armed violence for quick response to be implemented. That led to the recurrence of the armed clashes experienced in 2001, 2007, 2008, and 2009, as asserted by the officials of the CSOs. This further explains the absence of direct prevention measures (i.e., early warning system, etc.) in the preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009). Field findings also show that the CMT has proved to be (i) a major strategy and weapon to curb the outbreak of potential armed violence, (ii) a reliable source for detecting and monitoring signs of potential violent clashes that was non-existent in the past, and

(iii) a prevention tool that is depended on by all the stakeholders in Bawku for reliable information and bilateral consultations. Additionally, direct prevention measures implemented indicate the pro-activeness of WANEP and BEWDA, who are not waiting to be taken by surprise with regard to violent clashes.

Some of the early warning signs gathered by the CSOs – such as (i) families - women and children fleeing town, (ii) abusive language used on the radio waves, and (iii) sporadic shooting of illegal weapons – are early signs of a potential armed clash. The CSOs and relevant stakeholders hold bilateral consultations and initiate direct prevention measures (e.g., negotiations) against armed clashes. According to the field findings, the neutral stance of CSOs (WANEP and BEWDA) in dealing with the BIEPC and conflict parties has enhanced peace and trust from the communities, which gives the CSOs an added advantage over the state institutions with regard to preventing armed conflicts. The field study found that the roles of WANEP and BEWDA against armed violence and assisting the BIEPC to find an amicable solution to end the conflict are laudable.

From field findings, the role of WANEP and BEWDA in cooperating and providing assistance for the BIEPC to resolve pressing issues (outstanding farmland and festival celebration) has contributed to the absence of armed clashes. The author's study in the field found that WANEP and BEWDA have sustained a positive relationship with the BIEPC to empower them to build their capacity towards preventing and implementing direct measures against armed conflicts. The author's field study found that WANEP and BEWDA have devised mechanisms through cooperation with the BIEPC to obtain information that can assist them to initiate early direct prevention responses against armed violence.

According to the field findings, the perception by WANEP and BEWDA is that the absence of violent armed clashes in Bawku for the past decade can be attributed to the direct prevention measures (e.g., peace education and early warning system). This is strengthened by the level of cooperation among the stakeholders working together to curb any potential violent clashes. Veritably, cooperation as collectively envisioned by WANEP and BEWDA has facilitated ideas leading to prevention of potential armed violence and sustaining the peace, as the field findings show. The cooperation between the CSOs and the BIEPC sub-committee of farmlands to amicably settle outside of court issues relating to the loss of farmlands during the violence in the past is laudable. This has also fostered some level of trust, and the agenda has been to prevent any suspicions among the protagonists.

These efforts are all geared towards preventing heightened tensions and agitation that could lead to a recurrence of armed violence. The cooperation between the BIEPC, BEWDA, and WANEP ensured there were continuous engagements with the Mamprusi people and other opinion leaders to convince them to return to the committee after they redrew in 2009-2010. Per the field findings, the cooperation between the BIEPC, WANEP, and BEWDA has resulted in trust being built among them for further engagement in dialogue and negotiations. From the field findings, the reflections of the CSOs have indicated that the Mamprusi and Kusasi are cooperating with stakeholders who come to engage them, and this now requires sustained engagement, because with a sustained engagement they will be able to resolve the conflict. According to the field findings, cooperation between WANEP and BEWDA has enabled collective engagement of ideas and resources to maintain the relative peace and working relations towards preventing armed clashes in Bawku.

5.7. Conclusion

This purpose of this chapter was to present the roles by the CSOs (WANEP and BEWDA) in preventing armed clashes and also to gain an understanding of their activities with regard to prevention measures that were initiated at the early stages against armed violence. As part of the study's originality, this chapter, through the table, presented various prevention measures initiated in Bawku against armed conflict. With regard to this study's research question, the field findings analyzed in this chapter showed that direct measures such as the early warning system and peace-education measures initiated by the CSOs have been reliable deterrents against potential armed violence, contributing to the argument within the conflict-prevention domain about the importance of CSOs (Track II actors). This chapter thus concludes that conflict-prevention activities are important for not only curbing violent armed conflicts but also for sustaining peace between two hostile groups. It is important to note that CSOs' efforts in preventing armed clashes have contributed to the sustained peace in Bawku for the past decade. The CSOs' reflections do not differ from those of the NPC and BIEPC; thus all direct prevention measures seem to be perceived positively. Nevertheless, the possibility of a recurrence of armed violence is not being ruled out by the CSOs if the existing issues are not resolved.

