

FROM WARLORDS TO POLITICIANS: TRANSFORMING REBEL MOVEMENTS INTO POLITICAL PARTIES¹

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***Abstract.** Over the past few decades, African countries have faced a new phenomenon in political life – the ascent to power of former warlords – leaders of insurgent anti-government movements or tribal militias, who become presidents, vice presidents, prime ministers and members of parliament. Warlords seek to translate their wartime gains into material wealth and social status and gain political office to consolidate their military exploits. To achieve this, they employ many different strategies: transforming their armed groups into political parties, joining existing political organizations, establishing totally new parties, or conducting individual political activity.*

In societies where power is accumulated through the expansion of social networks – political, economic, military, ethnic, religious, regional, etc. – it becomes extremely useful for a politician to play several leadership roles. Access to various networks allows leaders to expand their base of support: this partly explains why African political elites are represented not only by politicians, but also by businessmen, priests, football players and former warlords. Since most African countries since independence have been in a constant transition from authoritarian to “democratic” governance, from public sector dominance to liberal economies, from limited violence to large-scale warfare, elites have constantly had to invent new roles for themselves in order to maintain political power. If they were unable to achieve the transformation that the situation required, they risked becoming marginalized figures. In this sense, recent warlords intuitively felt it inadvisable to distance themselves from their past wartime activities. Depending on the audience and circumstances, they either emphasized their former merits as field commanders, or, on the contrary, diligently portrayed themselves as vigorous peacemakers.

The literature on peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction, with rare exceptions, ignores such an important aspect as the influence of former warlords on post-conflict electoral processes, focusing almost exclusively on organizational issues, the level of effectiveness of state institutions, intra- and inter-party struggles, methods of ensuring security, and the degree of readiness of polling stations. The present paper aims at filling this gap.

Keywords: Africa, conflicts, peacebuilding, political parties, militias, warlords, electoral processes, security

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INTRODUCTION

In the post-colonial period, most African countries came to be engulfed in protracted civil wars and conflicts that were accompanied by millions of casualties among the civilian population and led to devastation and famine in the zones of armed clashes. However, no less challenging for the African countries that have already emerged from war either through the victory of one of the parties or through the signing of a peace agreement than the conflict itself is the period of post-conflict reconstruction, or peacebuilding. Causes, prerequisites, motives of armed groups, the flow of events in wars and conflicts, ways to resolve them as well as the activities of African and international peacekeepers have been the focus of attention of many Russian and foreign scholars. The problems of post-conflict reconstruction, including such aspects as the transformation of rebel movements into political parties, have not yet been adequately reflected in either national or foreign literature.

Meanwhile, in the past few decades, African countries have faced a new phenomenon in their political life: the coming of former field commanders – warlords – to power. As a result, electoral processes in the states of the continent that are undergoing post-conflict reconstruction have become a political game involving individuals who have committed serious crimes in the recent past.

However, many former rebel leaders position themselves not only as ‘experienced politicians’ but also as potential ‘protectors’ of citizens in the event of a new conflict. As British researcher Gerhard Anders notes, field commanders seek to ‘transform their successes during the war into material well-being and social status’ and ‘get a political post to consolidate their military exploits’ [Anders 2012: 160]. To do this, they use many different strategies: the transformation of armed groups into political parties, joining existing political organizations, or the creation of new parties and the conduct of independent political activity.

The literature on peacebuilding and post-war reconstruction, with rare exceptions, ignores such an important aspect as the influence of former warlords on post-conflict electoral processes. When it comes to elections, whether presidential, parliamentary or local, organizational issues, the level of effectiveness of state institutions, intra- and inter-party struggles, security methods and the degree of readiness of polling stations are considered first of all. To the extent that the influence of recent insurgent leaders is acknowledged in principle, scholars tend to paint it in dark colors, while the goal of peacemaking is defined as finding ways to shape policy through party politics, and even if taking into account opinions of individuals, they only consider civilian ones, not military (Chesterman & Ignatieff 2008).

