

**The Church and Inter-communal Violence: Study of Land grabbing and the role of Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.**

**How efficient is the Justice and Peace Commission of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bamenda in Cameroon, in addressing the issue of Land Grabbing?**

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### *Abstract*

The aim of this work was to answer the research question and related issues, in other words, to find out the efficiency of the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) of the Bamenda Arch Diocese Cameroon: in addressing land grabbing issues as a mission of the material church in the selected areas where conflicts are more frequent? According to the JPC it is the task of the church to ensure that Gods creations should live in total tranquility and harmony irrespective of race and faith. The JPC has is that these can be archived through practical evangelization. Thus, the people of God are called to serve and not wait to be served. Her most important activities are geared towards: bringing peace, fighting for justice, helping the poor and the oppressed and the practice of salvation. The above according to the JPC is made possible by ensuring the inclusive participation of all the people of God, consequently ensuring community development. This also has roots in Christ Slavic mission where he showed love, care and concern for the suffering people of God, "Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked" (Psalm 82:4).

Pope John Paul II of blessed memory equally had so much concern for the poor and the suffering people of the world. I quote him: "it is impossible to accept that in evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems so much discussed today, concerning justice, liberation, development and Peace in the world" (John Paul II, 1995, *Ecclesia in Africa*, paragraph 68) because of the natural right to life, anti-social activities such as conflicts for example should not be encourage. As such the church (JPC), should fight, defend human dignity, and promote justice and peace.

On this note I think that JPC has a task and a great role in working to help the poor in the society who have been victimized in one way or another by land conflicts. From the activities of the Justice and Peace Commission and the interview questions, the answers present clearly that the JPC has a greater efficiency in managing land grabbing issues rather than the government/legal system. Thus, the communities prefer the JPC interventions and resolutions rather than Jurisprudence

## **DEDICATION**

To: Mum, Dad, Grand Dad, Sister and Brothers for your unconditional support and sacrifices incurred for me all this far in my search for knowledge.

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All reverence the Almighty God for the gift of life and free gifts of nature.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

ACCC	All Africa Conference of churches
DO	Divisional Officer
SDO	Senior Divisional Officer
NGO	Non- Governmental Organization
PACA	Agricultural Program for Food Sufficiency
JPC	Justice and Peace Commission
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
WCC	World Council of Churches
FLD	Diaconal Lutheran foundation
NGODECA	Ngoketunjia Development and Cultural Association
ECJP	Ecumenical call to Just Peace.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Introduction.

Land is a much priced asset world over. In most countries around the world wealth is evaluated based of the number of acres and hectares owned by an individual. And since it is on land that most investment is carried out, it is but normal that every issue surrounding land becomes sensitive as to yield divisive tendencies amongst people. In the words of His Lordship Cornelius FontemEsua, Archbishop of Bamenda Archdiocese;

“Owning land has a price and giving away land has a price but taking by force a piece of land that belongs to another brings a prize for which no winner is proud to claim. Spilling blood over land that will make no difference if we own it is nothing but sheer wickedness and it does not present us as true children of God.” (Interview, L’effortCamerounais, P.5, Vol. 33, 2014)

Every quarrel originating from land dispute or land grabbing in the North West Region, Bamenda, has ended in bloodshed. (The Chronicle, 2013)

This study is going to document the prevailing issues of land grabbing in Cameroon particularly in the North West Region with Bamenda as it headquarters, and the efficient role played by the Church’s Justice and Peace Commission (JPC) in the Archdiocese of Bamenda. The focus is going to be on the Justice and Peace Commission and her mission to bring forth justice and desired peace among the warring communities in the region. In this paper, three aspects that make up the subject matter of the study are examined. First, there is a succinct hint on land disputes which is observed here as the root cause or the reason behind land grabbing. These terms are treated in an interrelated way to yield a better understanding of the key term which in itself is land grabbing. Second, the study will expound on land grabbing and how land grabbing has become a bone of contention amongst some communities in the North West Region of Cameroon. Third, I will be looking at justice in relation to the Justice and Peace Commission as a faith-based organization and what she has done in line of intervention and resolutions to the

problems that emanate from the land grabbing. Emphasis will be laid more on the outcome of the efforts put in place by the JPC and how the efforts impact the life of the peoples of these communities. I will like to make it clear here that the JPC mentioned here is that of the Archdiocese of Bamenda. Therefore I will limit myself to JPC of the Archdiocese of Bamenda.

I will discuss in detail the origin of JPC from the point of view of the Universal Catholic Church and its creation in the archdiocese of Bamenda as a diocesan organization. I will be looking at the JPC from its creation, to objectives, status, activities and its values. In the course of my discussion I will treat the term justice from a global, regional and local context and at the end of which I will give my view of justice as in the context of this study. The study showcases the villages of Balikumbat, Baligasin, Bamukumbit and Baligashu in the Ndop plains of Ngoketunja Division in the North West Region as typical communities where land grabbing is becoming the standard way of life.

## **1.2.Motivation**

Due to the limitations of the legal system in approaching the issues of land grabbing, Land grabbing has become a recurrent problem in the grass field communities of the North West Region of Cameroon. Apart from the need to farm, hatred, intoxication and the utter disrespect of human life are backbone reasons that influence constant strife and bloodshed over pieces of land in these communities that still live in the dark ages “The riddles of farmland”, (Nche Samuel et al 2013, P.111). Organizations such as the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC), Civil Society Agencies and Human right groups advocate for permanent solutions to the constant squabbles over pieces of land in these communities. Despite the efforts of the different organizations to come forth to a new rationale on this land grabbing and consequent blood sheds, the communities still stand at logger-heads to challenge each other over the ownership of farmlands. Most important questions raised have been; to what extent do the villagers respect administrative demarcations or warnings or dispositions?

Over the years, the idea of development has become an essential concern of global policy-makers where improvement of the local economy has become eminent, thereby necessitating safe-bound solutions to recurrent setbacks (Weber 2002). The Cameroonian Government in instituting its own justice within these localities is doing it from an authoritative perspective;

however, the justice required in these situations should be consultative and restorative. It is in view of the efforts made by the state and parastatals to render justice and bring peace, that I see the need to look into the situation from another angle, using a different approach and a different language to appeal not only to the stakeholders of the localities but to the indigenes (farmers) who risk themselves and their children in fighting battles that have no glory.

I am therefore inspired to bring a different style and approach to the language of resolution. My inspiration in choosing to write this topic comes from a desire to document and shed more light on the lamentable territorial wrangling which most often than not have come about through instigations of the youths by the stakeholders who stand to gain from the land grabbing. As a result of this, misguided youths pick up their locally made guns to take the lives of their fellow youths from the neighboring localities. Most emphatically, this work is also a search for answers about the effective presence of church's organization in the person of the Justice and Peace Commission and its efforts to resolve issues of land grabbing within her jurisdiction. This is where my diaconal education comes to be another perspective from which to interpret the situation and consequently be an instrument to address the phenomenon. Is there anything that the church can do apart from what it has already done? Furthermore, the media has been saying a lot about the genesis of the land grabbing, this study gives me the opportunity to understand the extent to which land issues within these communities have led to inter-tribal strifes and how the efforts of both the government and the Justice and Peace Commissions can be evaluated.

### **1.1. Qualitative research methods:**

Are concerned with opinions, feelings and experiences, describe social phenomena as they occur naturally - no attempt is made to manipulate the situation - just understand and describe.

Understanding is sought by taking a holistic perspective / approach, rather than looking at a set of variables. Qualitative research data is used to help us to develop concepts and theories that help us to understand the social world - which is an inductive approach to the development of theory, rather than a deductive approach that quantitative research takes - i.e. testing theories that have already been proposed. Qualitative data is collected through direct encounters i.e. through interview or observation and is rather time consuming (Bryman; 2012 p714).

### **1.2. Research Tools.**

I shall use mainly two strategies in collecting data. That is through questionnaire and participant observation. The questionnaires will be closed ended structured questions.

### **1.3. Research Question**

The research question that this study is trying to answer is:

*How efficient is the Justice and Peace Commission of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bamenda in Cameroon, in addressing the issue of Land Grabbing?*

I will analyze the Church's role in Baligasin, Bamukumbit, Balikumbat and Baligashu all situated in the Ngoketunjia subdivision in the Ndop plains. I will analyze from an interrogative point of view with this questions as starting points: are there any changes in the Church's role, in her fight for justice for all, and have there been any lessons drawn from the past? How has the Church continued to empower herself by increasingly becoming a prophetic voice speaking out against injustices in her society? Again the study will try to find out the possibility of the Church in the Ndop plain to initiate the process of how to bring real justice and peace to these communities, thereby building grounds for everlasting peace through its judicious paving of better ways to reconciliation.

In answering the research question, I am going to look into the following three objectives;

- To give a narrative of the land grabbing incidences experienced by the indigenes of the mentioned localities in the Ndop plain.
- To explore the role that the Church's organization that is the Justice and Peace Commission has played in enhancing peace and harmony in the warring localities.
- To analyze the Justice and Peace Commission today as a civil society in the area of conflict management and resolution; being the prophetic voice and advocating for peaceful communal life.

The Church has a responsibility of speaking for the voiceless and the marginalized; the church's ministry to the people should be inclusive of all people. "Therefore it has to be prophetic, lifting up the dignity of the excluded and marginalized, denouncing the powers that seek justice and life

only for themselves, announcing ways of promoting human values and wellbeing for all” (Nordstokke, 2011:27). In the mentioned localities, what did the Church do? Was the Church able to do something at all? Did they have the capacity to stand up and point out the wrongs in the society? Could the Church have acted differently? Did she assume her role of being a prophetic voice? The Church exists not in isolation, but in a society and it is her responsibility to communicate not only the truth about God’s word, but also fight.

This study seeks to systematically use questionnaires as a means to collect data and thereby use it to analyze the experiences and to perceive the extent to which the land grabbing issues have affected the members of the localities. The study will help find out how people have come to terms with what they have been through and how they are coping with the reality of their horrible past experience and subsequent attempts to reconciliation. Look into how they have been able to move forward, as individuals and as a community considering the torments that they went through. Also in this study conflict management gaps will be identified in order to explore if there is any possibility of coming to terms with the resolutions.

#### **1.4. Definition of key terms**

##### **1.4.1. Land grabbing**

From the global context, land grabbing is the contentious issue of large scale land acquisitions, that is, the buying or leasing of large pieces of land in developing countries, by domestic and transnational companies, governments and individuals.

Historically, land grabbing as used today, primarily refers to large scale land acquisitions following, especially, the 2007 to 2008 world food price upsurge. Land grabbing is a fundamental human rights violation that calls for local, national and international concern.

In the regional and local contexts, land grabbing could be defined as the forceful usurping or taking of a piece of land that belongs to the other. In contrast with the global context, in the local areas, land grabbing does not necessitate buying or leasing; it involves a community fighting with another community over a piece of land and in most cases the piece of land is ever an area where disputes have gone on for long time and the government intervenes to claim it as state property or pronounces ownership to the other community.

### **1.4.2. Land dispute**

A land dispute occurs when two separate entities feel like they both have a legal claim to a piece of property. This may be a disagreement about property lines, a bank foreclosure, or even a clerical error that created two rightful owners. If the matter cannot be settled civilly, then the matter is brought before a judge for a final determination. Both sides will then plead their case regarding the land dispute and eventually a verdict will be given. If neither party can prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he is the sole owner of the property, then is it possible that the land could be seized by the government.

The killing of brothers and sisters in these communities is a rebellious spirit to the powers that be to point out that in their communities; land grabbing is the strategy they will use to forcefully succeed where land disputes have failed. (Animbong 2014)

### **1.4.3. Justice**

Justice is a concept whose content several times has been subject to a philosophical as well as legal treatment. There is no universal definition of the term. In its most basic form, "justice" is the systematized administration of punishment and reward (Plato Book 1; P1-3) Further to this; one can say that justice excludes randomness. The concept of justice is based on numerous fields, and many differing viewpoints and perspectives including the concepts of moral correctness based on law, equity, ethics, rationality, religion, and fairness. Often, the general discussion of justice is divided into the realm of societal justice as found in philosophy, theology and religion, and procedural justice as found in the study and application of the law.

The concept of justice differs in every culture. An early theory of justice was set out by the Ancient Greek philosopher Plato in his work *The Republic*. Throughout history various theories have been established.

In the context of this research, I will view justice as: harmony to work for the good of all, to serve those in need, to build peace and reconciliation and to show respect and care for all creation. This justice is globally about building a kingdom of love. Jesus gave us two commandments which he said were the most important of all:

- To love God above anyone or anything else
- To love our neighbor as we love ourselves

Jesus had a special love for the poor and the downtrodden, the weak and the unloved especially those who suffer injustice of any form. Looking at justice in this context this study builds a society not of worldly riches and power but one of love and justice and peace. “And a harvest of justice is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:8)

## **1.5. Background**

### **1.5.1. Arch Diocese of Bamenda**

The archdiocese of Bamenda is situated in the North West Region of Cameroon. Bamenda is the headquarters of the region. The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Bamenda is the Metropolitan See of the Ecclesiastical province of Bamenda in Cameroon. It was by the Bull *Tametsi Christianarum* of 13 August 1970 that Pope Paul VI erected the Diocese of Bamenda with territory detached from the Diocese of Buea. . On the 18 March 1982 Pope John Paul II created the Bamenda Ecclesiastical Province by the Bull *Eo Magis Ecclesia Catholica*, making Bamenda the Metropolitan See and Bishop Paul Verdzev, Archbishop.

