



An Outline of Human Rights Theory and Practice

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Abstract

The theory of Human Rights is seen as rules, norms, standard and expectations seeking to protect all people and every person from cruel and relentless political, legal, and social abuses. The theory has it that all human beings are entitled to and are empowered for a dignified existence. It is a common phenomenon that human beings everywhere, demand the realization of diverse values to ensure their individual and collective well-being. However, these demands or rights are denied through exploitation, oppression, persecution. It is in the light of the above that the study examined Human Rights Theory and Practice in our contemporary society. Human rights theory and practices were explored across Nigeria and other African countries. The study discovered that the major challenges in practice of this theory include: discrimination against persons, armed conflict and violence, impunity and weak institutions. The study therefore recommends that individual state/government in Africa should domesticate and enforce the relevant human right laws, protect everyone especially the common citizens who are mostly exposed to human rights abuses. The study further recommends that in a conflict era, both state and non-state armed actors should be made to operate within the ambit of the rules of engagement as regards dealing with civilians.

Keywords: Human Rights Theory; Human Rights Practice; Human Rights Abuses; Human Dignity; Discrimination; Armed Conflict; Violence; Impunity; Weak Institutions; Human Rights Laws; Protection of Civilians; Contemporary African Society.

Introduction

Since human beings have moved from state of nature to organized civil society, certain institutions are needed to secure and protect those inviolable and inalienable rights of human person. Ofoegbu (2013) posited that the contemporary conception and contents of human rights theory have developed and grown over the years at the global level, human rights in international law have been energized and strengthened; and paradoxically, undermined and subverted, by certain historical developments. In December 1948, the United Nations General Assembly adopted and made a proclamation on Universal declaration on Human Rights. The declaration centered on the doctrine of inherent dignity, equality of human person, and inviolable and inalienable rights of all human family.

United Nations declaration stipulates that:

“whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world, Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people, Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law... Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge.”

From the above, Human Rights are the rules, norms and standard expectations seeking to protect all peoples and every person from cruel and relentless political, legal, and social abuses. They include: the right to freedom of religion, freedom from being tortured, the right to a fair hearing/fair trial when charged with a crime, and the right to education (Nickel, 2019).

According to Jimoh (2013), in addition to the Human Rights provisions of the United Nation Charter; there is also the United International Bill of Human Rights which comprises of the followings:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights: This prohibits slavery, inhuman treatment, arbitrary arrest, arbitrary interference with privacy, discrimination on grounds of race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or birth. The Declaration also proclaims the right to have and change belief and worship, freedom of opinion and expression, freedom of peaceful assembly and association, free elections and equal opportunities for access to public positions.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: This focuses on the responsibility of Governments to promote better living conditions for their people. It further grants rights to work, right to fair wages, right to social security, right to adequate standard of living, freedom from hunger, right to health and education, and right to form trade unions.

The international Covenant on Civil and Political Rights: This proclaims that it is the responsibility of the government to protect its citizens and every other person within its territorial jurisdiction against cruel inhuman and degrading treatment. This Covenant recognizes the right to life, right to liberty, right to security, and right to privacy of person. Like the Universal declaration of Human Rights discussed above, the Covenant prohibits slavery, arbitrary arrest or detention and guarantees the right to fair trial, freedom of opinion and expression; the right of peaceful assembly and of emigration and freedom of association.

Ellen, Eileen and Hurst (2003) supported the above view by stating that while reaching agreement on international human rights law was not easy, enforcement has proven even more problematic. It is one thing for a state to pledge to uphold human rights and another for it to tolerate policing of its compliance. Effective formal international enforcement mechanisms have been nonexistent for much of the last half of the twentieth century. Partially in response to this enforcement vacuum, international human rights advocates, many of them lawyers, formed organizations to promote human rights and developed an array of strategies for pressuring governments to conform their behavior to international human rights law. International human rights investigators seek out the facts wherever rights abuses are alleged and publish their findings, whether countries are at war, suffering from varying degrees of political tension and/or repression, or are peaceful and generally rights-respecting. International human rights organizations hope that their reports will bring about a change in the behavior of the government or other entity whose abuses they spotlight, but their principal targets are the policy makers who are in a position to put pressure on rights violators (Ellen, et al., 2003).