After the war, public institutions and political parties are usually weak or non-existent. Owing to their military experience, the loyalty of fighters or local communities, and the informal and sometimes formal military structures they may have led, former insurgent leaders have ample room to maneuver within the new political landscape and to influence political processes. While recognizing the political influence of former warlords, when evaluating peacebuilding processes it must be taken into account that they are among the politicians with the greatest ability to undermine security if the situation does not favor them. Moreover, achieving peace becomes possible only when the rebel leaders ‘conclude’ that war is no longer in their interest. This realization encourages former field commanders not only to fulfill the terms of peace agreements, but also to commit themselves to holding regular elections.

It should be noted, however, that all of the above hardly applies to the leaders of Islamist extremist groups such as the Islamic State's West Africa Province, the Islamic State's Central Africa Province, and Boko Haram, which may enjoy considerable popular support in countries and regions – in the Lake Chad Basin, Nigeria, Mali, DRC, etc. Although they also

compete for political power, they refuse to establish purely political rather than militant organizations because their proclaimed goal of creating an Islamic caliphate is totally incompatible with active participation in the political life of a secular state. In addition, fundamentalism on the African continent is constantly expanding in its current 'militant' format, while the establishment of political parties in the accordance with national procedures may even reduce the number of followers of an Islamist warlord.

PARTICIPATION OF WARLORDS IN ELECTORAL PROCESSES

During the period of post-conflict "democratization", former military leaders of anti-government movements, such as Yoweri Museveni (Uganda), Paul Kagame (Rwanda), Julius Maada Bio (Sierra Leone), Pierre Nkurunziza (Burundi), Charles Taylor (Liberia) and others, not only transformed their armed factions, creating own political parties or joining existing ones, but also participated in presidential elections, as a result of which they occupied the highest-ranking executive position. Moreover, the organization of electoral campaigns became for them the safest means of transforming their military prowess into post-war political and economic power. To strengthen their positions, they often changed strategies, but one thing remained unchanged: the promise of significant material benefits to their associates, that is, the expansion and strengthening of wartime patronage networks. Depending on the audience and circumstances prevailing in the post-conflict period, former warlords had to place greater or lesser emphasis on their 'rebel past', either emphasizing past 'merits' or, conversely, masking their participation in acts of violence whenever possible.

It is known that electoral politics in African countries is almost always the politics of the 'big man' and the struggle for power and influence of political, economic and military elites. Interestingly, former warlords often have held a number of advantages over other 'political strongmen', including career politicians and public figures, since during the years of war in various ways – through illegal mining, cross-border trade, smuggling, etc. – they accumulated significant funds and gained the loyalty and support of large portions of the population in the areas where their armed groups were based during the conflict. For instance, the former leader of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), President of Guinea-Bissau (1994–1999, 2005–2009) João Bernardo 'Nino' Vieira, used the military and criminal networks he created during the years of the struggle for independence in order to attract military and political allies for his re-election as head of state in 2005 (Denisova *et al.* 2020).

Perhaps few of the warlords surpassed – in terms of wealth accumulation – Charles Taylor, the leader of the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) in 1989–1997 and President of Liberia and leader of the National Patriotic Party (NPP) in 1997–2003 (Kostelyanets 2014). His income from the illegal exploitation of natural resources and trade in rubber, timber, iron ore, etc., reached \$100 million a year (Ismail 2008: 267). Financial information about other warlords is less accessible, but indirect evidence suggests that the funds they gained were enormous (Kostelyanets 2010). The sources of income, in addition to illegal trade in minerals, included robberies, racketeering, land seizure, illegal taxation, the sale of 'licenses' to local and foreign entrepreneurs for various types of activities (mining, construction, etc.), kidnappings for ransom, arms trafficking, drugs, etc. (Brancati & Snyder 2013). In times of peace, it is not uncommon for former field commanders to invest their wartime savings in commercial ventures, which, together with their new positions and ministerial portfolios, enable them to continue to enrich themselves (Englebort 2008). Thus, many warlords seeking to start a political career are economically endowed to compete in electoral politics successfully, and their wealth attracts 'followers' to them and helps them

expand patronage networks. For fear of betting on the ‘wrong’ candidate, voters tend to reject idealistic politicians in favor of candidates with significant resources.