The archdiocese comprises of the Civil Administrative Divisions of Mezam (inhabited mostly by Bali-Chamba, the Bafut and Ngemba); Momo (peopled by the Widikum, Moghamo, Menemo, Ngie, Ngwo and Menka); Menchum ( inhabited by the Aghem, Mmen, Fungom, Esu, Esimbi and Beba-Befang people); Boyo (peopled by the Kom and Bum ); and Ngoketunjia (inhabited by a number of chiefdoms -Bamunka, Babungo, Bangolan, Baba, Bamali, Baligasin, Bamukumbit, Babessi, Bafanji, Nsei, Balikumbat and Bambalang). The overwhelming majority of these people are self-employed peasant farmers. Industrial activity is virtually nonexistent but the population is very dynamic and a lot of commerce goes on especially in the major towns.

Bamenda, headquarter of the North West Region has some of the best educational institutions in the Republic of Cameroon at all levels; but it is also the political hot pot of Cameroon opposition. Today the Archdiocese has a population of 1.457.053 of the 2.023.695 inhabitants of the North West Region. 22% of the populations are Christians of varied denominations, 13%

adherents of Islam; 7% adherents of African Traditional Religion and the rest pockets of different Western and Eastern religions about 3%. The Archdiocese of Bamenda is divided into 31 Parishes and 9 Quasi Parishes grouped into 7 deaneries for easy pastoral administration - Njinikom, Mankon, Widikum, Bambui, Ndop, Bambui&Bafut each named after the oldest Parish of the Deanery.

## **1.6. Justice and Peace Commission as a Faith Based Organization in the Bamenda Archdiocese**

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace (JustitiaetPax) is a dicastery of the Roman Curia dedicated to "action-oriented studies" for the international promotion of justice, peace, and human rights from the perspective of the Roman Catholic Church. To this end, it cooperates with various religious institutes and advocacy groups, as well as scholarly, ecumenical, and international organizations. Among its reference works is the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

### **1.6.1. ORIGIN**

The Second Vatican Council had proposed the creation of a body of the universal Church whose role would be "to stimulate the Catholic Community to foster progress in needy regions and social justice on the international scene". [1] It was in reply to this request that Pope Paul VI established the Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax" by a MotuProprio dated 6th January 1967 (Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam). Two months later, in PopulorumProgressio, Paul VI succinctly stated of the new body that "its name, which is also its programme, is Justice and Peace" (No. 5). Gaudium et Spes and this Encyclical, which "in a certain way... applies the teaching of the Council", [2] were the founding texts and points of reference for this new body. After a ten-year experimental period, Paul VI gave the Commission its definitive status with the MotuProprioIustitiametPacem of 10 December 1976. When the Apostolic Constitution Pastor Bonus of 28 June 1988 reorganized the Roman Curia, Pope John Paul II changed its name from Commission to Pontifical Council and reconfirmed the general lines of its work.

### **1.6.2. Objectives and mandate**



Pastor Bonus defined the objectives and mandate of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in the following terms: "The Council will promote justice and peace in the world, in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the Church (art. 142)

1. It will deepen the social doctrine of the Church and attempt to make it widely known and applied, both by individuals and communities, especially as regards relations between workers and employers. These relations must be increasingly marked by the spirit of the Gospel.

2. It will assemble and evaluate various types of information and the results of research on justice and peace, the development of peoples and the violations of human rights. When appropriate, it will inform Episcopal bodies of the conclusions drawn. It will foster relations with international Catholic organizations and with other bodies, be they Catholic or not, that are sincerely committed to the promotion of the values of justice and peace in the world.

3. It will heighten awareness of the need to promote peace, above all on the occasion of the World Day of Peace (art. 143). It will maintain close relations with the Secretariat of State, especially when it deals publicly with problems of justice and peace in its documents or declarations (art. 144). [3]

### **1.7. Archdiocesan Justice and Peace Commission**

Does the concept of justice reflect the assignment of the Justice and Peace Commission in a good way? If so, how does it bring peace to the conflict zones? Is it possible that justice can exist without peace? When discussing the issue of justice the study will take into consideration whom the justice is for. If justice benefits the weak in the community, is this enough to proclaim justice?

#### **1.7.1. Status**

The justice and peace commission (JPC) of the archdiocese of Bamenda is a faith-based non-profit organization duly registered and legally recognized by the government of Cameroon. The Justice and Peace Commission of the Archdiocese of Bamenda was established on 12 December 2002 by His Grace Paul Verdzekov with Mme Laura Naddin Ngwa as pioneer coordinator. She began almost from scratch trying to articulate the very concepts of Justice and Peace. Members of this Commission then took part as Christian Electoral Observers in the twin Municipal and

Parliamentary elections which took place in Cameroon on 30 June 2002. They made such an impact on the ground that their report was an eye opener even to the Cameroon Government. Gradually the Justice and Peace Commission has grown into one of the best in the country, proof of it being that its pioneer coordinator has been appointed a member of the National Human Rights Commission of Cameroon.

Today it is comfortably part of the Universal Network of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace established by Pope Paul VI in 1967 and a member of the Cameroon National Episcopal Commission for Justice and Peace. Justice and Peace of the Bamenda archdiocese is established in almost in all the Parishes of the Archdiocese of Bamenda. It has been able to build peace between conflicting tribal groups of Mbesa and Oku; Bali and Bawock as well as lead a campaign against child trafficking. In fact, J&P Bamenda can be said to have transformed itself into a veritable peace broker in family, tribal and regional conflicts.

Pastor Bonus (the Apostolic Constitution of 28th June 1988) in its Articles 142 (1), (2), (3), and, 143, defines the objectives and mandate for the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace from which the Provincial Pastoral Plan breaks it down in a simplified manner. According to this Plan, the aim of this service is to help in the building up of a just and peaceful society by promoting all that enhances the dignity of the human person, by combating all that violates the dignity of the human person, by combating and denouncing all that degrades and destroys the human person. Its aim is

- To teach and encourage Christians to use Gospel values of justice, fair play, tolerance, and fraternity in all dimensions of their lives.
- To form consciences of people according to the Social Teaching of the Church.
- To educate citizens on their rights and privileges as well as their duties and obligations.
- To identify human rights violations and address them collectively.
- To mediate and help conflicting parties to take the right course of action.
- To ensure that justice and peace are reflected in all structures of evangelization.

- To sensitize members of the Church to be ready and willing to die in defense of the poor and oppressed in cases of grave and blatant injustice.
- To ensure that Seminaries, Novitiates, Catholic Institutes, Small Christian Communities and Families promote, spread and apply the knowledge of Catholic Social Teaching on justice and peace.
- To ensure that agents of evangelization are properly educated on possible Christian responses to unjust socio-economic and political situations that challenge the society.
- To ensure solidarity action on issues of justice and peace in the form of cooperation and mutual help within the Church and other churches and with people of good will.

The activities of the Service are generally based on Papal and Episcopal Social Teaching of the Church; International, and Regional Instruments (Treaties and Conventions); as well as National and local legislation through trainings, workshops, conferences, debates, symposia; interactive radio programs, publication of educative material, and research and studies on relevant and important topics and events all contributing to the development of persons, structures and systems. Activities of this reporting period were classified under 3 thematic areas; the promotion and protection of human rights; peace building and post-conflict reconstruction; and the promotion of good governance.

It is part of the universal network of the pontifical council for justice and peace which links up the different justice and peace departments at the continental, regional and national levels. The commission works at the grassroots through its deanery and parochial services made up of concerned Catholics who want to work for the peace and promote social justice in the light of the gospel and the social teaching of the church. The justice and peace commission believes in a transformed society in which there is respect for human dignity, equality, sustainable peace and development. This commission undertakes to work for justice, build peace and promote equality.

The archdiocesan justice and peace commission works with objectives such as:

- Reaching out to the poor and vulnerable in demand for justice

- Engaging in education on rights and entitlement of all, especially poor and vulnerable groups and undertaking advocacy actions for positive change.
- Accompanying communities, families and individuals in conflict prevention, building peace and socially sustainable development
- Accompanying local and traditional communities in policy formation and democratic governance
- Fostering community spirit and encouraging civic pride to guarantee national unity and integration

The justice and peace commission works with a vision to see a world in which peoples and cultures come together, unified and empowered by the common belief that they have the responsibility to create shape the way they live and grow in their communities.

### **1.7.2. Activities**

The activities of Justice and peace commission are generally action oriented, based on papal and Episcopal teachings of the Catholic Church as well as international instruments and local legislation. Actions are implemented through trainings, workshops, conferences, debates, publication of educative material and research on relevant events, all geared towards contributing to the development of persons, structures as well as systems.

### **1.7.3. Strategies**

The strategy of the justice and peace service is to use an action oriented approach through:

- Training/workshops
- Education and sensitization
- Carry out research on topical issues
- Provide advice and legal support
- Create and follow up of vigilante committees in local council areas, to do effective monitoring of trafficking in affected communities

- Offering mediation and conciliation in resolving conflicts either in communities or families

### **1.1.1. Values**

What do I understand by value? According to [Dictionary.com](http://Dictionary.com), Values are the rules by which we make decisions about right and wrong, should and shouldn't, good and bad. They also tell us which are more or less important, which is useful when we have to trade off meeting one value over another. Not contradicting the above definition, but rather keeping focus, I will examine the values of the justice and Peace commission, from a value base approach presented by Kulgman, B; in his work "Evaluating social justice Advocacy" Here just like the justice and peace commission, social justice advocacy should and must work to the advantage of structuring , protecting and promoting the less advantageous peoples of the various communities. This should be geared towards archiving the following: Political economic and social stability. Before proceeding I will equally like to make it crystal clear that; social values vary from region to regions and no two regions from what I have experienced have exactly the same social abilities to acquire the same values. Klugman holds the same position with the Justice and Peace Commission. What do I mean? Social justice advocacies must be geared towards archiving the desired goals as the end products without which the works of the Commission will be rendered useless and a complete waste of time money and resources. Participation of the targeted communities is also of great importance. The issue of gender and ethnicity is not left out as all the parties often involved must shun their differences and work towards achieving a common goal. Generally the values which the justice and peace commission of Bamenda propagates are grouped under the following headings: Justice, Equal opportunity, Transparency, Sustainability, Confidentiality, Results-focused, and Accountability.

### **1.1.Thesis outline**

The thesis is organized into five chapters:

#### **Chapter One:**

It is a general introduction motivation, research question and objectives, definition of key terms, the background and the organization; Justice and Peace Commission, creation, origin, status, activities, strategies and values.

**Chapter Two:**

Contextual Background of the study and Brief History of Cameroon.

**Chapter Three:**

Focus is on theory, JPC and its works on conflict resolutions and of course focus will be on land grabbing, how JPC manages the conflicts in restorative counseling and the diaconal theory of justice and peace.

**Chapter Four:**

Collection of data mainly texts and through questionnaires

**Chapter Five:**

Chapter four contains analysis, interpretation and discussion of data collected.

**Chapter Six:**

It is the summary of the paper, main conclusions and recommendations.

Having outlined the motivation, the research question and the objectives for undertaking the research, the next chapter will focus on the theory and the mission of the Justice and Peace Commission in conflict areas.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

#### 2.1. Brief History of Cameroon

##### 2.1.1. Early history

The earliest inhabitants of Cameroon were probably the Baka (Pygmies). They still inhabit the forests of the south and east provinces. Bantu speakers originating in the Cameroonian highlands were among the first groups to move out before other invaders. The Mandara kingdom in the Mandara Mountains was founded around 1500 and erected fortified structures; the purpose and exact history of which are still unresolved. The Aro Confederacy of Nigeria had presence in western (later called British) Cameroon due to trade and migration in the 18th and 19th centuries (DeLancey & Dike 2000). During the late 1770s and the early 19th century, the Fulani, a pastoral Islamic people of the western Sahel, conquered most of what is now northern Cameroon, subjugating or displacing its largely non-Muslim inhabitants.

Although the Portuguese arrived on Cameroon's doorstep in the 16th century, malaria prevented significant European settlement and conquest of the interior until the late 1870s, when large supplies of the malaria suppressant, quinine, became available. The early European presence in Cameroon was primarily devoted to coastal trade and the acquisition of slaves. The northern part of Cameroon was an important part of the Muslim slave trade network. The slave trade was largely suppressed by the mid-19th century. Christian missions established a presence in the late 19th century and continue to play a role in Cameroonian life (Heinrich, 1926).

##### 2.1.2. Colonisation

Beginning on July 5, 1884, all of present-day Cameroon and parts of several of its neighbors' became a German colony, Kamerun, with a capital first at Buea and later at Yaoundé. The Imperial German government made substantial investments in the infrastructure of Cameroon, including the extensive railways, such as the 160-metre single-span railway bridge on the South Sanaga River branch. Hospitals were opened all over the colony, including two major hospitals at Douala, one of which specialized in tropical diseases. The Germans had discovered the 1912, wrote in an official report in 1919 that the population of Kamerun had increased significantly. However, the indigenous peoples proved reluctant to work on these projects, so the Germans

instigated a harsh and unpopular system of forced labour. In fact, Jesko von Puttkamer was relieved of duty as governor of the colony due to his untoward actions toward the native Cameroonians. In 1911 at the Treaty of Fez after the Agadir Crisis, France ceded a nearly 300,000 km<sup>2</sup> portion of the territory of French Equatorial Africa to Kamerun which became Neukamerun, while Germany ceded a smaller area in the north in present-day Chad to France.