The world today, has accepted the notion that all human beings are entitled to and are empowered for a dignified existence. It is a common phenomenon that human beings everywhere, demand the realization of diverse values to ensure their individual and collective well-being. However, these demands or rights are denied through exploitation, oppression, persecution, etc., in many countries of the world. Human rights gained attention at the international level following the Second World War, where millions of people lost their lives. Horrified by the devastation of life caused by the Second World War, members of the United Nations (UN) took a pledge to take measures for the achievement of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all. It is in the light of the above that the study intends to examine Human Rights Theory and Practice in our contemporary society.

The Concept of Human Rights Theory

Human rights theory is in general terms, theory which state that rights, which all human beings by virtue of their humanity possess, and include the right to life, personal liberty, fair hearing, and dignity of human person, freedom of thought, conscience and religion. These rights provide common standards of behavior among humanity and are natural, inviolable, rational and unalterable, as their deprivations would constitute grave offenses to the citizens' sense of justice (Onwuazombe, 2017).

Human rights belong to every person and do not depend on the specifics of the individual or the relationship between the right-holder and the right guarantor. Human rights are the rights that everyone has equally by virtue of their humanity. It is grounded in an appeal to our human nature. They are the rules, norms and standard expectations seeking to protect all peoples and every person from cruel and relentless political, legal, and social abuses (Mishra, 2000). Human rights theory can be defined as those minimum rights which every individual must have against the state or other public authority by virtue of his being a member of the human family. Rajawat (2001) stated human rights are the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family recognizing them as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Human rights in a general sense denote the rights of humans. However, in a more specific sense, human rights constitute those rights which one has precisely because of being a human.

Biswal (2006) defined human rights as closely connected with the protection of individuals from the exercise of state government or authority in certain areas of their lives. It is also directed towards the creation of social conditions by the state in which individuals can develop their fullest potential. Kumar, Jawahar (1995) defined human rights as those rights which pertain to all persons and are possessed by every individual because they are human. In the words of Rajawat (2001), human rights are forms of moral rights and they differ from other rights in being the rights of all human beings at all times and in all situations. Mishra (2000) defined human rights as a claim to something of crucial importance for human life. In the context of the present study, human rights can be defined as those rights without which human beings cannot live with dignity, freedom (political, economic, social and cultural) and justice in any nation or state regardless of colour, place of birth, ethnicity, race, religion or sex or any other such considerations. These rights are inherent in human nature and therefore guaranteed and protected by the state without distinction of any sort. When such rights are denied to an individual, whether by the state or non-state actors, it constitutes human rights violations. When large scale violations of such rights occur, it constitutes human rights abuses scale violations committed repeatedly by state or non-state actors to any community or group of people in their everyday lives. Further, human rights abuses occur when arbitrary arrests, killings, torture, rape, repressive legislations, discrimination, etc., are carried out systematically against any community or sections of society by the state or non-state actors with the objective of suppressing a particular group's aspiration or demand for equal standard of living vis-a-vis other groups in that country. (Mishra, 2000).

Ladan (1998) identified three forms of human rights, namely: the first-generation rights such as the civil and political rights; the second-generation rights such as the right to health, right to education, and right to social amenities and the third-generation rights which include economic and cultural rights. The Human Rights according to Anzie (1998) can simply be classified into two, namely: a) Those rights referred to as natural rights which belong to a person for the simple reason that he was born a human being; b) Rights enjoyed by an individual by virtue of the fact that he is a member of a particular society.

The theory of human rights can be understood as universal, incontrovertible and subjective. Human rights are universal since they belong to every human being without any distinction of ethnicity, race, gender, religion, or type of government. It is incontrovertible, that is, they are absolute and innate. Human rights are subjective as they are properties of individuals who possess them because of their capacity for rationality, agency and autonomy.