The author's study in the field found that members of WANEP and BEWDA are all committed to preventing armed violence through further sustained extensive engagements. The sentiments expressed by the CSOs with regard to the Mamprusi people's position on having a regent who does not recognize or pay homage to the *Bawku Naba* adds to the many reasons for potential armed clashes. With the current existence of mistrust, as field findings have shown, the CSOs express worry over the proliferation of illegal weapons in Bawku among the people. The

situation per field findings is uncertain and the conflict has been described as being in hibernation by the CSOs.

The next chapter, the conclusion of this study, will focus on a summary of the analysis from previous chapters.

Conclusion: Towards Preventing a Recurrence of Armed Conflicts in Bawku

This chapter establishes that violent conflicts cannot take place without the involvement of two or more parties and are not unavoidable but can indeed be prevented. The case of Bawku, as this study has shown, is not only about the chieftaincy but also cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnicity, and norms which all influence the changing dynamics of the conflict. The Bawku conflict, according to the author's field findings, has a negative-sum outcome, has recurred, and has no winners.

With regard to this study's objective, the analysis of the prevention measures using the idea of direct and structural prevention has shown that direct prevention is implemented mostly at the early stages against armed conflict. This study, per the author's field findings, has established that direct prevention activities have been implemented by: (i) state agencies (the National Peace Council (NPC) and the Bawku Police – Track I actors); (ii) CSOs (West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) and Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) – Track II actors); and (iii) community representatives (*Bawku Naba* with his elders and Bawku Inter-Ethnic Peace Committee (BIEPC) – Track III actors) against violent conflicts in Bawku. The direct prevention activities are implemented at the early stages against violent conflicts and are reliable, considering the uncertain nature of the Bawku conflict.

The categorization of the stakeholders in this study has presented a clearer understanding of the efforts made in conflict prevention activities, the roles of the stakeholders at the different levels (i.e., Track I, II, and III actors), and approaches considered to curb future armed violence. This study explored details of cooperation efforts among the stakeholders towards preventing armed clashes. This study shed light on direct prevention measures such as alert call system, peace education, mediation, embargo, early warning system, and negotiation, and these results

are expected to contribute to developing arguments focused on preventing violent armed conflicts at the early stage within the conflict resolution realm.

Thus, this study has established with regard to the main research question that all of the arguments with regard to the direct prevention measures implemented by the NPC, Bawku Police (Track I), WANEP, BEWDA (Track II), *Bawku Naba* and BIEPC (Track III) contribute to: (i) direct prevention measures such as the early warning system are reliable at the early stages to curb violence, (ii) the state and its agencies are responsible for resolving conflict related matters, (iii) CSOs' efforts with regard to preventing violent conflicts augment the efforts of the state agencies, (iv) conditions upholding the successful cooperation among stakeholders involved with preventing violent conflicts are important to achieve effective results, and (v) prevention measures are not only implemented for short-term bases to curb violence but in the long term also.

The answers to the study's research questions establish that the prevention activities implemented in Bawku, per the author's field findings, included alert call system, early warning system, and peace education, among others, and were implemented by the state agencies, CSOs, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC against armed clashes. These measures were all direct prevention in nature, signifying the focus of stakeholders' efforts to tackle issues such as outstanding farmlands disputes early to avoid potential armed violence. The structural prevention is not considered at this stage because of the delicate issues that are still being negotiated. Furthermore, it has been established by the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC that the prevention measures initiated against recurrence of armed violence were reliable and would need to be improved for further engagement, especially the early warning system. The stakeholders thus agree, per the author's field findings, that Bawku has been peaceful due to the

cooperation among them, and the approach considered essential to tackle future recurrence would be to rely on the early warning and engage in more extensive engagements.

This study, per field findings, has shown that although the previous literature mentioned conflict-management approaches, an analysis of the Bawku case from the perspective of direct and structural prevention were not mentioned, and this study's objective has not only delved into that but also into updated knowledge on the case of Bawku with regard to conflict prevention and conflict resolution in general. This study sought to link the case of Bawku and conflict prevention – factoring in the kinds of measures implemented at the early stages, which organizations implemented them, the specific direct and structural measures, roles of stakeholders, issues that warranted the prevention measures, reflections of stakeholders on prevention measures, approaches considered for the future against armed conflicts, and cooperation efforts among the stakeholders – which was missing in previous studies (i.e., Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009). All of these arguments not only contribute to enhancing the general understanding about conflict resolution with emphasis on prevention measures' reliability in curbing armed violence in relation to the Bawku conflict, but also provide updated knowledge with respect to this case.