For many insurgent leaders, the prospect of participating in future elections and possibly winning them are the main incentives for the cessation of hostilities. However, insurgents are often ill-equipped to participate in electoral processes. First, not all warlords who aspire to become civilian politicians and are nominated for high government positions are able to work in a context that involves compromise, the establishment of alliances and dialogue on various issues. Secondly, it can be difficult for political parties that have emerged from armed groups to abandon the practice of resolving issues by force, especially since access to weapons in Africa remains practically independent of the implementation of programs for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of militants into civilian life.

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF POLITICAL PARTIES BY WARLORDS

The process of building strong, viable political parties is as complex as the process of building effective state institutions. First of all, political parties in Africa tend to organize around narrow identities or through the strengthening of personal relationships, come to life only during elections, and are rarely based on a clearly articulated ideology or political agenda. As a result, their activities become highly personalized. These tendencies intensify amid conflicts, when the authorities are unstable and the society is gripped by fear and suspicion. That is why the emergence of effective party politics in most African countries remains a very distant prospect, and the emergence of parties that are successors of insurgent groups makes this prospect even more vague.

Typically, post-conflict parties are weak and factionalized, or so small in size that they are effectively political platforms for specific “strongmen”, which is partly consistent with the organization of numerous armed groups that are created around one or a few people. Such parties can be qualified as a ‘private enterprise’ of this or that warlord, and the purpose of their creation is to promote his political and economic interests.

As a result of power-sharing, some leaders gain greater access to material benefits, external recognition, and high-paying government positions, which in turn leads to intra-party conflicts that can result in anything from formal splits to armed clashes. Regardless of the nature of such conflicts, they limit the ability of armed groups to develop into viable political parties.

Some armed movements have been able to resist centrifugal tendencies and participate in electoral processes as strong and well-organized entities. This applies, for example, to liberation movements such as the People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) and the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), as well as to the rebel groups Uganda National Resistance Army (NRA) and the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF). However, the stability and unity of the parties born in the depths of these rebellions – the MPLA – Labor Party, ZANU – the Patriotic Front, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the Rwandan Patriotic Front, respectively – did not depend on either political ideology or on the effectiveness of the party bureaucracy: they were led by strong leaders who employed tools of patronage and strict authoritarian control, even repression.

For example, one of the most prominent former warlords, the current president of Uganda, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, came to power in 1986 at the head of the rebel army and created a political party – NRM, which still today remains the only political force in the country capable of uniting and mobilizing citizens for effective socio-economic and political development.

Another head of state who came to power as a result of the victory of the rebels over the government army is the current President of Rwanda (since 2000) Paul Kagame, who retained

a militaristic leadership style in his practice of government. And this is not surprising: it was the military victory that ended the 1994 genocide that gave Kagame political power and the opportunity to transform his rebel group (RPF) into a political party (RPF), which never became a regular political organization, as the army remains its main support base. Moreover, the transformation of the RPF into a political party was not accompanied by the demilitarization of the organization, especially since the regime from the very beginning faced real military threats from the Hutus that had taken part in the Rwandan genocide and then fled to the neighboring DRC. Partial demilitarization of the RPF took place only within the framework of the program of disarmament, demobilization and integration into the regular army in 1997-2001 [Prunier 1997: 322].