Human Rights Theory and Practice in Nigeria and other African Countries

The theory of human rights includes civil and political rights or public liberties, economic, social and cultural needs particularly with regard to development, the environment and self-determination. As said, it is the state's responsibility to protect and promote human rights. It is also the duty of the state to create conditions for peaceful existence which enable human rights to be enjoyed by every individual in that state.

In Nigeria, Chapter IV of the 1999 Constitution copiously provides for the human rights of Nigerian citizens. Chapter II (16) of the same Constitution under the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy, had earlier also provided as follows: (1) the state shall, within the context of the ideals and objectives for which provisions are made in this constitution (a) harness the resources of the nation and promote national prosperity and an efficient, a dynamic and self-reliant economy; (b) control the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity. This paper is particularly concerned with subsection 1(b) on securing the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen, on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity. Article 13(3) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights also stipulates that every individual shall have the right of access to public property and services, in strict equality of all persons before the law. Article 19 of the Charter provides for the right of all people to equality and rights while Article 24 offers the people the right to a general satisfactory environment and clearly spells out that all people shall have the right to a general satisfactory environment favorable to their development. The Nigerian state was among the first set of nations which signed and ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The promotion of democratic institutions, good governance and human rights is one of the main objectives of the African Union (AU), enshrined in its Constitutive Act (2000). Its predecessor, the Organisation for African Unity (OAU), founded 60 years ago, in 1963, also established several mechanisms for the promotion of human rights. Of these, the most important ones include the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) and the African Court of Human and Peoples' Rights. Many other elements complement these, making Africa's human rights architecture a thick web of overlapping international, continental and national-level instruments (Kufuor, 2010).

Centre for Human Rights (2011) observed that despite the numerous legal and institutional tools available, human rights continue to be violated in numerous African countries. This is a result of the low level of implementation of legal instruments and of the African human rights institutions' lack of capabilities. Key in advancing the promotion of human rights in the continent is the need to build up the political will to overcome these shortcomings. Local activists and civil society organisations (CSOs) continue to fight for human rights on different fronts and some positive moves are visible at the continent's executive body, the African Union Commission (AUC). Continued engagement from international partners, notably the European Union (EU), at both levels will be necessary to advance the protection of basic human rights across Africa (Centre for Human Rights, 2011).

In Nigeria, Amnesty International (2022) reported that thousands of civilians were killed, injured or displaced by the armed conflict between the armed groups Boko Haram and Islamic State's West African Province (ISWAP) and the Nigerian military in north-eastern Nigeria. All parties to the conflict committed violations of international law, including war crimes, with impunity. Elsewhere, unlawful killings and violence were perpetrated by bandits and the authorities responded with enforced disappearances, torture, arbitrary detention, and severe restrictions to freedoms of expression and peaceful assembly. Media outlets and journalists had their freedom of expression curtailed by the authorities. Activists and protesters faced restrictions on their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. Amnesty International (2022) notes that more than 60,000 people were forcibly evicted from their homes. Failure to protect people from the effects of climate change led to deaths and displacement. Amnesty International (2022) further observed that security forces consistently violated human rights in the context of military operations conducted against Boko Haram in north-eastern Nigeria.

Reuters Investigates (2022) reported that the Nigerian military had conducted a secret forced abortion programme in the north-east since 2013, ending at least 10,000 pregnancies without the consent or prior knowledge of the women and girls concerned, which could amount to war crimes and a crime against humanity. The Nigerian authorities consistently failed to hold security officials accountable for crimes committed against civilians. According to Reuters Investigates (2022), this investigation is based on interviews with 33 women and girls who say they underwent abortions while in the custody of the Nigerian Army. Just one said she freely gave consent. Reporters also interviewed five civilian healthcare workers and nine security personnel involved in the programme, including soldiers and other government employees such as armed guards engaged in escorting pregnant women to abortion sites. In addition, Reuters reviewed copies of military documents and civilian hospital records describing or tallying thousands of abortion procedures (Reuters Investigates, 2022).