Explanation of terminology in this study such as conflict, conflict management, conflict prevention, and early warning system within the conflict resolution realm showed their importance to the arguments made and gave a clear insight into this study's scope in relation to the Bawku case towards preventing armed clashes. The early warning system and its characteristics explained in this study support the argument of its importance within the conflict prevention realm and in the broader sense conflict resolution, which are relevant to curbing violent armed conflicts.

According to the field findings, this study fits into the academic and practitioners field. With regard to the academic field, (i) this study depicts the essence of the analysis of prevention measures implemented in Bawku against armed clashes using the idea of direct and structural prevention, (ii) the study has presented direct measures implemented in Bawku against armed clashes which according to the field findings have been reliable, and (iii) the study has clarified the importance of the idea on Track I, II, and III actors for better understanding and insight to stakeholders' (i.e., NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, and BIEPC) prevention activities.

With regard to the practitioner's field, Track I and II actor's roles in preventing armed conflicts is essential. The author's study in the field indicates that practitioner's prevention activities have to be timely and neutral. Practitioner's role in building trust between the conflict parties, other stakeholders is important to prevent recurrence of armed clashes and sustain peace. The prevention measures or approaches implemented by the practitioner's towards prevention armed conflicts has to be in agreement with all actors and this can be achieved through capacity building, support and oversight guidance to the conflict actors.

The reflections of the ordinary people in the community with regard to conflict prevention measures, examining the effectiveness or reliability of these prevention measures against armed violence, and the outcomes of the measures implemented are issues to be considered in the future.

1. Remarks on Prevention Measures Initiated against Armed Conflict in Baawku

Results of the author's field study indicate that these stakeholders implemented direct prevention measures at all levels. In addition, the direct prevention measures initiated by the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC contributed to curbing

potential armed clashes in Bawku. The study also found out that the stakeholders attributed the absence of armed clashes for the past years to direct prevention measures – such as the early warning system, peace education, embargo, alert call system, mediation, security provision, and negotiation – which are strengthened by the level of cooperation among the stakeholders working together to curb any potential violent clashes.

Reiterating conclusions from the preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009), the stakeholders in the Bawku conflict (i.e., central/local government, NGOs and community) have been made attempts at resolving the conflict. Contrary to the conclusions drawn in the same literature with regard to the efforts in the past to resolve the Bawku conflict, the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC strongly envisage that the direct measures initiated by them would not only curb potential violent clashes at the early stages but also allow for further engagement towards resolving the conflict. The assurance is that issues which triggered violent clashes in the past are being put on the negotiation table to allow for extensive dialogue and mediation. In addition, expectations are that direct prevention measures would encourage the conflict parties to engage, negotiate, and find amicable ways to (i) resolve all outstanding issues that have the potential to cause violent clashes and (ii) perform the Okro-stick ceremony to declare the conflict over.

From the preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009), it is noticeable that direct prevention measures such as the early warning system and alert call system, among others which will detect and monitor signs of potential violence, were missing. Per the results of field study, the early warning system (i.e., CMT) has been relied on by not only the NPC and BEWDA, but all the stakeholders. According to the stakeholders, it is an undeniable fact that the necessary approach to prevent potential violence will be the reliance on

early warning systems (such as CMT), implementing sustained engagement, mediations, extensive dialogue, and enhanced peace education. These will enable the youth especially to desist from engaging in any provocative acts to trigger any armed violence. The alert call system implemented by the BIEPC, which has created a good communication channel between the protagonists and the community, will further boost a co-existence between the sides which never existed before.

According to field findings, this study has not only established the pro-activeness of all stakeholders in prevention efforts, but also established that the direct prevention measures initiated by the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and the BIEPC have been reliable. This could mean the stakeholders see the situation in Bawku to be unpredictable, as they have confirmed through their reflections, especially the comments from WANEP and BEWDA. In addition, this study has been able to establish per field findings that the proliferation of illegal weapons in Bawku could contribute to a recurrence of armed clashes. This corroborates the preventive approaches considered to curb armed clashes (e.g., early warning system, alert call system, sustained engagements) and use appropriate channels instead of violence to resolve issues.