In World War I the British invaded Cameroon from Nigeria in 1914 in the Kamerun campaign, with the last German fort in the country surrendering in February 1916. After the war this colony was partitioned between the United Kingdom and France under a June 28, 1919 League of Nations mandates (Class B). France gained the larger geographical share, transferred Neukamerun back to neighboring French colonies, and ruled the rest from Yaoundé as Cameroun (French Cameroons). Britain's territory, a strip bordering Nigeria from the sea to Lake Chad, with an equal population was ruled from Lagos as Cameroons (British Cameroons). German administrators were allowed to once again run the plantations of the southwestern coastal area. A British Parliamentary Publication, Report on the British Sphere of the Cameroons (May 1922, p. 62-8), reports that the German plantations there were "as a whole . . . wonderful examples of industry, based on solid scientific knowledge. The natives have been taught discipline and have come to realize what can be achieved by industry. Large numbers who return to their villages take up cocoa or other cultivation on their own account, thus increasing the general prosperity of the country." ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_Cameroon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Cameroon))

## **2.2. Geography of Cameroon**

Cameroon is a Central African nation on the Gulf of Guinea, bordered by Nigeria, Chad, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. It is nearly twice the size of Oregon. Mount Cameroon (13,350 ft; 4,069 m), near the coast, is the highest elevation in the country.

Cameroon is sometimes described as "Africa in miniature" because it exhibits all the major climates and vegetation of the continent: mountains, desert, rain forest, savanna grassland, and ocean coastland. Cameroon can be divided into five geographic zones. These are distinguished by dominant physical, climatic, and vegetative features.

## **2.3. Religion in Cameroon**



Christianity and Islam are the two main religions in Cameroon. Christian churches and Muslim centers of various denominations operate freely throughout Cameroon. Approximately 70 percent of the population is at least nominally Christian, 20 percent is nominally Muslim and 6 percent practice traditional indigenous religious beliefs, i.e., Animism. Other religious groups that constitute less than 5 percent of the population include Orthodox Jews, Bahá'ís, and persons who do not associate themselves with any particular religious movement. The Christian population is divided between Roman Catholics (38.4 percent of the total population), Protestants (26.3 percent), and other Christian denominations (including Jehovah's Witnesses) (4 percent). The vast majority of the Muslims are Sunni belonging to Maliki School of jurisprudence, with approximately 12% Ahmadiyya and 3% Shia. Christians and Muslims are found in every region, although Christians are concentrated chiefly in the southern and western regions. There is significant internal migration. Large cities have significant populations of both groups, with churches and mosques often located near each other.

The two Anglophone provinces of the western region largely are Protestant the Becks church of God including others and the Francophone provinces of the southern and western regions are largely Catholic. In the northern provinces, the locally dominant Fulani (Fula: Fulbe; French: Peul or Peuhl) ethnic group is mostly Muslim, but the overall population is fairly evenly mixed between Muslims, Christians, and animists, each often living in its own community. The Bamoun ethnic group of the West Province is largely Muslim. Traditional indigenous religious beliefs are practiced in rural areas throughout the country but rarely are practiced publicly in cities, in part because many indigenous religious groups are intrinsically local in character. (Forum on Religious & Public life. August 9, 2012)

#### **2.4. Government of Cameroon**

The Republic of Cameroon is governed by a democratic multi-party system structured after the French. The President of Cameroon is supreme, with all branches the government of Cameroon answering to the President: The Executive, Legislative (National Assembly), The Prime Minister, The Judiciary, The Senate and even The Economic and Social Council. All government activities take place from Yaounde, the political capital of Cameroon. There are over fifty (50) ministries with close to a hundred (100) ministers and minister delegates in the Cameroon government

#### **2.5. Catholic church in Ndop**

Ndop is a small town with a population of about 40,000 inhabitants. 74% of the population is made up of Christians, 14% is made up of Islam, 4% is made up of evangelical and Pentecostal churches and the rest of the 8% is made up of animist, pagans and believers of the African traditional religion. Of the 74% of Christians in Ndop, catholic Christians make up 52%.

Ndop municipality is a host to different trends of activities, businesses of all sorts operate in this small town however, the principle activity of most of its inhabitants is farming especially rice cultivation which is done in large scales, accompanied by fishing. Subsistence farming is done in very small scale. Most of the farm products in Ndop are destined for the market

Ndop has an extensive area of comparatively level to gently undulating land, lacking surface irregularities, and usually adjacent to a higher area. Ndop Plain (16.6km) and a wetland dominated by grass-like vegetation. (44.5km)

With the fertility of the soil in Ndop and its suburbs like Bamukumbit, Balikumbat, Baligasin and Baligashu which favors agriculture in all facets, it is understandable how land grabbing remains an issue of uppermost concern; squabbles and fights over pieces of land become the order of the day.

Land conflicts have an area of concern largely due to the failure to resolve many of the conflicts that are emerging in both formal and informal areas. These conflicts occur between different classes such as individuals and local institutions, communities and government as well as communities and individuals. Man's most valuable resource is land upon which his continued existence and progress depends (Dale and al.1988). Competing demands over land can stimulate and stir disagreements especially when the object contested for and the parties involved belong to different groups and have different interests. (Wehrmann, 2008). Prolonged conflicts and disputes therefore have negative impact from a number of perspectives; economic, social, spatial as well as ecological development (Hoffman, 2003). Inefficient means of dealing with land conflicts can result in disastrous effects(psychological/mental and physical) on individuals, groups and even the entire nation causing people lack of access to land and sometimes loss of lives.

## **2.6.The story of land grabbing**

Land grabbing is the contentious issue of large scale land acquisitions, that is, the buying or leasing of large pieces of land in developing countries, by domestic and transnational companies, governments and individuals. While used broadly throughout history, land grabbing, as used today, primarily refers to large scale land acquisitions following, especially, the 2007 to 2008 world food price upsurge( Borras; 2008) Land grabbing is a fundamental human rights violation that calls for local, national and international concern.

In the African context, land grabbing could be defined as the forceful usurping or taking of a piece of land that belongs to the other. By implication of the term grabbing, it brings to light the binarism of land grabbing as opposed to land disputes which spells clearly that land grabbing is forceful take away of one's property while land dispute is a case of disagreement over ownership.

In areas of land grabbing, statistics since the year 2000 show that foreign governments and corporations have bought or leased over 56 million hectares in Africa, an area almost the size of Kenya. In Cameroon particularly in the South West Region, palm oil is a major driver of new land acquisitions. Rapidly increasing demand for palm oil for food and agro-fuels is currently leading to a new wave of large-scale planting in Cameroon.

The US-owned Herackles Farms that is opening up palm oil plantations in this region has been at daggers drawn with the indigenous population over the problem of land grabbing. The project covers 73,086 hectares of forest and farmland home to about 14,000 people, mostly small farmers. Most of the local inhabitants are opposing the plantation, fearing it will deprive them of their farmland and access to forest products. International and Cameroonian NGOs and scientists are also critical of the project on the grounds of ecological destruction, illegality and socio-environmental injustice. When residents protested against the plantation in the summer of 2012 they were met with intimidation and arrests. Land grabbing goes alongside intimidation and corruption of the law enforcers.

Herakles' palm oil plantation projects have been labeled as "the right projects in the wrong place". It is imposing its version of development without consent of the communities that will be directly affected and that protest accordingly. The plantation would take a large part of their land, undermining local food sovereignty and forcing people into wage labor. It would also have

a disastrous impact on biodiversity. Following this model will send Africa's forests down the path seen in Indonesia and Malaysia where oil palm plantations have caused millions of hectares of deforestation.

In Cameroon, the financial media is full of reports of new large-scale land transactions. An aluminum mine in Northern Cameroon, supported by a hydropower plant and two railroads, would bring the country \$4bn in investment from companies in the US, Dubai and India. An iron mine in Southeast Cameroon, being bought by a Chinese firm planning to build port facilities and a railroad, would bring \$4.7bn into the country. And an even bigger oil palm plantation, developed by an Indian conglomerate, is expected to transform the landscape of over 200,000 hectares, a development worth more than \$1.7bn. The government welcomes these investors and validates their land purchases without due concern of the welfare of the land owners. The gain desired by the government undermines the survival of its citizens. The desire for these projects is understandable: the world needs more minerals and food, governments need revenues, and local people want jobs. But by encouraging such investments and thousands more like them around the world, governments are giving away land that belongs to the people who live on the land, determining their future with neither consultation nor consent.

This has become known as the "land grab", but it might be better called the "great land giveaway". Governments, eager to capture the cash promised by large-scale agriculture, timber, or mining operations, all too willingly hand over their only resources to large multinational corporations to catalyze development. Instead these projects often trigger community resistance, and governments often respond to those standing in the way of these deals with an onslaught of legal harassment, violence and worse. For example, after objecting to the actions of Herakles, the palm-oil producer, NasakoBesingi and four other Cameroonian advocates were jailed for three days in November 2012. Other activists have faced longer prison sentences. Fa'a Embolo, a village leader from Central Cameroon, spent four months in jail; in other communities they have been beaten and killed. These stories are repeated across Africa, as weak governance and a lack of legal recognition and support for customary rights continue to inhibit any real progress. Michael Richards, a natural resources economist, concludes:

“That the local communities have always been lied to, subjected to coercion or political pressure, or tricked with documents that were either falsified or misleading. In 17 out of 18

cases, Richards said, local communities would have said no to the land transfers, if they had been given the information needed to make an informed decision.” (*Our Lands are NOT safe*, 2011 P.5,)The communities and their defenders stand their grounds not to let go their precious lands to development that mars their livelihood and as a result, this leads to reactions and actions that yielded have conflicts between the investors and the population in support on one and the population against on the other hand. In Cameroon, by clearing rain forest and other illegally occupied lands and then arresting protesters who trespass onto the land, palm-oil producer Herakles has become the subject of a global advocacy campaign that has tarnished its reputation. The impact on the company's bottom line has not been assessed, but the project delays do not come cheaply.

More often than not, the government assumes that such investments will provide rapid growth in their countries. While in some ways the projects exacerbate a growing gap between the rich and the poor and multiply the risk of conflict. These land-based conflicts could well begin to take the glow off the investment picture for the companies involved and those that finance them. But the growing appetite for land - and the growing speed of land acquisitions - means that tenure problems and the financial risks associated with them are not going to disappear.

Rather than giving away land and resources to companies to the detriment of their citizens, African governments - Cameroon included - must respect the rights of citizens and let them negotiate with investors on their own terms. And the companies themselves should be asking who owns the land they obtain on such good terms. To do otherwise is ultimately too high a risk, not just for advocates, but also for investors, communities, and the governments themselves.

This study within its geographic setting sees land grabbing as a counter-reaction to the failures of the resolutions brought about by land disputes. The indigenes who express their disappointments over the verdicts given by administration in their land disputes tend to apply jungle justice; considering the verdicts as unjust, they sought to take what is theirs by force. This forceful taking of land is as it applies within the geographical setting where the study is carried out. In other areas, land grabbing is forceful taking in situations where land is needed by government or a multinational and the indigenes who may not have been informed surprisingly see restriction boards on pieces of land they know belong to them.

## **2.7.Examples of land grabbing.**

The paragraphs that follow will lay out facts to justify the above views:

Balikumbat and Bamunkumbit are neighboring villages in Balikumbat subdivision in Ngoketunjia division in the North West region. Historically, it has been alleged that during the Chamba migration, the Baligansin people migrated into Bamunkumbit. They are said to have been received with great hospitality and settled by Bamunkumbit on the south eastern end of its territory. They were treated as a quarter in Bamunkumbit but later requested the fon of Bamunkumbit at the time, to grant them autonomy to manage their own affairs. The request was granted in good faith and the Fon of Bamunkumbit in recognition of their autonomy, went and planted a traditional fig tree in their palace.

After some time, it is alleged, the Baligansin people began exposing their expansionist tendency by claiming land beyond their limits .This aroused a quarrel and soured relationship and good cohabitation between them and Bamunkumbit –their host and landlord. The uneasy relationship finally led to open confrontation in the early 50’s during which lives were lost.

In 2011, the present fon of Baligansin addressed a complaint to the Divisional officer for Balikumbat subdivision making a claim over a piece of farmland in Mbacha quarter Bamunkumbit. Two complaints have been lodged to the administration to this effect by Bamunkumbit.

Recently, the Baligansin people are alleged to have scared farmers on the disputed piece of land and a lot of destruction and stealing of crops was going on. This persisted until 26 November 2014 when one of the women was caught stealing beans and cocoyam from the farms in question. She was immediately taken to the police in Balikumbat for questioning but not long after, the police station was invaded by Baligansin population shouting and throwing stones on the roof of the police office . They caused the woman to be forcefully and unconditionally released for the sake of peace and safety of the police station. Victims of the theft were ambushed and stoned on their way back from the police station.

On another count, two villages in Balikumbat Subdivision, Bamunkumbit and Baligashu, are spoiling for war over a disputed piece of land at Mindat neighborhood where a recently created

Government Technical College Baligashu is supposed to be built. The piece of land under dispute in Bamunkumbit is said to have been resolved by the Ndop Subdivisional communiqué Ref. No. E.29/02/C.68/102 of May 13, 1991 making reference to the 1979 Land Commission that laid the issue to rest, restraining the Baligashu people from carrying out further construction on it.