Furthermore, Zenda (2022) reported that human rights violations continue to increase in Africa, with a report by a global rights watchdog raising the red flag for most of the countries on the continent. Zenda cited the 2022 Human Rights Watch (HRW) report, stating that human rights violations continued in the 26 African countries that the watchdog monitored last year, with the situation worsening in most of them. The report noted that rights violations not only continued in countries facing armed conflicts, such as Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria and South Sudan, but were also recorded in countries like Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Zimbabwe, among others.

In addition to the above, UN Human Rights Report (2019) reported that, in the horn of Africa, ethnic violence and extreme poverty were major challenges. Weak governance, corruption and marginalization, compounded by the effects of climate change, impaired the enjoyment of basic and fundamental economic and social rights and fuelled discrimination in the sub-

region. In West and Central Africa, considerable challenges were faced due to an increase in conflict and violence throughout the Sahel region which was exacerbated by climate change and extreme poverty. Moreover, the African continent experienced widespread restrictions related to political and civic spaces, including limitations on the exercise of freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association that were targeted at political opponents, journalists and human rights defenders (HRDs). UN Human Rights Report (2019) observed that protracted armed conflicts in the CAR, the DRC, South Sudan and Somalia continued to expose the civilian population to extrajudicial executions, abductions, torture and unlawful detention carried out by violent extremist groups, State and non-State actors. A high prevalence of conflict-related sexual violence against civilian populations was also reported. Violent extremism in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin continued to be a major challenge for the security situation.

According to UN Human Rights Report (2019), Boko Haram and other violent extremist groups remained a threat in Cameroon, Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Nigeria, leading to the deaths of civilians and causing a dire humanitarian crisis with millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in need of assistance. Weak justice systems and the absence or limited implementation of transitional justice processes contributed to a high level of impunity for grave human rights violations. On a positive note, some steps were taken regarding the fight against impunity in CAR with the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court, the establishment of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission in Mali and the establishment of a War and Economic Crimes Court in Liberia to enable victims to obtain justice for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Zenda (2022) further reported that the human rights situation in Mozambique worsened in 2021, where an insurgency has been dragging for nearly five years in the northern gas-rich Cabo Delgado province. This insurrection by an Islamist-linked armed group calling itself Ansar al-Sunna has resulted in the displacement of nearly 800,000 people as of June last year, as the armed group continued to attack villages, kill civilians, kidnap women and children and use boys as soldiers in its fight against government forces. State security forces were implicated in human rights abuses, including intimidation, sexual exploitation of displaced women, and the unlawful use of force against civilians (Zenda, 2022).

In Rwanda, Human Rights Watch (2022) reported that Rwanda's human rights record remains atrocious, with the government of President Paul Kagame keeping the tiny African nation's political and civic space tightly closed. The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) continued to stifle dissenting and critical voices and to target those perceived as a threat to the government and their family members, the report reads. The space for political opposition, civil society, and media remained closed. Several high-profile critics, including opposition members and commentators using social media or YouTube to express themselves, went missing, were arrested or threatened. The report noted that the Kigali regime was also accused of pursuing critics and dissidents across the globe. Rwanda's government and those operating on its behalf continued to exert pressure on Rwandan refugee and diaspora communities, as far afield as Australia and Canada. Refugees who are known critics of the government have been threatened and harassed (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

In Burundi, Human Rights Watch (2022) observed that in June 2020, a number of people, including journalists and human rights defenders released from prison. There was, however, renewed assault on human rights by the government of the late Pierre Nkurunziza's successor. Despite the reduction in abuses against opposition members after the May 2020 elections, killings, disappearances, torture, arbitrary detention and harassment of those perceived to oppose the government continued throughout 2021, (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Zimbabwe is another country that is on a downward trajectory with abductions, arbitrary arrests and mass evictions of citizens from their ancestral lands, among other violations, being noted. The administration of President Emmerson Mnangagwa failed to take meaningful steps to uphold human rights and ensure justice for serious abuses primarily committed by security forces in 2021. It said there had been no accountability for abuses by security forces, including the August 2018 post-election violence, and killings and rape during the January 2019 protests. Abductions, torture, arbitrary arrests, and other abuses against opposition politicians and activists have not been meaningfully investigated (Human Rights Watch, 2022).