To find amicable ways to resolve a conflict, technical knowhow is needed; the technical capacity through training in the area of mediations, communication skills, dialogue, and negotiations will go a long way to facilitating ideas not only for prevention measures but also to resolve the conflict. With regard to curbing potential recurrence of armed clashes, the author's field findings have been able to establish that the technical capacity of the BIEPC has to be enhanced. In addition, the BIEPC would have to be resourced with means of mobility and funds to undertake periodic peace education and sensitizations. These direct prevention measures

would go a long way toward sustaining the peace, enhancing assimilation of peace rather than violence, and generating more ideas to solve the conflict. The technical support in organizing training workshops for the BIEPC members from NPC, WANEP, and BEWDA will broaden their knowledge on conflict-related matters. This will be reflected in how the BIEPC addresses the outstanding issues related to farmlands and other issues that come up, devoid of partiality or favoritism.

From field findings, the non-existence of structural measures in Bawku could imply the situation is best approached with direct measures. As indicated from the issues raised by the various stakeholders, more direct prevention measures have been implemented against potential armed violence at the early stages than structural prevention measures that require a longer period. In short, the situation – which is described as unstable by the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC – requires more vigilance through implementation of direct measures, as it has been established per the author’s findings that outstanding issues and the proliferation of illegal weapons all add to the propensity for a recurrence of armed violence.

From this study, it can be identified that the preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) did analyze the causes and socio-economic effects of the conflict, but this study has added updated knowledge by delving into the realm of direct prevention measures implemented at the early stages to curb the recurrence of armed violence in Bawku.

2. Regarding the Roles of Stakeholders in Preventing Armed Conflict in Bawku

The author’s field study found that the roles played by the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, and BIEPC have fostered a sense of responsibility toward preventing armed violence

and focusing on peace. Preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) detailed the various attempts made in the past by the central government to manage and resolve the conflict. However, this study has revealed the roles and efforts from the NPC and Bawku Police and other stakeholders in initiating direct prevention measures at the early stages to curb armed violence. With the challenges faced by the NPC with regard to lack of funds for prevention activities, the institution, per the author's field findings, found that the NPC liaised with the WANEP and BEWDA towards sustaining the peace in Bawku. The author's study in the field found that WANEP played the roles of a technical backstopper and a capacity builder in ensuring armed violence was curbed. BEWDA played the role of a peacebuilding facilitator and offers technical guidance to the BIEPC to keep the committee active. The CSOs through their roles in facilitating capacity building and training, and promoting sustained and extensive engagements have made strides in preventing armed violence. BEWDA and WANEP have played significant roles and have contributed to the absence of armed conflict in Bawku for the past decade.

Their roles in preventing armed violence have enabled the BIEPC to be an effective local peace infrastructure that the community relies on. WANEP and BEWDA have indicated that the central government has to support the efforts toward preventing armed violence by providing adequate funds for the NPC to facilitate periodic prevention activities. In so doing, the NPC will build the capacity of its personnel and enhance the district peace councils to promote prevention and resolution conflicts. BEWDA and WANEP have explained that the resources will also ensure the NPC is depoliticized and will work accordingly per the constitutional act authorizing it. Contrary to claims by Bukari and Guuroh (2013) that some factions in the Bawku conflict deem the CSOs-initiated peacebuilding approaches as biased and ineffective, expectations by

WANEP and BEWDA are that their roles in implementing sustained and extensive engagements will prevent armed violence. They also express the expectation that continuous negotiations with the BIEPC, youth and women representatives, and opinion leaders would enable collective understanding towards ending the conflict.

According to Bukari and Guuroh (2013), despite all the efforts by the CSOs to find a solution to the conflict, their efforts still remain to be seen whilst the feuding parties are yet to come to a compromise. The field findings in this study show that WANEP and BEWDA have made strides by implementing direct prevention measures and have also resolved some of the outstanding issues that could have escalated into violence (e.g., the peaceful celebration of festivals and settlement of the farmlands cases). This study found that one outstanding issue to resolve is the Okro stick ceremony – which during the field study was being tabled for further dialogue and negotiations by the BIEPC and all stakeholders. Nevertheless, WANEP and BEWDA in their role documented by the author's field study have been able to curb recurrence of armed violence and sustain the peace. In the meantime, to reiterate, the necessary approach to prevent potential recurrence of armed violence, per field findings, is the sustenance of extensive and continuous engagement in communication.