In the letter addressed to Northwest Governor, the then DO for Ndop Subdivision, Jacob Agbor, wrote that "one crucial stipulation made by the 1979 Land Commission was that while the Baligashu people were to be paid compensation for crops and houses existing at the date of the report of the commission for them to quit the disputed area, they were forbidden to carry out any further developments on it after this date." (Administrative archives Ndop Subdivision, consulted 2016)

The said crops and houses are said to have been evaluated at FECA 14,325,200 million. As stated in the Fon of Baligashu's petition, the DO said the Baligashu duly accepted to receive the compensation which, unfortunately, could not immediately be made available by Bamunkumbit. While accepting to receive the compensation, the Baligashu went ahead to violate the commission's one essential prohibition that they should not carry out further development on the disputed area.

"They went ahead and built more houses and planted more cash crops," lamented DO Agbor. According to the DO, there was a second evaluation that was ordered by the SDO for Mezam that amounted to FCFA 37 million and the Baligashu stood their grounds that the two evaluations should be considered together for compensation, thereby expecting Bamunkumbit, a village of less than 5,000 inhabitants, to pay FCFA 52 million.

Meanwhile, the Baligashu people argued that they have very limited land space and if they were to leave the disputed area, they would have nowhere else to go to. The DO then said if this argument were genuine, one would expect them to readily accept to remain on the disputed area and owe allegiance to the Fon of Bamunkumbit.

On the contrary, the D.O said in one of their meetings in 1991, the Baligashu stated categorically that "they would rather see themselves driven from the place than accept a franc of the compensation and quit. They said nothing about the option of remaining and paying allegiance to

Bamunkumbit." As such, when Government Technical College was created last year, the Baligashu people invaded the area and moulded cement blocks to start the construction of the college.

From eye witness account, the Public relation officer of the Ngoketunjia Development and Cultural Association, NCODECA, Micheal Alot (a notable) and Chrysantus Ablingwa (elite) of Bamunkumbit, said when the crisis resurfaced with the construction of the school, they alerted the Mayor and the present DO of Balikumbat who advised the Baligashu people to choose any land, anywhere in their village but that they ignored the advice. "Instead, we saw them molding blocks and on July 3, three armed boys invaded our village, and we caught them and handed them to the administration," they stated. According to them, the Baligashu are insisting on constructing on the disputed piece of land to claim ownership when the 1979 Land Commission had resolved the issue.

They went further to reiterate their stands on the matter; "If they continue, we see war looming in the days ahead if the administration does not restrain the Baligashus". One person was killed and several houses destroyed when a land dispute squabbles resurfaced between Baligansin and Bamukumbit in Balikumbat sub division, Ngoketunjia division; in the North West region. The two villages have a long standing dispute over a piece of land that dates back to 1979. A ministerial decision had on July 20, 1979 ruled that the disputed piece of land belongs to Bamukumbit but a 2005 prefectural order awarded the land to Baligashu. In the midst of the administrative buffoonery, a prime ministerial order ruled the area as a no-man's land. These examples show the complexity and many difficulties often encountered in solving land grabbing issues through the legal body. Thus, a need for a neutral body ;Justice and Peace commission.

Land grabbing has brought untold physical and psychological torture amongst people within affected communities. Land grabbing is a win-win situation for the powerful, the stronger camp ends up grabbing the land. In the case of Balingasin and Bamukumbit, they are a people whose primary activity is farming. Most of their land issues have been over farmlands; their constant wrangling and fights have brought loss of lives, destruction of crops and houses which have left families separated and hungry. On 27 November 2014, the people of Baligansin armed themselves with guns and attacked Bamukumbit farmers in their farms in Mbacha quarter. These



attacks led to the death of five people. A mass of people fled their homes and went to neighboring villages as refugees.

In bringing out the details of land grabbing and the issues surrounding the land grab in the area of study, I succeed to situate findings that will project the thematic aspects of the study. Through the above narratives, the despair, agony and hardship brought about by land grabbing is depicted as it generates antagonism and confrontations between people within the same locality. It equally projects the experiences of the people as farmland is usurped, crops destroyed and houses burnt down, and not to minimize the lives that are lost in the process. The experiences identified are more physical and psychological at the same and go a long way to affect the economic and social standings of the people in these communities. Inevitably there are spiritual and emotional sufferings that the people of these communities go through however, those types of sufferings are not mainly included in my themes, because not only is it sidetracking with this study, it could render my task cumbersome. Nonetheless, the sufferings are globed in the term “injustice” which opposes to justice. Hence I concentrated on the physical and psychological actions that could be easily narrated. I will present these oral memoirs and reinterpret them as I understand them, and hoping without changing the story. The participants during the interviews were simply conveying the important experiences of their own lives. The goal here is to interpret and reconstruct the life history; the experiences lived through life history, and at the same time reconstructing the life story; the narrated life story. This will be done by classifying the experiences of the members of Jehovah’s Witness in themes that have developed out of the methods.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. THEORETICAL APPROACH AND THE EFFORTS OF THE JPC ON CONFLICT RESOLUTIONS**

#### **3.1.Introduction**

This chapter explains the theories that have been used in this study. The research endeavor will consider the qualitative research approach as its major research tool since the aim of a qualitative research is to yield understanding of any disciplinary background, such as a psychologist seeking to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. The qualitative research method investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when, or "who", and has a strong basis in the field of sociology to understand government and social programs. This is also popular amongst: political science, social work, special education and education majors (Bogdan & Taylor, 1990). And because a popular method of qualitative research is the case study (Yin, 1989), I deem it necessary to use it as a tool. Qualitative research as a tool is therefore the umbrella pattern for my research through which i am able to sort out theories that will be used to analyze the work. The Diaconal Theory of justice and peace and the Restorative Counseling method, are theories that expound on the role and mission of the Justice and Peace Commission in the conflicts that ensued as a consequence land grabbing.

#### **3.2.Diakonia theory of justice and peace**

Diakonia, or the "responsible service of the gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christians in response to the needs of people", is rooted in and modeled on Christ's service and teachings. (WCC,2002). Diakonia gives a different viewpoint to justice and peace. Diakonia is the caring ministry of the church. It is the gospel in action and is expressed through loving your neighbor, creating inclusive communities, caring for creation and struggling for justice. (Church of Norway Plan for Diakonia)

According to Rachel Medema, diakonia can be perceived as a response to how Christians should live their lives:

Diaconal ministry is the active expression of Christian witness in response to the needs and challenges of our communities. Diakonia in all its many authentic forms cannot be separated from the struggle for justice and peace, and it is directly linked to the empowerment, transformation, and liberation of marginalized and excluded people in every community (Medema, 2005: 1).

The quotation underlines the fact that diakonia needs to engage in the struggle for justice and peace as well as responding to the needs and challenges of today's world. According to Oftestad, diaconal works should be grouped into three different traditions as this will yield a better understanding (Oftestad, 2003a:7).

The first perspective of diakonia involves Christian personality as the basis for diaconal work. This perspective is rooted in the pietistic movement, where the "Christian personality forms the presupposition and the aim of the diaconal work" (Oftestad, 2003a: 9). The second view of emphasizes that society is the basis for diaconal work. Well-known representatives are the former Harvey Cox and Johannes Chr and Hoekendijk, two of the influential figures of The World Council of Churches. This tradition was a reaction of the individualistic oriented diakonia.

Furthermore, according to this tradition, diakonia needs to engage in everyday life (Oftestad, 2003a: 15). However, it is hard to detect differences between this perspective of diakonia and other social work. Liberation theology belongs to this perspective. Another perspective of diakonia emphasizes local churches as the basis for diaconal work. The church is seen as "the congregation of the saints, in which the Gospel is rightly taught and sacraments rightly administered" (CA 7 in Oftestad, 2003a: 27). This is a Lutheran point of view in which the church has two centers of gravity; "the administration of the means of grace", and "the people of faith that are created and live under the means of grace" (Oftestad, 2003a: 27). Within this perspective, diakonia is first and foremost a movement inwards where the congregation is the basis of diakonia.

In a way to introduce the diakonia theory of justice and peace, its root must be traced to the teachings of Jesus Christ and eventual emulation by the church. The church then impacts its institution of justice and peace commission to translate the teachings to the service of mankind. "Guide our way into the way of peace", says the Bible in Luke 1:79. If this is thought of as a

central part of Christian teaching, how are Christians to become peacemakers in a world plagued with violence and injustice? The words peace and justice are often used together. In what way is the church to relate to this? A lot has been written about the concept of “justice and peace” and how justice and peace can create avenues of lasting peace. Less thinking has gone into what should constitute true “justice and peace”. Peace is considered a general human need. Article 3 in The UN Declaration of Human Rights claims that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”<sup>2</sup>. This thesis considers what the Christian church can do on the way towards a just peace in our societies and in the world. Should the church take greater responsibility and become a more important agent of peace today? If so, what will such a role mean in practice?

Diakonia theory of justice and peace embody the welfare of the human person, it encompasses the call to serve the poor and oppressed. It also refers to the specific kind of help that should be given anybody in need.

### **3.3. Diakonia, the call to serve.**

Also in contemporary theology the word diakonia presents a variety of connotations and representations. For the Diaconal Lutherans Foundation in Brazil (FLD) diakonia means: serve to change people's lives, to contribute to the construction of citizenship of the less fortunate (Actalliance 17<sup>th</sup> July 2000) Diakonia therefore, in its Christian context means service, to serve, to render selfless service unto and this service institutes a standard of real justice and peace.

Jesus told his apostles, "I am among you as the one who serves". (Luce 22:27)

The early Church had an understanding of Jesus as servant: St Paul wrote in the Letter to the Philippians (Philippians 2:8)

Jesus Christ was the image of God, but He humbled Himself by taking the nature of a servant, by "being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man", by "becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross".

So the concept of Christian service is to model oneself on Christ and be obedient unto the Father. Serve and do not count the cost, serve and serve the Christ who is within the other, serve, and

Love God in doing that service. This is the way to the Kingdom of God. The Justice and peace commission works in line with the words of St. Paul. The diakonia of Jesus is the basis for this diakonia of the church and of justice and peace. The diakonia theory of justice and peace looks into the charitable works that uphold social concerns. John Collins has done a major word study on the meanings of diakon- and its cognates (1990) and his exposition of Mark 10:45 shed fresh light on the understanding of 'service' (Collins, 2002 p28). He points out that frequently only half of the verse is quoted "For the Son of man came not to be served but to serve". Collins argues that the second half of the sentence – "and to give his life as a ransom for many" – is the key to the understanding of Christ's particular service. It is not generic "service" implying menial tasks; it is the self-giving of Jesus who came to give his life for others, that lies at the root of a Christian understanding of diakonia.

Collins also asserts that. In Luke 22: 27 "I am among you as one who serves" is a reminder that the kingdom of God does not function in the same ways as worldly power. Jesus was the teacher, the rabbi, but also a servant. However, Collins suggests that the significant feature that Jesus is drawing attention to is that, "he is in the midst". A servant would always be present whilst doing the chores.

This indicates the fact that diakonia or diaconal work cannot exist without the works of Jesus Christ. "Because of the holistic mission of God, diakonia is deeply interrelated with kerygma (proclamation of the Word) and koinonia (sharing at the table)" (LWF, 2002: 6). The diaconal mission of Jesus shaped the values and lifestyle of the early church and it is therefore crucial that the church gives continuity to his life and teachings (LWF, 2002: 27)

The diakonia theory of justice and peace affirms that religion can make a significant contribution to social justice. Whatever advances social participation, non-violence, equality, liberty and, a better life experience for more of the population is an improvement on the existing state of affairs in a society. Religion therefore has a legitimate role to play in social change.

### **3.4. Prophetic Diakonia**

Diakonia needs to take on a role and speak on behalf of fellow human beings. In The Old Testament, the reason for doing advocacy was based upon the principle that the whole of

creation has dignity and is created in the image of God (Mogensen, 2010: 47). Following this perspective, diakonia cannot ignore injustice, suffering and the harm done to God's creation. This calls for a need to care for creation( diakonia as care for creation) This would, I believe ignore the sensitivity Jesus emphasized in his diaconal ministry. Therefore, "The church must critically ask whether its diaconal practice is sufficiently sensitive to the clamor of the suffering, bold enough to respond to difficult and even controversial challenges, and willing to be renewed through its action" (Nordstokke, 2011b: 16). Because of this prophetic vocation, I believe diakonia must denounce injustice and advocate for justice and peace. This makes advocacy part of an integrated diaconal theology which is needed if a transformation is to take place. In seeking justice, diakonia must allow the voice of "the voiceless" to be heard. It is important that diakonia seeks to empower "the voiceless" in order that they can advocate in their own lives.

I lean on the theories that emphasize that the church needs to have Jesus as a role model of its diaconal work. I also note that diakonia has been viewed as an integrated part of the church's holistic mission, although, as noted by Oftestad, there are different perspectives to the basis of the diaconal work of the church. Lastly, I identify that diakonia is considered key for the relationship between church and society. I will now explore one way I believe diakonia can fight for justice and peace.

Justice in the context of land grabbing here is value-based. It looks out for the common good; it challenges injustice and works for the good of all, it serves those that are in need, it builds peace and reconciliation and it preaches love for one another; to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. It considers welfare as an uppermost goal.