Challenges of Human Rights Practice

Human rights are inherent in all people; everyone has the right to live in dignity and to participate fully in a society. The world faces significant and interrelated challenges recently which threaten human rights in a number of ways. The following are some of the challenges working against the theory of human rights.

Poverty: poverty for instance denies people these rights and remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity in this century. Kofi (2005) pointed out that despite the fact that the world is blessed with natural and human resources, a significant number of people, particularly in developing countries, still live in abject poverty. Specifically, poverty affects economic and social rights, those rights that relate to the workplace, social security, and access to housing, food, water, health care and education (Maytree, 2023). In essence, the failure by a state to adopt measures and policies that can ensure access to basic amenities and social services, such as water, electricity, food, housing and health, and improve the living conditions of the people would amount to a human rights violation (Ebenezer and Gladys, 2020). Conversely, where a state

adopts stringent or restrictive policies such as austerity measures, which further plunge the people into debt and poverty, the state would be deemed to have failed in its obligation to protect and promote the rights of vulnerable and marginalised groups (Ebenezer and Gladys, 2020).

Discrimination: Furthermore, discrimination is one of the barriers when it comes to implementing justice measures for human rights. It has various effects that it comes along with. The bad thing with these effects that arise from discrimination is that discrimination becomes a violation to human rights (Bednar, 2021). According to Amnesty international (2023), discrimination occurs when a person is unable to enjoy his or her human rights or other legal rights on an equal basis with others because of an unjustified distinction made in policy, law or treatment. All humans have the right to be treated equally, irrespective of our race, ethnicity, nationality, class, religion, belief, sex, gender, language, sexual orientation, age, health or other status.

Armed Conflict and Violence: Another major challenge of Human rights practice is the violation of Human rights as a result of armed conflict and violence. Across the world since the event of World War I, many human rights violations with devastating impacts have taken place in various armed conflict as recorded in literatures. These primarily occur following violations of rules of engagement in wars and armed conflict. International humanitarian law known as the laws of war establishes what can and cannot be done by parties to an armed conflict. These laws seek to minimize human suffering and protect civilians as well as combatants who are no longer taking part in hostilities, such as prisoners of war. The main treaties of international humanitarian law are the 1949 Geneva Conventions, adopted after the horrors of World War Two, and their additional Protocols. (Amnesty International, 2023). Under the laws of war, civilians may not be deliberately targeted, although they may still be killed or injured if this happens as part of a proportionate attack on a military target. All parties to the conflict must take measures to minimize harm to civilians and civilian objects such as residential buildings, schools and hospitals, and must not carry out attacks that fail to distinguish between civilians and combatants, or which cause disproportionate harm to civilians (Amnesty International, 2023).

No matter the cause of war or the forces involved, the results are often the same. Armed conflicts mean devastating loss of civilian life, massive displacements and violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. According to Amnesty International (2023), some of the most serious crimes under international law that are committed during armed conflicts include the following:

War crimes: serious violations of international humanitarian law that include willful killings, direct attacks on civilians, torture, use of prohibited weapons, the murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war or others who have been captured, surrendered or injured and crimes of sexual violence.

Crimes against humanity: crimes committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack by or on behalf of a state or an organization against a civilian population during peace or wartime. There are 11 crimes against humanity including murder, extermination, enslavement, deportation or forcible transfer of a population, torture, rape and other serious forms of sexual violence, enforced disappearance and apartheid. Crimes against humanity may be committed in armed conflict or in peacetime.

Genocide: certain acts committed with the intent to destroy, completely or partially, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group. Genocide may be committed in armed conflict or in peacetime.