The *Bawku Naba* and BIEPC per their roles as paramount chief and community mouthpiece, respectively, have been engaged and in touch with the community by ensuring direct measures at their level are implemented. Their co-existence per field findings can be attributed to the fact that the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, and BEWDA have all ensured the needed technical capacity to implement direct prevention measures such as dialogue, alert call system, and negotiation to settle issues, and most importantly to find amicable ways to end the conflict. Preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) made mention of the

attempts made by the community representatives through negotiation among themselves to settle the conflict, but this study has constructed arguments with regard to direct prevention measures.

The respective roles played by the stakeholders at the different levels, according to the field findings, corroborate the conclusion by Mitchell (2005), Miall (2004), and Reimann (2004); thus, the roles played and cooperation among the conflict actors in relation to Track I, II, and III actors within the conflict resolution discipline are essential to ensure prevention of armed violence does not emerge, spiral, or recur. The field study found that for WANEP and BEWDA to sustain their role toward the long-term resolution of the conflict, the necessary approaches to prevent recurrence of armed violence should be sustained through extensive engagement.

3. Regarding the Reflections of NPC, Bawku Police, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC

Reflections by the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC indicate that direct prevention measures, such as the early warning system, the alert call system, peace education, sensitization, provision of security, mediations, and negotiations, resolved situations that could have triggered armed violence, especially instances relating to political tensions and festival celebrations. According to the CSOs' assertion, the lack of resources from the central/local government for the NPC to efficiently implement prevention activities on a periodic basis is somewhat stalling the progress of settling outstanding issues on farmlands. The clarion call by WANEP and BEWDA is for the central/local government to play a complimentary role in: (i) preventing a recurrence of armed clashes, (ii) not meddling in chieftaincy issues for political expediency, (iii) treating criminal matters as criminal, (iv) meting out the appropriate punitive sanctions without favoritism, (v) assisting the NPC with funds, and (vi) resolving the conflict. This supports the assertion by Lund (2003) that the state is always the

first respondent and point of call in conflict prevention and resolution; hence their role is important.

In the same vein, the admonishment by WANEP and BEWDA for the central/local government to acquire the technical capability and employ peacebuilding approaches in security related issues, so treating criminal matters would not escalate the conflict, points in the right direction. In their quest to see the conflict resolved, the CSOs' assertions for the central/local government to support the BIEPC technically and financially are tenable according to the field findings. This will enable all outstanding issues to be resolved and allow for concentration on the provision of an alternative for the performance of the Okro stick ceremony which will declare the conflict over. According to the field results, the proliferation of illegal weapons as noticed by all the stakeholders poses a challenge to preventing a recurrence of armed violence. From the reflections of the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC, this problem poses a challenge to the efforts made in prevention. That is all the more reason the NPC, BEWDA, and WANEP have advocated for sustained and extensive engagements as an approach to curb armed violence.

The author's field findings indicate that the stakeholders stressed the need for cooperation efforts that must be sustained, especially with the BIEPC, to enable the paradigm of sustained engagement to be active and reduce tensions. Reflections of NPC, WANEP, and BEWDA indicate that, in the long run, there should be periodic evaluation and assessment conducted on the direct prevention measures initiated to know where they have to improve, ascertain whether there are weaknesses with regard to the measures, and build upon them where necessary. All these will go a long way toward strengthening the spirit of cooperation with the BIEPC and the Bawku community, according to the reflections of the stakeholders. While cooperation among

the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC is important, as illustrated in this research, the study also determined the existence of funding and technical gaps that may hinder this cooperation on the ground in the future.

As for the funding gap, the author's field findings indicate that there needs to be, for example, financial support available for the NPC to efficiently carry out monitoring and for the BIEPC to be well-versed in conflict-related matters, as well as to advance in settling outstanding issues and declare the conflict over. It is important for the provision of resources for the NPC to cooperate with BEWDA and BIEPC to implement prevention measures. According to the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, and BIEPC, cooperation – when sustained especially with the BIEPC – will enable the paradigm of sustained engagement to be active and reduce tensions.

4. Approach for Preventing a Recurrence of Armed Conflict in Bawku

Preventing recurrence of violent armed conflicts, according to Ramsbotham et al. (2016), requires that the actors involved initiate direct prevention measures against such conflicts. It is in this regard that the stakeholders, according to the author's field findings, have explained in various opinions that the measures to prevent armed clashes depend on the direct prevention measures, such as an early warning system, peace education, mediations, dialogue, and the alert call system. It is an undeniable fact that, as shown by the field findings, the necessary approach to prevent armed violence will be the reliance on the early warning system and alert call system because of their reliability as expressed through reflections by all the stakeholders. Sustained engagement accordingly will enable regular interaction to create new ideas to deal with the outstanding issues or the Okro stick ceremony. Per the description attributed to the Bawku

conflict by the NPC, WANEP and BEWDA as being unpredictable and uncertain, the stakeholders stress the need for prolonged engagements to solve issues without violence, as field findings have indicated. It in that view the officials of WANEP and BEWDA strongly advocate for extensive interaction with the BIEPC and other stakeholders to gather information for further dialogue and negotiations.