### **3.5. Diakonia as social justice.**

In his book *A Theory of Justice*, John Rawls' Welfare-Based Principles which are motivated by the idea that what is of primary moral importance is the level of welfare of people, this sheds more light to the stance of the Justice and Peace commission in their quest to resolve conflicts. Also in his view of equality of opportunity, John Rawls reiterates the importance of equality which must be attained by showing concern, respect or the treatment of people. (Rawls, 1996)

Specifically, Rawls develops what he claims are principles of justice through the use of an artificial device he calls the Original position in which everyone decides principles of justice from behind a veil of ignorance. This "veil" is one that essentially blinds people to all facts about themselves so they cannot tailor principles to their own advantage:

"...no one knows his place in society, his class position or social status, nor does anyone know his fortune in the distribution of natural assets and abilities, his intelligence, strength, and the like. I shall even assume that the parties do not know their conceptions of the good or their special psychological propensities. The principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance"(Rawls; 1999:11)

According to Rawls, ignorance of these details about oneself will lead to principles that are fair to all. If an individual does not know how he will end up in his own conceived society, he is likely not going to privilege any one class of people, but rather develop a scheme of justice that treats all fairly. In particular, Rawls claims that those in the Original Position would all adopt a maximin strategy which would maximize the prospects of the least well-off.

« They are the principles that rational and free persons concerned to further their own interests would accept in an initial position of equality as defining the fundamentals of the terms of their association (Rawls, 1999: 11)

Rawls claims that the parties in the original position would adopt two such principles, which would then govern the assignment of rights and duties and regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages across society. The difference principle permits inequalities in the distribution of goods only if those inequalities benefit the worst-off members of society. Rawls believes that this principle would be a rational choice for the representatives in the original position for the following reason: Each member of society has an equal claim on their society's goods. Natural attributes should not affect this claim, so the basic right of any individual, before further considerations are taken into account, must be to an equal share in material wealth. What, then, could justify unequal distribution? Rawls argues that inequality is acceptable only if it is to the advantage of those who are worst-off.

The theory has continued to develop and expound over time, and deals with arising challenges of today's social issues. And a harvest of justice is sown in peace by those who make peace" (James 3:8). According to Pope Benedict XVI;

Justice is not a mere human convention. When, in the name of supposed justice, the criteria of utility, profit, and material possession come to dominate, the value and dignity of human beings can be trampled underfoot. Justice is a virtue which guides the human will, prompting us to give others what is due to them by reason of their existence and their actions. Likewise, peace is not the mere absence of war, or the result of man's actions to avoid conflict; it is, above all, a gift of God which must be implored with faith, and which has the way to its fulfillment in Jesus. True peace must be constructed day after day with compassion, solidarity, fraternity, and collaboration on everyone's part. (Pope Benedict XVI, 14th Jan. 2012)

The above quotation presents, Christianity as a non-violent action for social justice and peace within its community and historical context. This is a base that outlines the mission of the justice and peace commission in the archdiocese of Bamenda.

A church that prays for peace, serves its community, uses money ethically, cares for the environment and cultivates good relations with others can become an instrument for peace. Furthermore, when churches work in a united way for peace, their witness becomes more credible (ECJP: 9).

### **3.6.Diaconia of the church as the triune God.**

According to Harald Hegstad, the church is a concrete and experienced fellowship of people that qualifies as a church through their relation to the triune God. (Hegstad, 2009: 17). Moreover, the church is considered and described to be a holy place, together with being "apostolic". The latter term is a reminder that the church is founded on apostolic witness (McGrath 1997: 220). I believe the perspective of the church being local and universal at the same time, as well as something concrete, gives a greater understanding to what constitutes a church. The message of the Gospel has personal as well as social implementations, and the church is to proclaim the good news of the Gospel; that every human being is created in the image of God. There is hope, future and grace through Jesus Christ. I believe the fact that the Gospel is to have social



implementations is highly relevant to the issues of justice and peace. Furthermore, according to Hegstad, the church is sent to the world, but it is also a part of the world (Hegstad, 2009: 61). Therefore, the assignment of the Christian church is to proclaim the good news of the Gospel for the sake of the world, and is not to accept an unjust world. As put in a WCC publication:

The church has been sent to be a sign of the kingdom of God, and to set up signs of God's kingdom. Its mission therefore means struggling for dignity, justice, human rights, participation, reconciliation, healing and integrity in her own life and her actions, and supporting the efforts and struggles of those who are concerned (LWF, 2002: 25).

Jesus care for the helpless and needy has served as a model for the diaconal work of the church. If the church carries out its diaconal task, it is in fact sharing the gospel by deeds. Such a role as a diaconal actor in today's reality thus makes the church more visible. Moreover, a diaconal way of acting must also be seen in relation to the needs and injustice in our world (Nordstokke 2002: 18). I believe the perspective of having Jesus as a model for the diaconal work of the church will serve as a useful perspective in the discussion of justice and peace and what its meaning will entail for the diakonia of the church.

I chose the diakonia theory of justice and peace because of its ecclesial identity, its uniqueness pertaining to Church and its functions, which are in focus of this study and also in order to understand better the diaconal challenges posed in the research question. The authors of 'Research Methods in the Social Science' explain this way "Best of all Theories by its very nature and can always be modified and extended to fit the situation" (Somekh & Lewin, 2005:49). This is exactly what I will do with this theory of diakonia in the context of justice and peace; it will be extended to the communities where land grabbing is very recurrent. This theory will be used in the analysis of JPC's mission to tackle the conflict issues in Balikumbat and the neighboring villages. It shall challenge the churches' response to the situation and again challenge its continual role in current situations in a changing world.

Diakonia in this context affirms the understanding of diakonia as reconciling, compassionate, transformative, justice seeking and prophetic. "...holistic ecumenical diakonia attends to the healing, and reconstructive elements of human life. Here the explicitly spiritual gifts of prayer

and consolation are offered along with the social dimensions of healing, reconciliation and rebuilding communities and nations”. (Ferguson and Ortega, 2002 p. 3)

### **3.7. Ecumenical Diakonia**

Ecumenical diakonia has several dimensions enclosed to it; however, I am not going to use the theory of Ecumenical Diakonia in its full entirety because that would be too much for this Master thesis. However, I will concentrate on Diakonia and justice and peace. Furthermore, I will use this study as a way of developing ecumenical diakonia concept in a setting where the concept of diakonia is carried out but the term ‘Diakonia’ itself is not generally used or known. Ecumenical Diakonia points the usefulness of diakonia because it gives an understanding of a church that relates to its reality, and it lifts up advocacy as an act of the church. In Diakonia it is important and the churches ought to side and walk with those who struggle against structural and other forms of injustices. The Church needs to be dynamic in its actions and sensitive to the current and changing social needs and issues that may rise locally or even beyond because in today’s world, there are much closer inter-relationships among different regions, and globally.

Thus diakonia, the service of God to our fellow men and women, has as its goal the concrete presence of God. Diakonia is the sign of God with and among us, Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14). And this sign is given through the action of God there, where life is threatened. Amidst this reality, it is necessary to act with words and actions: Enough! Things cannot go on this way! A conversion of value is urgently needed. We have to testify with our actions the same way as Jesus Christ: “Do as I did”. (Ferguson, and Ortega, p. 14)

In the New Testament, it most often refers to a ministry (leadership role) or, as we have seen related to Jesus, his Messianic mission.” (LWF, 2009:81). The Church has the important task, of standing in the gap for those at periphery and being prophetic meaning to defend justice “Diakonal action therefore by its very nature includes the task of unmasking especially systemic forms of injustice and of promoting justice.” (ibid)

“Ecumenical Diakonia as Love of life: the call to participate in God’s Mission leads us to work as co-creators, with the firm conviction that all may have life abundantly (John 10:10). To be true co-creator, participants must resemble the Creator in two important aspects – God’s compassion and God’s self-emptying love (kenosis), represented by the sacrifice of Christ on the

Cross. All the activities of the Christian community in evangelism, diakonia, the struggle for human dignity, healing, peace and justice belong together in the mission of God”. (Ferguson and Ortega, p. 9)

Today the justice and peace commission have developed a strong ecumenical tradition; they penetrate every community with crisis in the nature of conflicts to resolve them in every just way and with every just means so that harmonious peace may reign permanently. Borrowing from the words of Martin Luther King Jr. “you cannot fight hate with hate” and to corroborate the adage, the Justice and Peace commission preaches one gospel which is that of love. Jesus had a special love for the poor and the downtrodden, the weak and the unloved especially those who suffer injustice of any form. Looking at justice in this context this study builds a society not of worldly riches and power but one of love and justice and peace. “And a harvest of justice is sown in peace by those who make peace” (James 3:8). This justice is globally about building a kingdom of love. Jesus gave us two commandments which he said were the most important of all: To love God above anyone or anything else and to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Justice and peace commission translates this message in its work to resolve conflicts

### **3.8. Restorative Counseling Method**

Restorative Practice offers a framework and a series of practices designed to process issues, repair harm, restore relationship, build community and allow people to move on. Restorative Practice invites people affected by conflict to talk to each other openly and honestly through facilitated circles and restorative conversations.

“Some emotional or mental health needs are best met in the settings where they are experienced, rather than in the counseling office. That’s where Restorative Counseling comes in”. (Shalem Mental Health Network).

The restorative counseling theory will be employed as a second theory which is applied in an after conflict situation. The government passes judgment most of the times as it relies much on jurisprudence and neglects the state of mind of the people. This study values the state of mind the people; the state of mind determines the outcome of any judgment or restriction orders. “While it works most of the time, it cannot work all of the time” (Boege, 2006). State verdicts should

consider the state of mind of the people. Restoration takes into consideration the welfare of the people.

The restorative counseling method looks into the afterlife of the peoples in the affected communities. What can be done to restore normality in the community? How can it be done and in what way is it going to be done? The land grabbing in Balikumbat and Bafanji resulted to loss of lives and burning down of houses. Many people fled their villages and families were separated. While the government, through its forces of law and order is always busy arresting perpetrators of the acts, the Justice and Peace Commission derives means to restore life. In working to restore the situation, the Justice and Peace commission identifies the affected members by consulting the councilors of the communities. A list of the affected members is drawn up and given to the JPC. In situations of homelessness, the JPC through foreign organizations compensates the families either with money to help in rebuilding their houses or donates zinc for some of them to roof their houses. The commission goes as far as intervening at the level of the courts for the perpetrators not to be sentenced in a bid to bring long lasting serenity and harmony in the communities. Government actions tend to aggravate the state of affairs within the communities and push the people to act in vengeance towards their neighboring villages. The Justice and Peace Commission also organize forums whereby the people are formed or trained on how to approach conflict situations. Specialists are equally invited to talk to the conflict victims. Again, indoor talks are held between the chiefs of the communities asking them to reallocate some pieces of land for communities to farm on and the land on which wrangling continually take place, the chiefs are advised to demarcate it for something that can benefit the two communities like schools or community hall.

The physical and mental conditions of the people are a consequence of the conflicting situations which yield injuries and damage: loss of live, destruction of property and separation of families. The physical condition relates to the visible effects that occur as a result of the land grabbing; the injuries, deaths, destruction of property and separation of families are factors that combine as physical effects. The mental condition relates with what is happening within the individual and which is invisible; thoughts that torture the mind of the person, the traumatic experiences. The physical and mental conditions are the pathways to the restorative counseling theory, it is through the physical and the mental conditions of the people that the Justice and Peace

Commission is able to properly assess the situation and know how to tackle it. They lead up to the activities that will play a vital role in bringing about peace, a normal way of life and a harmonious settlement back to a normal communal way of life.

The Justice and Peace Commission is doing « a lot » in the process of restoring peace and order within the communities where land issues have changed in nature and have practically been on the increase, and becoming more complex and violent. Unlike the forces of law and order, the JPC comes into these conflicts as a humanitarian institution. It adopts a Christian approach in its processes of resolutions. So, in the physical and mental theoretical aspects, the JPC comes with different forms of animations and activities such as workshops on modern farming techniques, a workshop that captures the interest of the people since they are mostly farmers and are willing to improve their crop productions, they do not hesitate to make massive turn-outs. In the workshops, agricultural experts are invited to teach the people on proper farming methods, produce conservation and formation of cooperatives and farmers unions. The aspect of farmers' cooperatives and unions calls therefore for oneness and unity to attain the goals which often are to benefit from government funding and non-governmental organizations. In other cases of animation, the JPC organizes football competitions, cross country races and promote any community vibrant cultural activity that will create a serene atmosphere within the localities.

In the context of the psychological healings the Justice and Peace commission organizes ecumenical masses within the communities. She also organizes forums like peace talks, empowerment talks and round table discussions to bring parties to a common ground of mutual understanding.

“When everything else must have gone, land will still be here and it might not even be us as custodians of whatever will be found on it. Why not share now what these lands offer to us all. Share and not fight because land is there to swallow us up. We dig up land, it doesn't bleed, we burn it up it doesn't shed a tear and yet we spill blood over something that is so generous to us and feeds us all. What will you do if at the end of fighting you were given the entire land to farm on alone? Will you be able to cultivate it alone?”

(Ajeande Gillian, 2014 Workshop, Combined report, p.2).