Weak Institutions: The challenges of Human rights are also evident in the inability of institutions concerned to uphold their responsibilities. Weak institutions are a big hinderance towards observance of the human rights (Bednar, 2021). There appears to be a large gap between theory and practice of human rights in places where institutions are weak. A major deficiency in the development of human rights is one of enforcement. Since the enforcement of human rights largely depends on the domestic machinery of national governments in Africa and especially in Nigeria, firm institutional infrastructures have seemingly been erected to safeguard human rights in the country. In Nigeria for example, the institutional infrastructure includes the judiciary, the National Human Rights Commission, the Public Complaints Commission and the Legal Aid Council. Dada (2012), observed that the various institutional mechanisms are not strong enough or capable of providing adequate and effective platforms for meaningful human rights promotion and protection. This is especially so because many of these institutional mechanisms are not independent and do not have the financial and logistical capability to meaningfully function as they ought to. They are controlled, directly or indirectly, by the government through funding, composition of membership, and provision of operational guidelines, among others, government interference or influence becomes not a mere possibility but a reality.

Impunity: Africa is party to various international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights. The continent is obliged under these international treaties to take a wide array of measures against torture and other ill-treatment, including its prohibition in law, ensuring that complaints are investigated, bringing perpetrators to justice and providing reparations to victims.

Amnesty International (2020) pointed out that under international law, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment are prohibited absolutely, in all circumstances and without exception. The prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment has been included in many subsequent international and regional human rights treaties, and other international and regional instruments. Many of these instruments that prohibit torture and other ill-treatment also require measures to prevent such abuses, to investigate alleged cases, to bring to justice those responsible and to offer reparation to victims.

It could be deduced that once impunity is entrenched in a state, the state, its agencies and machineries become incapable of meeting the benchmark of investigating rights and laws' violation, as well as taking important steps towards bringing offenders to book in ways that would serve as deterrents to others, thus bringing justice to the state. On the other hand, Bolaji, Olayinka and Olayemi (2014) argued that in a state where people perceived justice as entrenched and accessible, impunity is traded off and individuals act in conformity with the norms regulating behaviour. This invariably translates into growth and development. Impunity also manifests in blatant acts of corruption, bad governance and human rights abuse by public officials; governors, ministers, senators, military personnel, etc. These acts are reported daily in the media. Occupants of public offices in Nigeria, see their tenure as an avenue for personal aggrandizement and as a means of getting their own share of the national cake. Thus, they steal from the public treasury with reckless abandon. However, their acts attract no sanctions. Only an insignificant few are apprehended, nevertheless these few do not get justice, as offenders get away with little or no commensurate punishment for their offence. Sometimes the case is totally buried and the offender walks away free.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Theory of Human rights was proposed primarily to make citizens better off and for the protection of individual right to live, especially in the developing continents like Africa and Asia. The enforcement of basic human rights theory however, remain one of the most pressing and yet most elusive goals of the international community.

It is the position of this paper that despite human rights laws in various parts of the world, some of which are domesticated in various countries' local laws, standards of practice and enforcement are not at its best. The theory experiences various challenges that make it less active and influential in some parts of the world.

This article therefore states categorically that the promotion and defense of Human Rights is the hallmark of every democracy especially in Africa. Human rights are best protected in an environment where democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty are allowed to flourish.

The study therefore recommends that individual state/government in Africa should domesticate and enforce the relevant human right laws, protect everyone especially the common citizens who are mostly exposed to the human rights abuses. More so, the study further recommends that in a conflict era, both state and non-state armed actors should be made to operate within the ambit of the rules of engagement as regards dealing with civilians. Human rights cannot be respected in a country where rule or law is neglected. In fact, rule of law is the bedrock of democracy. Rule of law means that everybody no matter your position is under the law, that is, the law is supreme. Not only that the law is supreme, it is also its duty through justice system and other government agencies to protect the rights and dignity of the human being.

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