Many warlords are popular with the locals, whom they may have protected during the war from abuses by local authorities and other armed groups. During election campaigns, they often play the card of 'military solidarity' and the possibility of a new danger to communities, which they as former rebels are in position to defend against (Themnér 2015). Often such a risk does materialize, and in order to prepare for it field commanders try not to disband rebel units even if after the war they find themselves at the top of the pyramid of power and take control over the official power structures – the army, police, gendarmerie, security services, etc., which, even being weak and divided into factions, are more or less able to protect the regime from its opponents. However, the presidential guard, recruited from among the former associates of the leader, in any case remains the main military backbone of the regime.

Being 'political entrepreneurs' rather than 'political idealists' both in military and civilian life, former warlords easily change sides and take their followers with them. For instance, Idrissa Kamara began his career as an officer in the Sierra Leonean Army (SLA). After the 1997 coup that overthrew the government of Ahmad Kabbah, he joined the military junta of the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) led by Johnny Paul Koroma, and in 1999 defected to the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Foday Sankoh. Finally, in 2007, he headed the security services under Ernest Bai Koroma, the leader of the All People's Congress (APC) party, who won the 2007 presidential election. Throughout this period, I. Camara could rely on a group of 'his own' fighters, who committed all these 'transfers' together with him (Christensen & Utas 2007).

I. Kamara's trajectory showed that political parties are ready to accept 'political refugees' who can not only bring material resources with them, but also bring potential voters and ex-combatants to use them during clashes with opponents. In turn, militants are often inclined to join strong and widely supported parties rather than new organizations created by former comrades-in-arms with vague prospects. For example, when Issa Sesay, who led the RUF after the arrest of F. Sankoh, formed the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFPP) and tried to run on its behalf in the 2002 presidential election, he was supported by very few former RUF field commanders, most of whom chose to join the well-established parties – the APC and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) (Themnér 2011).

It must be said that after the 1991-2002 civil war in Sierra Leone, a rather large group of recent rebel leaders entered the political arena of the country, who began – through party politics – to fight for power not only with former opponents, but also among themselves. Among them, for example, was the speaker of the RUF Eldred Collins, who was one of the five leaders of the Front that retained power in the movement in their hands after F. Sankoh was captured by ECOMOG – troops of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) – in 1998. Under the terms of the 1999 Lomé ceasefire agreement, the RUF was given the opportunity to be represented in the government, and Collins was invited to take one of the ministerial posts in the AFRC administration, but he did not have time to 'enjoy' the high position, as in May 2000 hostilities resumed. Collins was among 400 militants arrested

by police after the RUF attack on Freetown and was sent to Pademba Road Prison, where he spent 16 months (Keen 2005: 264).

At the end of the war and after the defeat of the RUF, the remnants of the group tried to transform into a political party. The Revolutionary United Front Party (RUF) was officially registered, and party branches were opened in Freetown, Bo and Makeni, for which the Nigerian government provided educational and office equipment. Collins continued to act as a spokesman for the movement, although he was now referred to as a public relations officer (Gberie 2005: 194). This work was not easy: the party did not have enough funds; it was also not possible to agree on a party structure in order to become a viable political body. One of the main problems was the lack of a leader. With Sankoh still incarcerated, Alimani Pallo Bangura, a university professor and Collins' AFRC cabinet colleague, was eventually nominated in 2002 for the highest office in government. Collins did not run for any office and only supported Bangura, who lost the election. The RUF failed to win even a single seat in parliament (Kandeh 2013: 197).

In 2005, Collins officially announced his withdrawal from the party. Later, he tried to join the APC or the SLPP, but his candidacy was rejected. In 2007, shortly before the election, which was won by APC candidate Ernest Bai Koroma, the RUF was declared "bankrupt", but in 2009 the party unexpectedly reemerged, and Collins was elected its interim chairman. In August 2012, at the RUF convention, Collins was nominated as a candidate in the upcoming presidential election that year. Through his active work, the party has increased the number of offices throughout the country and fielded candidates for parliament and local government (Lupick 2012).