Given the aggressive nature of the people in the grass field plains of Ndop in the Ngoketunjia subdivision, the Justice and Peace commission devises an approach and method to handle the crisis. The title holders, members of the village development associations, councilors and elites of the concerned communities are approached with invitations of a round table meeting aim at a resolution. It is in these meetings that the JPC lays out its aim and brings the above mentioned groups to understand it and as a result, they go back to their communities as ambassadors to proclaim the outcome of their meeting with the JPC. Through these persons, the JPC paves the way for serene atmosphere and therefore approaches the communities free from possible outrages. The JPC intervenes with the personality of a church based organization whose language is completely different from what the people get during government interventions.

The Justice and Peace Commission employs restorative justice because of its neutral personality and because it tries to restore the state of both the victimizer and the victimized. It does not solicit jurisprudence because she does not work within a classification of a criminal justice system which has a range of constructive sanctions; her mission is more of restorative and not punitive. The Justice and Peace Commission is on a humanitarian mission of love, livelihood and the welfare of the individual.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

#### 4.1. Introduction

The chapter aims at analyzing the effects of land grabbing, the efforts made by the government, the Justice and Peace commission and the community's people in resolving the conflicts yielded by land issues. The chapter also sought to find out the experiences and opinions of the community's people on the effects of land grabbing to their own lives.

The age of the respondents to the questionnaires ranged between 25 years and 50 years. This is a range of the agile and active age which means that the young and the adults are all involved in land issues considering that the main activity in the communities is farming. 65% of the respondents are within the working age and practically survive through their farm produce. This is to say they have the strength to fight back each time they feel that their sources of income are or have been threatened in one way or the other. It can be inferred from the study that the issue of land grabbing does not relate to a particular class of people, it affects the whole community in one way or the other; men, women and children. I chose my respondents through random selections during meetings and restorative mental activities for example, during the football encounter that was organized by the justice and peace commission between Balikumbat and Balingashu. I gave questionnaires to those who accepted to answer.

#### 4.3. Data on general issues

**Table 1: Presentation of data on the questionnaires that were answered and returned by the people of the three different communities that have recently experienced land grabbing problems.**

Names of the villages	Number of respondents	Number of questionnaires	Number returned	Percentage returned
Balikumbat	6	6	5	99

Balingashu	6	6	4	98
Bamukumbit	6	6	6	100
Total	18	18	15	98

From the above table, it is seen that 18 people were consulted in the three different villages where land grabbing issues have been on the rise, 18 questionnaires were handed to them and 15 of them responded in answering and submitting the questionnaires within the time frame agreed. 3 of the people categorically refused to submit the questionnaires. Out of 18 questionnaires distributed, the 15 that were received by the people of the three villages returned their sheets.

In all the villages, the questionnaires returned made a percentage of 98.

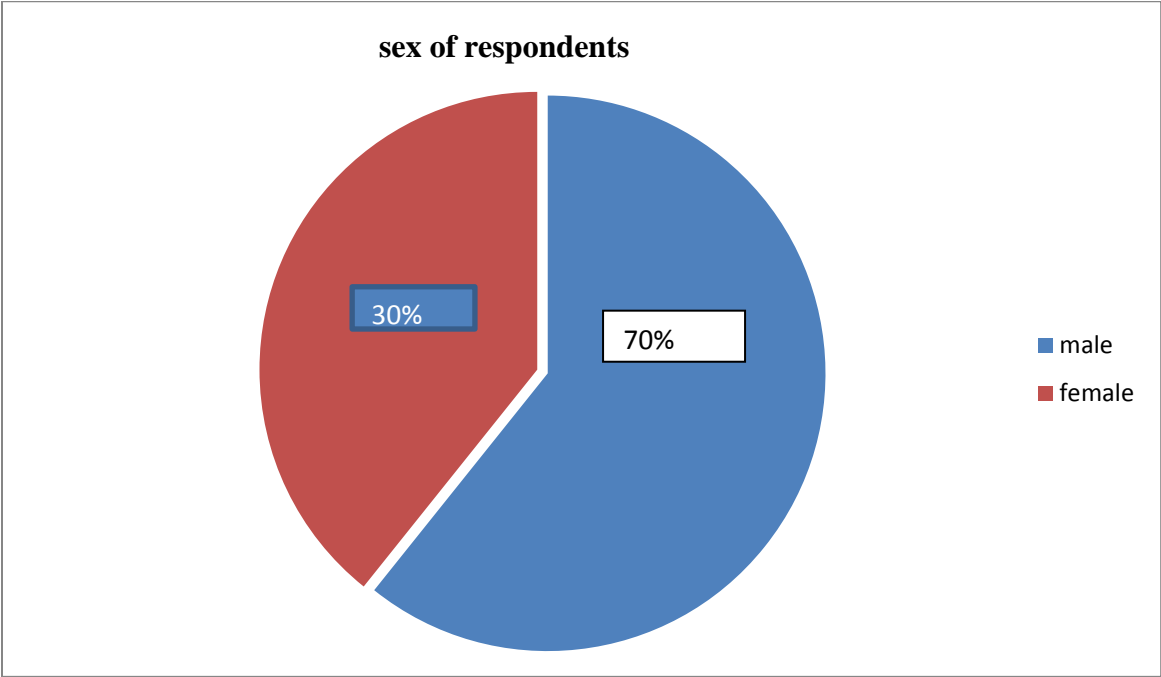


Figure 4.1: Sex distribution of the respondents in the three communities where questionnaires were distributed.



In the three villages where questionnaires were distributed, an effort to yield gender balance was paramount. In each of the villages, of every 6 numbers that were picked, 2 to 3 women were consulted to respond to the questionnaires. However, out of every 4 women consulted, 2 were ready to respond. This is due to lack of proper education on Land grabbing issues and also because men are the ones at the front, the women believed they had a better understanding of the issues better than the women. Slightly more than ¾ of the respondents were between the ages of 28 to 50 years. This indicates that this age range make up the working population and it is the age range that is actively involved in farming activities and consequently active in conflicts that arise from land grabbing.

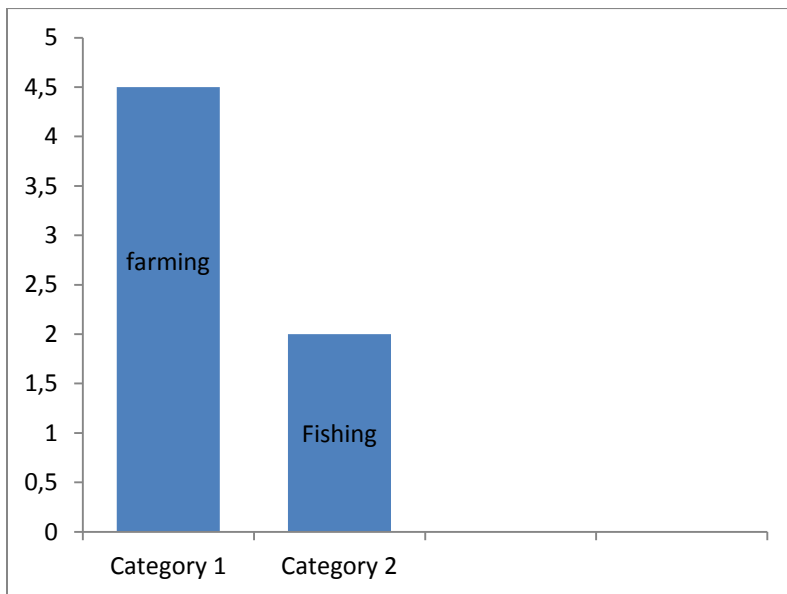
**Table 2: Land grabbing seems to be a recurrent issue between Balingashu, Balikumbat and Bamukumbit.**

Number of respondents		Not often	Veryoften	often	Total
Balikumbat	6	0	4	1	5
Balingashu	6	0	4	0	4
Bamukumbit	6	0	5	1	6
	18	0	13	2	15

From the table above, 96% of the villagers in the three villages confirm that land grabbing issues occur very often. From the respondents, it is understood that apart from land that is bought or inherited, most of the land owned by large scale farmers is grabbed; gotten as a gift from the fondom or forcefully acquired. 4% of the villagers responded that land grabbing occurs often. Given the margin between very often and often, it is clear that from the table that land grabbing is a constant platform for conflict in and around the villages. With 95% of the population across the three villages made up of farmers and in addition to the fertility of the soil and the good produce that yield, every village is ready to fight for his/her piece of land which is an indubitable

source of income. Farming makes up 95% of the activities in the three villages and fishing covers the remaining 5%.

Most of the land on which land grabbing issues erupt is either inherited land, land given as a gift or communal land. Inter-tribal conflicts caused the movement of people from one direction to the other and some fondoms that received migrants gave them settlement land and land on which to farm on. The passage of time has had new settlers encroaching forcefully into other pieces of land and the original settlers wanting to take back what is theirs either due to the fertility of the soil or due to population growth and want of more land for farming and construction of houses.



**Table 3: Land grabbing issues have led to the loss of many lives and destruction of property.**

Number of respondents		Many	Not many	Very few	Total
Balikumbat	6	5	0	0	5
Balingashu	6	3	0	1	4
Bamukumbit	6	3	2	1	6
	18	11	2	2	15

The above table represents the effects of land grabbing to the three communities and to the question of loss of lives and destruction of property, 11 respondents out of the returned questionnaires agreed that many lives are lost as a result of land grabbing conflicts. 2 respondents deemed that the lives lost and property destroyed is not many and another said they were very few. A greater number in the different villages agree that the aftermath or consequences of the land grabbing conflicts are alarming and cause a lot of havoc to the communities. The respondents also reiterated that the conflicts are gradually deserting the villages, homes are destroyed ; burnt down, lives are lost and families are separated and as a cautious measure many families are relocating thereby abandoning their farms and yielding a cycle of land grabbing that is, people will try to fight over land that seemed not to be exploited. The situation equally hampers development as communal land sometimes is used to settle the unsettled and by the time government structures and facilities are making way into the communities; there is never available land to embrace government initiatives.

With lives being lost and property destroyed pinpoints a situation of anarchy and justifies the fact that justice and peace are trampled upon.

**Table 4: *Government efforts render proper and lasting solutions to land issues in the communities.***

Number of respondents		To a great extent	Greater extent	Lesser extent	Total
Balikumbat	6	0	1	4	5
Balingashu	6	0	0	4	4
Bamukumbit	6	0	2	4	6
	18	0	3	12	15

96% of the respondents believe that government has yielded fewer results. Government intervention is always in line with its judicial standpoint; criminal proceedings which hunt for culprits, issues warrants of arrest and tags wanted list here and there. Lost lives and destroyed properties is given no attention by the government. Government's attention is particularly on perpetrators of the act. 3 respondents think that government action helps to restore the situation to a greater however majority disagree.

From the above figure analyses, it can be deduced that the government’s failure to properly demarcate land in and around the villages is one problem on one hand, the government’s failure to judiciously combat land grabbing and the issue of land certificates on the other hand which is made quite impossible with administrative bottlenecks and the corruption that goes with it. Government neglect and weakness has yielded anarchy and transformed the villages into jungles of survival of the fittest; where the powerful grab land easily and either give to whosoever they want or use it for themselves. It is equally evident that some information is lacking simply because the women are not properly educated on land grabbing issues. This accounts for why only a few were ready and able to respond to the questions posed. Consequently, the villages as per the analyses above have lost sight of the government’s role in resolving land grabbing conflicts.

**Table 5: *The presence of the Justice and Peace Commission as an organization that attempts to establish justice and peace among the warring communities.***

Number of respondents		Effective	Very effective	Not effective	Total
Balikumbat	6	1	4	0	5
Balingashu	6	0	4	0	4
Bamukumbit	6	0	6	0	6
	18	1	14	0	15

From table 5, the mission of the justice and peace commission is duly recognized and approved by 99% of the respondents. The respondents see the justice and peace commission as a very effective tool for conflict resolution. As opposed to the government, the justice and peace commission does not come in with criminal proceedings or goes hunting for perpetrators, it comes in with a sole objective to restore and bring back life to normal, it attempts a healing process. It attempts to give back what has been taken away; it attempts to reconcile conflicting parties. The justice and peace commission at 99% fulfills its mission which is being proclaimed as per the respondents in the table above.

The Justice and Peace Commission come in with an Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). ADR is the informal dispute resolution process in which parties meet a professional third party who helps them to resolve their dispute in a way that is less formal and often more consensual than is done in the courts. (Spangler, 2003). According to Fisher et al., (2000) ADR represents several dispute resolution processes and techniques which while believed by some to be outside the traditional mainstream of state jurisprudence, have gained acceptance among both the general public and the legal profession. As explain by Crook, (2002), it represents another opinion on how disputes can be resolved outside of the official judicial means. Ramirez (2002) describes ADR as a ‘win-win’ alternative which is an example of joint decision making approach to dealing with social conflict. The Justice and Peace Commission therefore in its humanitarian mission imbued with God’s teachings go a long way to resolve and restore justice and peace in the communities.

Table 6: *Common forms of land acquisition in the communities*

Number of respondents		Purchasing	Grabbing	Inheriting	Total
Balikumbat	6	0	3	2	5
Balingashu	6	0	3	1	4
Bamukumbit	6	0	5	1	6
	18	0	11	4	15

90% of land acquired across the villages is land that is grabbed. 10% is inherited land. Which means purchasing land in any of the villages is rare. Grabbing seems to be the best means of land acquisition. While inheritance remains and issue within families from one generation to another.

