

## THE CIVIL WAR IN CHAD 1965 -1980

Chad found in North Central Africa was colonized by France in the 1880's .Later in 1920, France fully established herself over Chad. Unfortunately tribes in Chad, the Toubous moslems in the North fought against the Tsara Christians in the south. The Tsara's were pre-dominantly agriculturalists, growing cotton while the Toubous in the desert area were Nomadic Pastoralists. In 1962 just two years after independence FROLINAT (National Liberation Front) was formed and organized a full scale war against the independence Government of the Tsara under President Francois Tombalbaye. The war began in 1965 championed by FROLINAT of the Toubous against the central government of the Tsaras under Francois Tombalbaye because of several factors.

Francois Tombalbaye was a dictator whose character sparked off the civil war. After receiving independence from the French in 1960, he portrayed autocracy where he banned the existing political parties in 1962. The Progressive Party of Chad (PPT) which was for the Tsaras was allowed to operate while other parties like National Movement for the Liberation of Chad and the National Union of Chad were outlawed including the arrest of their leaders like Marxist Ibrahim Abatcha with conservative Ahmed Moussa. This aroused resentment among the Toubous who later took up arms against Francois.

There was the mal-administration in Chad by Francois Tombalbaye. He appointed the Christian Tsara in government leaving the moslem Toubous unemployed , these Tsara were corrupt, arrogant and mistreated the Toubous. Such inefficiencies by the Tsara civil servants forced the Toubous to rise up against Francois.

Francois Tombalbaye promoted tribalism with nepotistic tendencies leading to the civil war. Francois was well assured of the support of the Christian Tsara's and as a way of protecting himself in power, Tombalbaye favoured the Christian Tsaras in the civil service , promoted their use of Christianity against Islam and he appointed a good number to the National Army of Chad to the dismay of other officials from the North like Felix Malloum, Ibrahim Abatcha, Ahmed Moussa, Hissene Habre among others. This forced them to take up arms in order to protect the interest of the Toubous.

Francois Tombalbaye abused the fundamental human rights of the people of Chad. Being a dictator Francois infringed on the rights of the masses like their freedom of association and expression, religious freedom which climaxed with the suppression of the riot activities of the trade unions with the students in 1963 where 500 pple lost their lives. Thus protests were organized near Fort Lamy later N'djamena and gained momentum which led to the civil war.

Francois abused democracy and constitutional governance in Chad leading to the civil war. In 1963, when elections were organized Francois with his PPT rigged the elections fearing to lose to the other parties like National Movement for the liberation of Chad and National Union of Chad. Unfortunately this sent wrong signals to the other opposing leaders like Marxist Ibrahim Abatcha with Ahmed Moussa that the masses were being deprived of democracy with good governance hence the immediate desire for war.

Francois' government imposed exorbitant taxes on the Moslem Toubous leading to the Civil war. The Toubous were heavily taxed by the Tsara Civil Servants with most of the taxes misappropriated by the officials from the south. This aroused protests in the districts of Batha, Mangalme and later N'djamena, where the traditional leader of the Toubous Derde Sultan Queddei Kedefemi was even arrested for inciting violence among the Toubous. This sparked off the immediate desire for war led by the sultan's son Queddei Goukouni.

The abuse of the traditional cultural norms of the Toubous accelerated the civil war. Francois infringed on the cultural rights of the Toubous by discouraging them from wearing turbans, discouraged their practice of moving with knives which forced the Moslem Toubous to change to Christianity. The climax of this abuse was the replacement of the traditional chiefs from the North which Tsara Civil servants in the collection of taxes. Thus to reinstate their traditional patterns, the civil war became inevitable.

Tombalbaye neglected the immediate desire for a strong national army. Tombalbaye as the head of state personalized the National Army of Chad. Anyone opposing his regime was arrested and kept in detention. This caused military resentment among the soldiers from the North, who later joined FROLINAT to wage war against Tombalbaye.

Francois' act of arresting the Toubou Traditional Leader led to war. When Tombalbaye initiated the policy of heavy taxation over the impoverished Toubous, the idea was rejected by the traditional leader sultan Kedefemi who unfortunately was arrested by Tombalbaye and later fled into exile in Libya. This later compelled the Sultan's son Goukouni Queddei Kedefemi to continue with his Father's idea of criticizing Tombalbaye's regime using war activities.

Tombalbaye introduced the policy of Chaditude (Cultural revolution) leading to war. This was a cultural master plan hatched by Tombalbaye aimed at cementing National Unity. This policy involved re-traditionalising all institutions in Chad by reducing foreign influence where all Christian names had to be abandoned in pursuit for traditional names for example Francios to Ngarta, Fort Larmy to N'djamena e.t.c This policy was resented since the masses were not in support of it. To the Toubous war was the next course of action.