Collins' campaign program in general differed little from the programs of any other candidates, both Sierra Leonean and African: he promised to ensure effective economic development and improve education and health care. That is, he did not try to use his insurgency experience to attract the electorate and only manipulated the feeling of marginalization common among various groups of the population and their exclusion from participation in political decision-making. Collins appears to have deliberately distanced himself from his past, fearing that associations with RUF atrocities would negatively impact his ability to win over voters.

Collins was optimistic about the results of the elections, hoping that neither the ACP nor the SLPP would win 50% in the first round, and in the second round he could offer support to one of these parties by transferring his electorate to it and bargaining for himself the opportunity to take high position in the new government. However, Ernest Bai Koroma and ACP won the race by a wide margin; Collins won only 0.6% of the vote and, having not received a single seat for the RUF in parliament, he realized that he needed to change his strategy so as not to remain on the political fringe. In 2013, he considered two options: rename the RUF so that it would not be associated with the former rebel movement, or join another party (Themnér 2017: 191). Both of these options were ultimately unsuccessful, but in 2017 Collins became one of five MPs personally nominated by President Ernest Bai Koroma (Awoko 2017).

An alternative electoral strategy for former warlords, especially those whose electorate is concentrated in a specific region, is to run as an independent candidate in parliamentary or local elections – with one name on the ballot. For example, during the 2005 elections in Liberia, former 'war baron' Prince Johnson was elected as an independent candidate for the upper house of parliament from Nimba County. Thanks to the strong support of the Gio and Mano ethnic groups, he was able to campaign without the support of any party.

However, in 2011, P. Johnson abandoned his 2005 tactics and founded the National Union for Democratic Progress (NUDP) under nationwide slogans, which brought him 3rd

place in the 1st round of the presidential election. Moreover, by supporting Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, he helped her win in the 2nd round. But by 2014, Johnson left the NUDP and again won the parliamentary elections as an independent candidate.

Thus, another type of electoral strategy may be the formation of an entirely new political organization, unrelated to the former armed group. This path is usually taken by field commanders who, for one reason or another, have lost the confidence of the fighters, but who have great political ambitions. This strategy was used, for example, by Sekou Conneh, the leader of the Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) faction during the run-up to the 2005 elections in Liberia. Instead of trying to turn LURD into a political party, Conneh created a new one, the Progressive Democratic Party (PRODEM), which functioned *de facto* as his own ‘political enterprise’.

There are reasons why the role of warlords and its study on the example of African countries undergoing post-conflict reconstruction is especially important: first, African states on the continent tend to be institutionally weaker than in most other parts of the world (Spears 2013: 43). The general weakness of African states, combined with the devastation caused by the war, markedly limited the ability to build strong and viable institutions in affected societies. Second, ‘big man’ politics is particularly prevalent in Africa. Among other things, the personalized nature of African politics makes it difficult to create inclusive and viable political parties.

WARLORDS AND PEACEKEEPING

Meanwhile, the main goal of peacekeeping processes is to create the necessary incentives and deterrents for the rebels in order to induce them to peace. For some warlords, the realization that the fighting is hopeless to continue – because of the emergence of a stalemate in the confrontation or a sense of imminent defeat – is a sufficient stimulus to participate in the transition from war to peace. Others, however, may need stronger incentives to lay down their arms, ranging from security guarantees, amnesties, minority rights, and regional autonomy to power-sharing agreements and public office. Such expectations/demands may be successful: former rebel ‘elites’ play an important role in peace processes.

The group of warlords who contribute to the strengthening of peace is not homogeneous. At one extreme are those who actively seek to address the root causes of conflict and reduce intercommunal tensions. On the other hand, there are those that do not undermine security, but do not seek to eliminate the conditions that could lead to a resumption of violence. They prefer to remain neutral so as not to undermine their own positions by participating in political reforms.