#### **4.4. Summary of findings**

Land grabbing is becoming a normal phenomenon in the three villages since the common form of land acquisition is by grabbing – forceful taking away of one’s land. Many of the respondents have been involved in land grabbing disputes in one way or the other and their experiences have been injurious therefore reflecting the high incidences of land conflicts in the villages.

Land grabbing as seen above; is a provocation that brings about conflict and since conflicts are an integral part of human interaction, humans must learn how to manage them and come up with innovative and creative ideas on how to resolve conflicts. Even though, each system has its own way of managing conflicts; I think it is important to note here that, managing conflicts depends very much on the appropriate process applied to a particular circumstance or context of the conflict. Which types of justice systems are available to handle the land grabbing issues? On one hand there are courts and on the other there is the Justice and Peace Commission

The position of the government as a strong arbitrary force has neglected the plight of the people, thereby giving the strong the arms with which to continuously grab from the weak. Overall, the government has denied to levy the proper justice to the villages; its criminal proceedings and state jurisprudence is not what is needed in the villages.

The Justice and Peace Commission( from the survey above) is highly proclaimed by the villagers and seen as a true and devoted alternative which resolves and restores not only the peace but equally institutes a kind of justice that brings real harmony ; psychologically, physically and materially.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1.Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion and interpretation of the findings from the research study. The chapter brings out the role of the church through its Justice and Peace Commission in its mission to bring peace and justice to communities where conflicts hinder the peoples' lives and how it impacts the lives of the peoples in conflict areas. The main objective of the study was to find out the role played by the justice and peace commission in fostering justice and peace. In this chapter, the researcher will discuss and interpret findings, come up with recommendations and a general conclusion.

#### 5.2.Interpretation of findings

The main objective of this study was to bring out the role played by the Justice and Peace Commission in the restoration of peace and justice in conflict areas and to also bring out the mechanisms with which she goes about to attain her mission. This research used as case study, three villages in the Ndop plains, namely Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit that have turned out recently to be warring communities over land issues.

After the investigation through questionnaires, the researcher through the data collected and analyzed discovered that land issues/conflicts are not only recurrent in the above mentioned villages but largely lead to loss of lives, destruction of property and family separation. From the questions raised, the responses led to the following findings:

The responses obtained confirm that land grabbing is actually a disturbing issue among the communities. 96% of the villagers believe that one of their greatest problems is that land grabbing interferes in many ways with their peace. 95% of the villagers being heavily involved in agricultural activities stand greater chances of losing their pieces of land due to recurrent nature of the land grabbing and more so, in the absence of a strong and reliable arbitrary force. 90% of the respondents when asked about common forms of land acquisition in the villages confirmed that most of the land is grabbed. As a result, fear and uncertainty looms the villages and peace becomes a commodity as some flee the villages for a quiet settlement in other areas.

In an effort to understand the place of arbitration in moments of land issues, respondents decry the passive nature of the government in her numerous attempts to resolve land grabbing crisis and their outcomes. 96% of the villagers believe that the government's approach is indecisive, weak and full of neglect. This yields a situation where the villagers openly and categorically declare their indifference as far as the government is concerned. However, as opposed to the government, the church in its diaconal mission to bring light to those in the dark, has through its reliable institution, the Justice and Peace Commission, come up with means and measures to properly and delicately handle the land grabbing issues which seem to render living unbearable for the villagers. In this guise, 99% of the villagers acknowledge and believe in the works of the Justice and Peace Commission as an agent with good tidings and with a mission to restore true and harmonious peace. In a way to attain her mission the JPC uses the diaconal theory which lays out the teachings of Jesus Christ and employs it as a universal message to soften and to change the mindset of the people. In order to succeed, JPC equally makes use of the restorative theory to bring back life to the villages; psychologically, physically and materially.

The Justice and Peace Commission therefore, through its mission ensure spiritual, moral and social development in the communities where she has intervened in conflict outbreaks. In the spiritual domain, the JPC brings out its diaconal mission through the word of God, bringing the people to understand God's ways and God's message in their lives by:

### **5.3. Building a kingdom of love and justice and peace**

Jesus gave us two great commandments which he said were the most important of all. He asked us: - to love God above anyone or anything else

- to love our neighbor as we love ourselves

And from the Gospel stories, Jesus had a special love for the poor and downtrodden; the weak and the unloved; for outcasts and for those who are forced to live on the margins of society.

Jesus asks us to love everyone but especially those who suffer injustice in any way. By doing this we can play our part in building the Kingdom of God; a kingdom, not of worldly riches and power, but one of love and justice and peace.

### **5.4. Translating faith into action**



We all share a responsibility to care for God's people and for the beautiful world he has made  
By putting your faith into action you can:

- Develop a greater awareness of global issues
- Understand how our actions directly impact others, near and far, and how they impact our planet too
- Foster good relationships with each other and with the world around us
- Live the message of the Gospels and Catholic Social Teaching to help build a fairer world that will enable everyone to live life to the full.

In the social dimension, the JPC does not only resolve the conflict but sees into the livelihood of the people by setting up activities that can foster true unity and in turn eliminate possibilities of future land grabbing or conflicts. She imports expertise to train the farmers on the different farming methods, joint farming and cooperative societies. She sponsors some farming initiatives like gardening and acts as a liaison between farming groups in the communities and some international organizations for food programs like Agricultural Program for Food Sufficiency (PACA).

### **5.5. Justice and peace commission the negotiator and the mediator**

The JPC stands to negotiate and mediate the way to peace and justice, for peace and justice to reign in the villagers and most especially between warring parties. "Diakonia theory of justice and peace embody the welfare of the human person, it encompasses the call to serve the poor and oppressed. It also refers to the specific kind of help that should be given anybody in need."

JPC negotiates by looking for a joint solution between parties. Herrera et al, (2006) describe negotiation as "a conflict resolution method freely chosen by stakeholders in whom they manage to meet and personally find a joint solution to their conflict". Thus negotiation is done directly between the parties with or more often without a facilitator. In negotiation, the desired objective is agreement which may or may not be enforceable under formal or customary law. In her process to properly negotiate, the JPC must create grounds for conciliation. Herrera et al, (2006) define conciliation as "a situation where a neutral party tries to engage stakeholders separately in a network to promote communication and help them to jointly choose a conflict resolution method". The conciliator tries to resolve the conflict on mutually acceptable terms. The

conciliator's role is very delicate; he or she will have to listen to the warring parties and attempt to clarify what lies behind their sometimes radical point of views and make them understand that there are other legitimate interpretations of reality. The Justice and Peace Commission to have succeeded have properly played her roles of negotiator, conciliator and mediator. Mediation is defined by Shamir (2003) as "a process that employs a neutral or impartial person or persons to facilitate negotiations between parties to a dispute in an effort to reach mutually accepted resolutions." Herrera et al, (2006) describe it as "the intervention of neutral third party with no decision making power whose duty it is to follow the entire negotiation process, improve communication between the parties, and help them reach the most appropriate resolution". As a volunteer mediator, the JPC has transcended barriers such as hatred and revenge, anger and bitterness to restore love and tolerance among conflicting groups.

#### **5.6. Seeing, reflecting and acting.**

In this paragraph I will show how efficient the JPC as a faith based organization is doing her work using the diaconal method of: see, reflect and act. This according to (Nordstokke, 2009) is the best merger between theory and praxis in diakonia. For a better understanding of this subject theme drawn from my survey, I will use the parable of the Good Samaritan. As it explain all the three stages or steps (seeing, reflecting and acting) used by the Justice and Peace Commission to restore harmony amongst the affected people and their communities in general. As seen in the Dictionary of Ecumenical Movement: "responsible diaconal service will contain both short-term and long-term objectives". The church (JPC) as observed above, follows a step by step process as she try to resolve conflicts in the conflict zones. The above is well illustrated using a parable from the gospel according to Luke 10:25-37, *the parable of the Good Samaritan*. It is three fold step process:

*"The primary step consisted of "coming near "the injured man who fall from the horse and is laying by the side of the road, presses solidarity and the overcoming of fear and apathy regarding the suffering of others. "Coming near" is also necessary in order to see what has happened and to know what is needed. The second step concentrates on responding to the immediate need of suffering, using existing resources—in this case bandages, oil and wine—in order to get the healing process started. The third step concerns rehabilitation and return to normal life, with preparation for continued support if necessary."*

At level of my discussion, the hermeneutical keys for understanding and practicing diakona today, I must say are very important. According to Dr kjell the terms should not be interpreted but rather should be treated and handled as they are, “they should not be interpreted as one comes first and leads to the other, but they should be seen as parallel and interactive processes, all of which have their origin in Gods gracious care for creation and salvific action in Jesus Christ”. By thses, diaconial workers (the Justice and Peace Commission of the Bamenda Arch Diocese), are better equip for the “great” diaconal tasks of fully seeing, reflecting and acting. The Dictionary of Ecumenical Movement defines Diakonia as

*“Responsible service of the Gospel by deeds and by words performed by Christian’s in response to the needs of the people”*

The definition has three important elements. Firstly, Diakonia is seen as action: Diakonia cannot be limited to statements and good intensions. It is full of action and words build as “responsible service” meaning that actions are accountable. Secondly it confirms that these actions are performed by Christians. But note should be taken here that not only Christians perform and render effective “responsible service” but rather this points to the distinct work of Diakonia. Thirdly, diaconal work has a focus on the needs of the people. So to say that it is “not” correct to use Diakonia to designate all kinds of good work”. This will make the word to lose it meaning in context. It important note here that the Justice And Peace Commission do not do all the work by herself people of all works of life brought together irrespective of race , culture and faith. The come together and form a common platform. Thus, shunning their difference and forging ahead for a common goal of empowerment and liberation .this phenomenon is described by (Karsrud et al, 2014) as “*working together in the field of Diakonia*” Here, Diakonia should not only be limited to only professionals but must also include: vulnerable and the volunteers. Thus the Justice and Peace Commission; sees, reflects and the act In response to the people’s needs and demands.

### **5.7.Reflections on women’s participation in the survey**

John Rawls in his *A Theory of Justice*, talks about fairness in the society. As seen in the survey conducted over leaf in Figure 4.1: dealing with sex respondents, it shows that out of every 4 women whom I consulted, only 2 were ready to respond. Why? My search showed that lack of

proper education and the role of the women is lacking in the three communities of: Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit respectively. Those much information was not gotten as a result of lack of proper education on land grabbing. This did not only end the level of questions answering I equally discovered during the various meeting held that; the voice and position of women involvement, in decision making, is a call for concern in the above three localities. I think that if the women above are given proper education and consequently the chance to air out their views on issue affecting them, much will be achieved during subsequent surveys' and research works.

Another reason why few women participated in the survey can also be discussed further as being lack of empowerment and gender equality. This is a very sensitive topic even in the bible. "When god created man, he made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female and blessed them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created he called them "man" (NIV, Genesis 5:1-2) those this mean that women in the above communities are men? And can this be a justification for the lukewarm altitudes to participation? I will categorically say No. why? My survey and observations, gender inequality is still the order of the day in the conflict zones above. Now arise another question: how can this phenomenon be overcome? I will answered by saying that women empower is the way forward as this come with gender equality.

"Respect for the autonomy of every human being, and faith in people's ability to think on their own and contribute to changes in life, should also shape today's professional diaconal encounter between people" (Dietrich et al, 2014).

The church (JPC) differs a bit with the above quotation because, traumatized people (women) should not be allowed to think on their about their lives but rather be guided. With the case of those women who have been affected in one way or another perhaps mentally, the church (JPC) has it as a point of duty to talk to them constantly thus, guiding and consequently liberating them from their psychological traumas. The JPC in trying to achieve her goal of empower and gender equality uses a community base approach. This approach involves the participation of all the people. The community is made to understand that: "no one is a mere recipient or a mere donor of service, but that we are all intertwined as human beings with the same value and dignity" (Dietrich et al, 2014). All these, is found deep rooted in the fundamental respect for Gods creations. "helping the other means assisting the other and walking together with them in order to help them to manage their own life"(Dietrich et al, 2014). Thus, the church (JPC) is striving so

much to cultivate and encourage the active participation of all as this leads to community development.

From the above it can be deduced without mincing words that the Justice and Peace Commission as a justice and peace agent has a lot to offer to communities and in translating her values to the conflict zones, she has proven that she is a force to reckon with, not only nationally but also internationally.

### **5.8.Conclusion**

The above discussions clearly reveal that, conflicts have existed in all cultures, religions and societies since time immemorial, as long as humans have walked the earth. Because conflicts are an integral part of human interaction, one must learn to manage them, to deal with them in a way that will prevent escalation and destruction and come up with innovative and creative ideas to solve them. Dealing with conflicts – conflict management – is a very important process in every community. Conflict management is said to consist of both conflict prevention and conflict resolution processes. Volunteer institutions such the JPC are confronted with diverse and complex tasks to come up with suitable measures to confront the problematic of conflicts. Notwithstanding the challenges, the JPC still stand tall in her role to restore justice and peace.

In my opinion, the Justice and Peace Commission have played a great role in restoring lives, restoring situations and restoring conditions. She has succeeded to bring relative peace and justice to the conflicting communities.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

#### 6.1.Executive summary

Due to the growing prevalence of land disputes in the Ndop plains in the villages of Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit, need arises for a critical and comprehensive look into the role played by church organizations in restoring justice and peace. Base line information was gathered through the use of questionnaires which were shared out to respondents for a better assessment and understanding of the factors and dynamics of issues surrounding land grabbing and land grabbing resolutions in the above mentioned villages. The research study sets out to bring out a clear picture of land grabbing issues and the role played by the Justice and Peace Commission to render true justice and to restore harmonious peace.