Contrary to the claims by preceding literature (Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009) with regard to various attempts made to resolve the conflict, the stakeholders in this study (i.e., NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC) envisage that with the direct measures implemented they will get some results, but for now, violence is no longer an issue. In addition, claims by Awedoba (2009) that CSOs may not have the expertise to resolve that issue, the officials of WANEP and BEWDA firmly assert that, with a sustained engagement between the BIEPC and the youth, prevention efforts would lead to resolving the conflict. According to field findings, while the Mamprusi and Kusasi are aware of illegal weapons in their possessions, they openly state their opinion on the need for self-defense as the basis for keeping the weapons. The question then is asked: do they really trust each other and want to resolve the conflict? With these developments, the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, and BIEPC have expressed the desire to implement extensive engagement (i.e., direct prevention measures) with the BIEPC and youth groups to build trust and confidence.

5. Concluding Remarks

As the situation has been described by the NPC, WANEP, and BEWDA to be in hibernation, they clearly state that any misunderstanding between the two factions could ignite tensions leading to escalation of armed violence, thereby nullifying efforts made toward prevention.

Based on the author's field findings, this study investigated and ascertained that prevention measures have been initiated by the stakeholders at different levels against recurrence of armed violence, and this is one of the reasons for the sustained peace in Bawku. The field findings also indicate that the absence of armed violence is attributed to the cooperation among the stakeholders, namely the NPC, Bawku Police, WANEP, BEWDA, *Bawku Naba*, and BIEPC, which is aimed towards curbing armed violence at the early stages. The cooperation among stakeholders has enabled a collective engagement of ideas and resources especially on the part of WANEP and BEWDA to maintain the relative peace and working relations towards a resolution of the conflict. Reflections by stakeholders indicate that the prevention measures initiated did curb situations that could have ignited into violence, such as instances relating to political tensions. The early warning system, a direct prevention measure, has been described by all stakeholders as efficient in addressing rumors that could lead to armed violence.

From the author's field findings, the technical support to the BIEPC by the NPC, WANEP, and BEWDA is commendable, and such support would go a long way to prevent future armed violence and resolve the conflict in Bawku. The protagonists have agreed on their efforts to prevent any armed violence, but when to resolve the conflict by agreeing to perform the Okro stick ceremony to signify the end of the conflict now remains the question to be considered in future research. This study based on field findings has identified effective prevention activities against recurrence of armed violence that were not mentioned in the preceding literature (i.e., Bukari, 2013a; Bukari, 2013b; Kendie et al., 2014; Awedoba, 2009).

This study supports the following argument: Conflict prevention activities are important not only for curbing armed conflicts, but for the sustenance of peace from the viewpoint of scholarly review of literature and practitioners in the conflict-resolution realm adopted in this study.

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Appendix: List of Interviews Conducted

No.	Respondent	Organization	Status	Location	No.	Date
1	State agency	NPC	Senior officer	Northern region	1	September 18, 2019
2	State agency	NPC	Senior officer	Greater Accra	1	September 18, 2019
3	State agency	Bawku Police	Senior officer	Bawku	1	September 19, 2019
4	NGO	WANEP	Senior official	Northern region	1	September 23, 2019
5	NGO	BEWDA	Senior official	Bawku	1	September 23, 2019
6	Community representative	BIEPC	Senior members	Bawku	2	September 19, 2019
7	Community representative	Bawku Naba	Paramount Chief	Bawku	1	September 21, 2019
8	Community representative	Bawku Naba's palace	Elders	Bawku	15	September 21, 2019
9	Community representative	Members of the Bawku town	Mamprusi elders	Bawku	2	September 19, 2019
10	Community representative	Kusasi youth	Youth representatives	Bawku	4	September 19, 2019
11	Community representative	Mamprusi youth	Youth representatives	Bawku	11	September 19, 2019
12	Community representative	Kusasi women	Women representatives	Bawku	2	September 20, 2019
13	Community representative	Mamprusi women	Women representatives	Bawku	2	September 20, 2019
	Total				44	

Source: Author's field findings, August to October 2019