However, while warlords under certain circumstances can play the role of peacekeepers, it can be assumed that the opposite is also possible: military experience makes former warlords prone to armed solution of problems that arise in the course of peacebuilding. In addition, former rebel leaders are accustomed to resort to military solutions even in situations that can be resolved peacefully. One may say, ‘once a military is always a military’.

For instance, the former leader of the armed group The Congolese Rally for Democracy Antipas Mbusa Nyamwisi, after the ceasefire agreement signed in 2002 that formally ended the war in the DRC, initiated the transformation of the movement into a political party and ran for it in the 2006 and 2011 elections, but was defeated. Initially supporting the regime of Joseph Kabila (2001–2019), he gradually moved away from it due to dissatisfaction with his own status, although he held ministerial positions. As a result, he again went over to the opposition camp, encouraging militants who remained loyal to him to participate in hostilities that did not stop in the eastern regions of the DRC, thus maintaining his ‘political significance’ both locally and nationally.

However, the violence initiated by former warlords does not necessarily take the form of armed clashes and may take the form of inciting militants to riot or attack political opponents, party headquarters or government buildings. But even in this case, the credibility of political institutions as instruments of conflict resolution is undermined.

The criminalization of politics may have serious consequences for post-conflict societies: if high-ranking former warlords do not renounce their criminal activities while enjoying complete impunity, this may encourage other politicians to use criminal networks for their own purposes. In this way, a culture of impunity develops, which facilitates the resolution of social disputes through violence.

Indeed, former field commanders often resort to attacks on their political opponents in order to intimidate or destroy them, habitually considering such actions as 'acceptable'. For example, already after his election in 1997 as president, Charles Taylor ordered his former associates in the NPFL to attack supporters of the United Liberation Movement of Liberia for Democracy – the Johnson faction (ULIMO-J.) (Kumar 1997: 9). Such actions by former warlords encourage citizens to question the legitimacy of electoral processes, especially since they can provoke a resumption of armed clashes, which happened in that case: the ULIMO-J. eventually regrouped into a new organization, LURD, and refused to cease hostilities until Taylor retired (Themnér 2011).

The motives of warlords to start an insurrection, criminalize politics and the economy, become 'peacekeepers' or resume violence, as well as to frequently change sides, can only be understood in the context of the countries where they operate, since factors influencing their behavior vary from case to case.

One example of the repeated transformation – “depending on the situation” – of a warlord into a statesman and vice versa is the military-political career of Riek Machar, Vice President of the Republic of South Sudan (RSS) from 2011 to 2013, from 26 April to 23 July 2016, and since 22 February 2020. Following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between Khartoum and Juba in 2005, Machar participated in the process of transforming the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) into the ruling party of the young republic. However, after the escalation of tensions with RSS President Salva Kiir in 2013, Machar created an armed faction SPLM/A in Opposition, the base of support for which included the Nuer people – the second largest ethnic group in South Sudan (the first is Dinka, to which Kiir belongs). Following the signing of a peace agreement in August 2015 that ended hostilities, Machar returned to Juba in April 2016 and assumed the post of Vice President again (Kochanova 2020). Heavy fighting resumed in July and Machar left the country. The government seized the opportunity to replace him: on 26 July 2016, Taban Deng Gai, former SPLM/A in Opposition Chief Negotiator, was sworn in as First Vice President (South Sudan's 2016). In February 2020, after exile and house arrest in South Africa, Machar was again appointed First Vice President of the RSS.

The 2013 crisis, initiated by Machar, turned out to be the most serious in the independent history of the RSS. It arose as a result of a bitter struggle for power between Kiir and Machar, who believed that he had no less right to the presidency than his rival. On 15 December, armed clashes broke out between SPLM/A in Opposition and the Armed Forces of South Sudan. An integral part of the fighting was massacres, the victims of which were mainly opposing Dinka and Nuer. Under pressure from the international community, a ceasefire agreement was signed only in August 2015.