Chapter one of the study dwelled on the general introduction of the theme, motivation, research questions, objectives, definition of key terms and a thorough look into the background of the study and the origin and person of the Justice and Peace Commission. Chapter two looked into the context of the study; brief history of Cameroon and the story of land grabbing as experienced in the villages of Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit. Chapter three developed the theoretical approaches and brought the efforts of the Justice and Peace Commission on conflict resolution. The theories developed were the Diakonia theory of justice and peace and the restorative counseling theory. Chapter four analyzed, interpreted and discussed the data that was collected using tables and established summary of findings. Chapter five further discussed and interpreted findings while giving recommendations of areas that are worthy of exploitation. Chapter six is the general conclusion.

The research Endeavour was worthy of study because it has opened my mind to certain realities around me, philosophically, anthropologically, sociologically, historically and even geographically. Through the research I have been able to ascertain the problems of peoples in different localities and have understood how important the role of stakeholders is in the fostering of social order and peace; in the person of the Justice and Peace Commission. I have equally through this research confirmed the universal role of the church in its mission to improve lively hood not only spiritually, but morally and materially.

I have without any doubt seen and confirmed the role of church organizations in the improvement of the quality of life of the people mindless of their religious background thus branding the church as truly universal. The person of the justice and peace commission represents the generosity of the church as a whole. It is clear to me after this research that one factor which incites the continuous land grabbing in these villages is the lack of government oversight in the different trends of land grabbing.

From the research study, it is evident and factual that the continued existence and progress of man depends on land. It is also evident that people with different interests having competing demands over land results in land conflicts and disputes of all sorts. Disputes over land could therefore be said to be an integral part of human interaction. These land disputes have negative impacts on all aspects of social and economic developments. However, there must be efficient mechanisms put in place to deal with these conflicts without which they can result in disastrous effects. This study has proven and confirmed that any conflict can be well managed and resolved if the right mechanisms and processes are put in place for the restoration of every social barriers which come about as a result of the conflict.

## **6.2.Recommendations**

After every storm comes the calm. Devastating experiences have more often than not left some indelible marks in the lives of the people as seen in the above chapters. Anti-social behavior in: Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit respectively lead to loss of lives, destruction of property separation of families and untold miseries. Theses as discovered through my findings came as a result of some lapses in the general legal system. Thus I have every reason to make recommendations which if made future out brakes of crisis in land grabbing will be reduce drastically consequently facilitating future works and interventions from the JPC in conflict zones within its jurisdiction. It is an undeniable fact that: when any group of person is affected by such anti-social behavior, every effort is put in place to repair harm and damages caused. Thus, restoring relationships that have been destroyed. In such instances, there often need for both parties involved to come together for a common understanding and this can only be possible if there are guiding roles and principles that facilitate such meetings. The JPC in Blikumbat often find it difficult organizing such meetings because the legal systems have not made provisions permitting such meetings. Thus, another for my recommendations.(Ajeande Gillian:2014)

Drawing from the explanation above I have every reason without any fear of contradiction to make the following recommendations.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

#### **6.2.1. Proper land tenure for land acquisition and land ownership**

Land grabbing issues sweeping across villages in the Ndop plain is as a result of *laissez-faire* which has yielded cacophony for both the land grabber and land owner. Measures should be put in place to permit land owners to own their lands and hold on to them without fear from land grabbers. Land certificate procedures should be made easy and affordable and eventual land certificates recognized and respected.

#### **6.2.2. Strict laws and incarceration of land grabbers**

Strict and unbending laws should be put in place for land grabbers and their prison terms accompanied by huge fines.

#### **6.2.3. Recognition of inherited land by the customary courts and the civil courts**

The customary courts and civil courts should recognize inherited land as worthy property that cannot be grabbed or seized

#### **6.2.4. Strict respect of land boundaries**

Strict boundaries between existing farming plots should be made known to the land tenure office and registered in office archives.

#### **6.2.5. Legitimacy of justice institutions**

Institutions handling justice should be true and just to their works and represent the groups with truth and honesty.

#### **6.2.6. Training and skills for mediators**

Mediating institutions or persons should be trained with skills that should equip them to better handle land disputes or conflicts of other sorts.



### **6.2.7. Full government involvement in land grabbing issues**

The government has to take the mantle in the efforts to solve land grabbing issues or other conflicts. To handle criminal proceedings in conflicts situations and at the same time blend it with efforts to restore and repair damage.

### **6.3.Future research work**

Time and distance stalled this research endeavor and reduced the researcher's chances of properly exploiting all avenues of data that could be analyzed for the better discussion. The satisfaction level of disputants after the resolution of a conflict can also be investigated and find out the probability that resolved conflicts will not revive again. Do the land conflicts die off over time or people take the laws into their own hands and use physical strength or other aggressive or defensive ways to secure their lands as is currently the case in: Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit ,where land grabbing is the order of the day?

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## Appendix A: Questionnaire

Name: Ndop/Ngukentujia Villages: Balikumbat, Balingashu and Bamukumbit

1. Land grabbing seems to be a recurrent issue between Balingashu, Balikumbat and Bamukumbit. How often does it happen?

Not often   Very often        

2. Each time there is a land issue many lives are lost and a lot of property is destroyed. How many people have lost their lives in the land grabbing wars?

Many   Not many   Very few  
     

3. Has government efforts been able to render proper and lasting solutions to land issues in the communities?

To a great extent              
Greater extent   Lesser extent

4. Other organizations have come in to establish peace among the warring communities like the Justice and Peace Commission. How effective has her role been in restoring peace?

Effective      Very effective      Not effective  

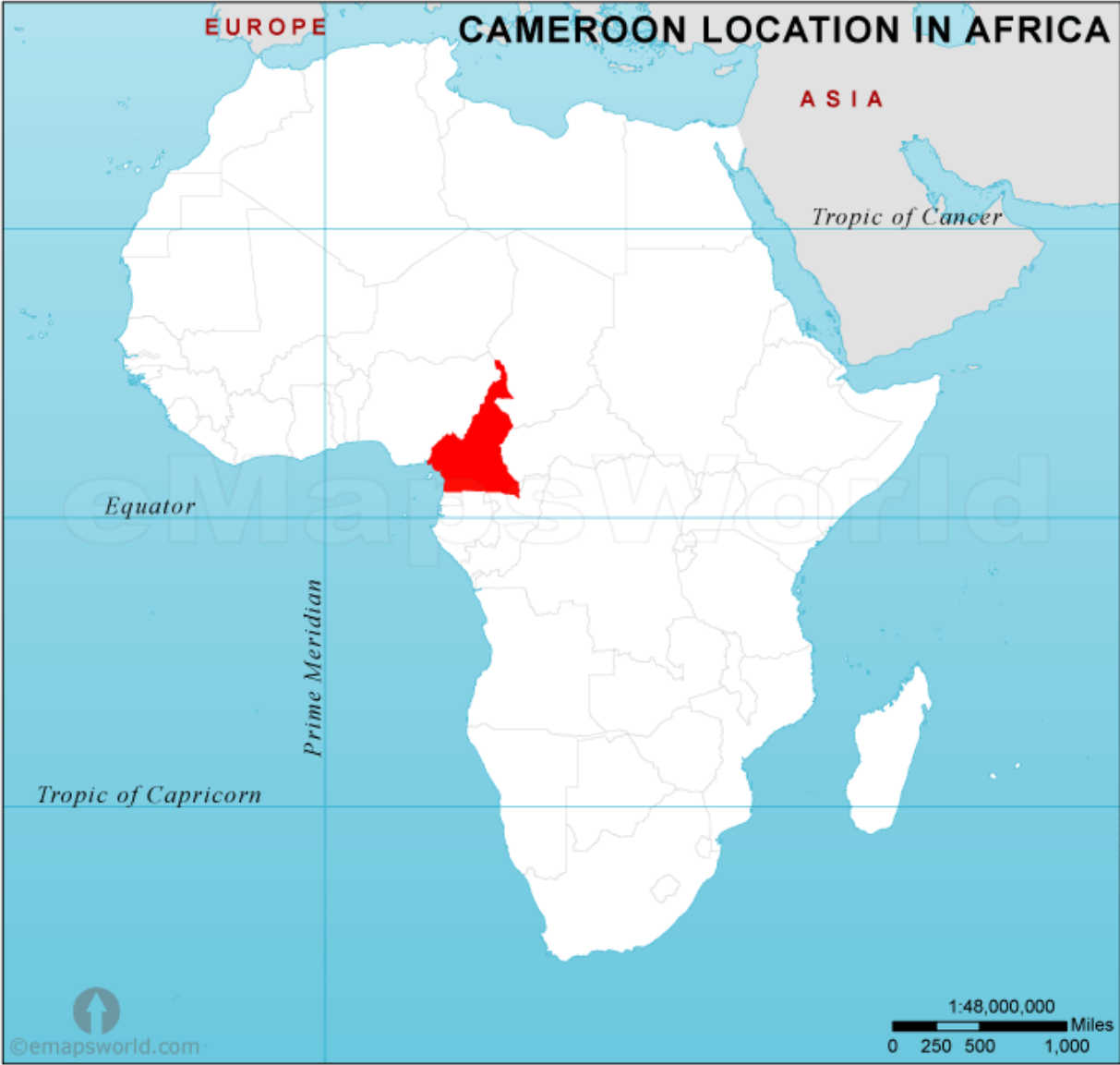
5. Do the communities themselves try to resolve the land issues amicably?

Never      Sometimes      Occasionally  

6. The elite and titleholders of the communities are lukewarm and disregard the plight of the people. How often do elites and titleholders attempt to bridge the gap between the communities as far as land grabbing is concerned?

Not often      Very often      often

**Appendix B: Cameroon in Africa**



Source: <http://www.emapsworld.com/cameroon-location-map-in-africa.html>

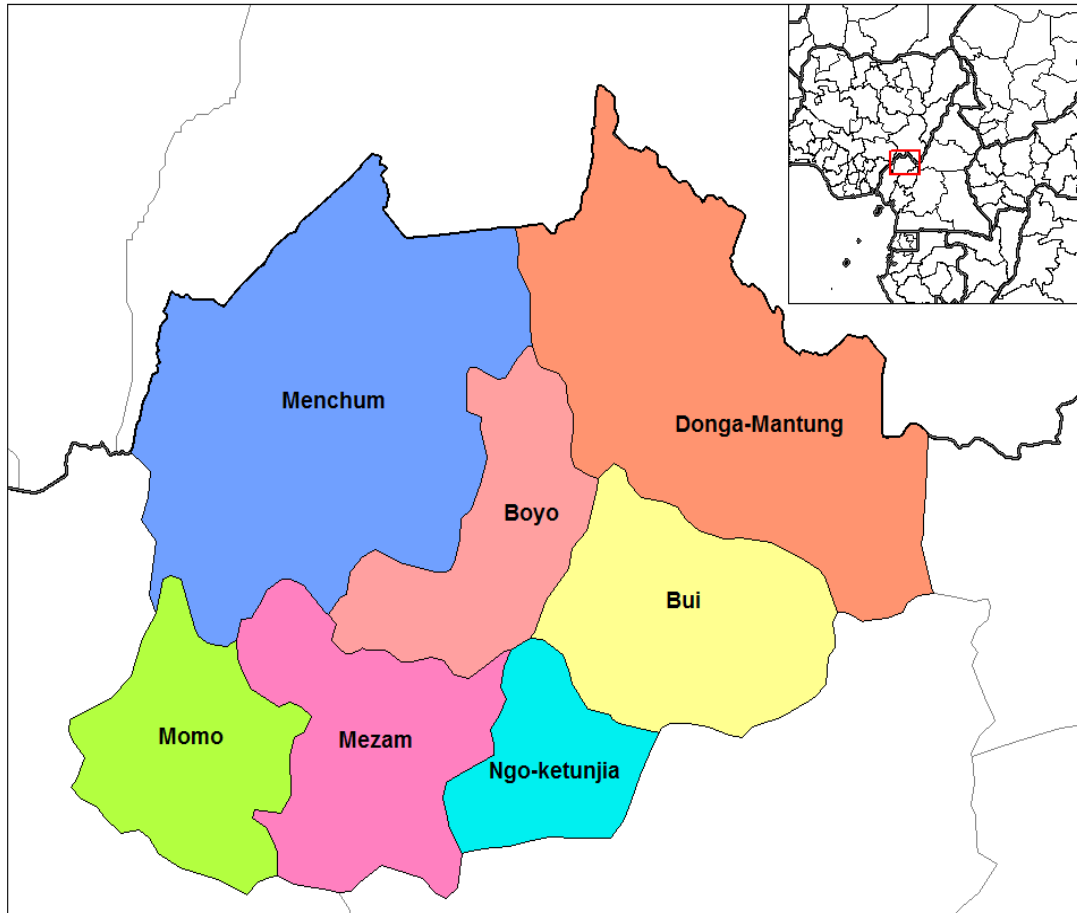


Appendix C: Cameroon Political Map



Source: <http://www.mapsofworld.com/cameroon/cameroon-political-map.html>

**Appendix D: Divisions of Northwest Region, ( Ndop/NgoKetunjia) Cameroon.**



**Source:**

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Northwest\\_Cameroon\\_divisions.png](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/Northwest_Cameroon_divisions.png)

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