The formation of FROLINAT – accelerated the pace of the civil war. This was formed in 1966 which mobilized all the Toubous using the Charisma of other military Generals like Ibrahim Abatcha, Ahmed Moussa, General Goukouni Queddei. the Presence of such generals created a fertile ground which bred the civil war.

The interference of France in the affairs of Chad created ground for war. As early as 1968 to 1972, France was rendering military and financial support to the Tsara government as a way of reducing Gaddafi's influence in Chad. Unfortunately France's intervention attracted Libya to follow suit by supporting the FROLINAT, thereby accelerating war.

Libya's influence in Chad drove her into civil anarchy. Col Muammar Gaddafi was interested in the Aouzou mineral strip in Northern Chad and promised Francois' government 23,000 million Francs which

Ghaddafi didn't give to Tombalbaye. Thus Libya encouraged FROLINAT through its leaders to wage war against the Tsara government.

The weakness of the OAU was responsible for war. The body had the mandate of promoting peace and stability while safeguarding the independence of Chad. However member states were divided on the approach to use towards Chad and since states like Libya, Sudan, Egypt supported FROLINAT, War couldn't be reversed.

The absence of social justice drove Chad into unrest. The leaders from the North like Radical Ibrahim Abatcha of NUT (National Union of Chad) and conservative Ahmed Mussa of NMLC (National Movement for the liberation of Chad) criticized Francois' government for abusing social justice, equality and ethnic unity. To them they pursued war as a measure of restoring such virtues.

The failure of the ceasefire agreement of 1977 increased war in Chad. After toppling Tombalbaye in 1975, Felix Mallourn the new leader tried a cease fire arrangement with the Toubous by engaging Goukoum Queddei in talks in 1977. However, Queddei refused the terms of the agreement and instead continued with war activities against the south.

The exclusion of Goukouni Queddei in the government of National Unity heightened war against the south. Francois created a government of National Unity with Hissene Habre as the Prime Minister leaving Goukouni with no post. Queddei's exclusion compelled him to increase war against the south.

#### CONSEQUENCES OF THE CIVIL WAR.

The war accelerated the cold wars between USA and Libya. During the civil war, the two countries were attracted into the affairs of Chad. Libya took side with Goukouni's FROLINAT forces while USA took sides with Hassene Habre's forces. All this was done in the name of exporting and defending their political ideologies in Chad.

The war led to colossal loss of lives and destruction of property. Many people lost their lives especially in the fighting zones. These included soldiers plus innocent women and children. The riots of 1963 claimed over 500 people.

It introduced the army factor in Chad's politics. Right from the 1975 coup de tat, soldiers started playing an increasing role in Chad's politics. The 1975 coup was followed by another in 1977. As soldiers got into management of politics in the civil service, dictatorship also continued.

It revealed the weakness of OAU. Though set up to prevent interstate conflicts, the OAU showed inconsistency when it failed to come up with a clear programme to stop Libya from supporting Chad's rebels. Hence this war provided the OAU with the challenge of being militarily prepared.

Economic retardation took place in Chad. Due to increased government expenditure on war, destruction of basic infrastructure like roads, hospitals, schools, Libya's exploitation of Chad's mineral resources in Aouzou strip. Chad therefore was left in economic ruin. Hence it stands as one of the world's poorest countries.

There was destabilization of families in Chad. As the number of men going to war increased, women were left to manage homesteads. As more and more men died in War, a number of women remained as widows and orphans even bastards were produced due to raping of young girls with women.

It created inter-state conflicts between Chad and other countries. The relationship between Libya and Chad was due to Muammar Gaddafi's support to the Muslim rebels in the Northern part of Chad. Despite Tombalbaye's accusation and later Malloum's peace talks with Gaddafi, Libya continued supporting the rebels. Hence soiling the relationship between the two countries. Later Chad picked up conflicts with both Egypt and Sudan for supporting rebels against Goukouni's government.

The War created internal divisions within Chad. Due to the atrocities committed during the civil war, the divisions between the southern and northern parts were never bridged. The southerners blamed the North for the war and vice versa.

It contributed to the refugee crisis in Africa. As the war raged on, a number of Chadians fled to the neighboring countries seeking for political asylum especially Sudan and Libya. After the overthrow of Goukouni in 1982, He fled to Algeria and this contributed to soiled relations between the two countries.

It divided African countries into those supporting the civil war in Chad and those against it. In principle and practice, Sudan and Egypt funded Habre's forces against Goukouni's government. Other African countries were totally against the Chad Civil War.

Research questions.

1. Discuss the causes and consequences of the civil war in Chad between 1965 and 1980.
2. To what extent was Francois Tombalbaye responsible for the outbreak of the Chad civil war since 1965?
3. "Colonial legacy was primarily responsible for the outbreak of the civil war in Chad between 1965 and 1980," Discuss.
4. Examine the impact of the 1965-1980 civil war in Chad.