Thus, instead of strengthening 'democracy', the independence of South Sudan led to a series of bloody conflicts that arose as a result of disagreements between the former warlords who seized power.

Machar's desire to oust Kiir from the presidency was largely due to the fact that state power in the RSS, as in many other African countries, assumed control over income from the export of natural resources, in this case oil, and, accordingly, rapid personal enrichment. To achieve his goal, Machar used various strategies: blocking Kiir's decisions; accepting the position of vice president, despite the dissatisfaction with the position of the “second person” in the state that he got; open criticism of the president's policy in various forums; making deals with powerful military men; inciting inter-ethnic hatred and hostilities. To downplay his responsibility for the bloodshed, he, like many former African warlords, carefully concealed the role of his own interests in fueling the conflict, masking them with the rhetoric of protecting his Nuer ethnic group from a truly Dinka-dominated government (Brosché 2014). It can be said that by presenting himself as the ‘chief leader’ of the Nuer, Machar further deepened the ethnic rifts that both South and North Sudan suffered throughout the period of their independence. His second goal – to become a national leader – was never achieved, because due to the bloodshed he organized in 2013, the South Sudanese no longer consider him their hero.

CONCLUSION

The transformation of rebel movements into political parties after the end of civil wars and conflicts has become one of the phenomena of the political life in African countries. This phenomenon was observed in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Uganda and a number of other states. As a rule, the opportunities for an anti-government movement to become an officially recognized political organization, and for its leaders to lead it in order to develop their political careers, appear either in the event of a victory of the rebels (Rwanda, Liberia, Uganda) or after the signing of a peace agreement (Sierra Leone) and the beginning of the integration of former militants into the socio-economic and political life of post-war society. Often, it is the implementation of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programs that allows those responsible for committing large-scale crimes not only to avoid punishment, but also to occupy an important public post.

In turn, the desire of individual warlords to rise to the top of the political hierarchy during and after the end of the conflict indicates that the struggle for political power (along with economic one, for example, access to natural resources) is one of the main motives of their anti-government actions. A tried and tested way of gaining power peacefully is participation in presidential and parliamentary elections. Having a political party and often an extensive support base, including loyal former militants, makes the “path to power” easier for the warlords.

Nevertheless, the transformation of rebel movements causes an ambiguous reaction from both the population of countries that have undergone conflicts and the world community, since, on the one hand, building a political career by the recent war barons in the context of peacebuilding should prevent the unwinding of another spiral of violence; on the other hand, recent field commanders, accustomed to achieving goals by military means, often resort to violence in resolving political issues even in peace time.

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ИЗ «ВОЕННЫХ БАРОНОВ» В ПОЛИТИКИ: ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ ПОВСТАНЧЕСКИХ ДВИЖЕНИЙ В ПОЛИТИЧЕСКИЕ ПАРТИИ¹

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***Аннотация.** В последние несколько десятилетий африканские страны столкнулись с новым явлением политической жизни – с приходом к власти в качестве президентов, вице-президентов, премьер-министров и парламентариев недавних полевых командиров – лидеров повстанческих антиправительственных движений или племенных ополчений.*

Полевые командиры стремятся преобразовать свои успехи, достигнутые во время войны, в материальное благополучие и социальный статус и получить политический пост для консолидации своих военных «подвигов». Для этого они используют множество различных стратегий: трансформацию вооруженных групп в политические партии, присоединение к уже существующим политическим организациям, создание новых партий и независимую политическую деятельность. В литературе, посвященной миростроительству, за редким исключением игнорируется такой важный его аспект, как влияние бывших полевых командиров на постконфликтные электоральные процессы. Данная статья призвана восполнить этот пробел.

***Ключевые слова:** Африка, конфликты, миростроительство, политические партии, вооруженные формирования, «военные бароны», электоральные процессы, безопасность*

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