

## Analysis Of The Debacle Between Nigeria And Cameroun Over Bakassi Peninsula

Dr. Owa Egbara Owa<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Eni Eja Alobo<sup>2</sup>,  
Dr. Miebaka Nabiebu<sup>3</sup>, Wisdom Egbara Owa<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Political Science,  
Faculty of the Social Sciences  
University of Calabar, Calabar – Nigeria  
ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4554-5568>  
[owaegbararowa001@gmail.com](mailto:owaegbararowa001@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup>Faculty of Law  
University of Calabar, Calabar – Nigeria

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Law  
University of Calabar, Calabar – Nigeria

<sup>4</sup>State Secondary Education Board  
Calabar, Cross River State – Nigeria.

### Abstract

Nigeria and Cameroun are bounded by the Bakassi Peninsula to the Eastern part of Nigeria, where the inhabitants are predominantly Efik speaking people in Cross River State. And the two countries were colonized by Britian and Germany respectively. In 1885, they agreed within themselves to keep to the terms of boundary demarcation between Nigeria and Cameroun from the Calabar estuary to the shores of Lake Chad in Northern Nigeria. The Anglo-German Treaties of 1886, 1890 and 1893 carved Bakassi Peninsula into Nigeria. But in 1913, another Anglo-German treaty was signed to position the Bakassi Peninsula into the Cameroun territory, from Rio-del Rey to Akpa Yafe. The dispute reached a high point when on May 16, 1981, Cameroun sighted three Nigerian military patrol boats which violated the Cameroun Navy. On March, 1994, Cameroun took the matter before the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for determination on whether the disputed territory is not a Cameroun territory. Then on October 10, 2002, the International Court of Justice gave its ruling, ceding the area to Cameroun, following the recommendations of the 1913 Anglo-German Agreement and the Green Tree Agreement that preceded it. Although, the ruling of the

International Court of Justice was widely criticized mostly by Nigerians but it has to be sustained because of the binding force of the United Nations Charter over its member states. The Game Theory was adopted as the theoretical framework. The theory grants the behaviour of parties to a dispute, in scenario of making rational choices to their advantage and to the detriment of the contending party. It was observed among other that the factors that triggered the Nigeria-Cameroun dispute include political, economic and socio-cultural. After the implementation of the International Court of Justice ruling, the youth of Bakassi attempted a secession agitation to declare a state of Bakassi. Herein, it was recommended that given the unpleasant consequences which may occur in such situation, the options of dialogue, negotiation, and resettlement are preferable to avoid any fratricidal war between Nigeria and Cameroun over Bakassi Peninsula.

### **Introduction**

The debacle between Nigeria and Cameroun over Bakassi Peninsula is traceable to the Berlin Conference of 1884. The Conference granted the incursion of the colonialists into Africa. The agreements which were signed therein, gave the colonialists powers to venture into the African space for exploration and exploitation. It was by the instrumentality of these treaties that Nigeria was a British colony while Cameroun was a German colony. These countries agreed to uphold the boundary demarcation which they orchestrated between Nigeria and Cameroun, in Rio-del Rey. This incident occurred in 1885, with the maritime boundary running through the Calabar estuary to Lake Chad. According to Ate, (1992), "the treaty between the Kings and Chiefs of old Calabar and Britain on September 10, 1884 gave the British government the rights of occupation and the mandate to protect the jurisdiction of the Treaty King, Obong of Calabar."

During this period, Bakassi Peninsula was within the jurisdiction of the Efik administration, as was observed that the inhabitants of Tom Shot Island were loyal to the reign of the Treaty King. Also, it is on record that the Bakassi Peninsula was under the administration of the Obong of Calabar under the agreements of Anglo-German of 1886, 1890 and 1893 respectively. These agreements were

between Germany and the Oil River Protectorate in Rio-Dey Rey, and they captured the Bakassi Peninsula into the Nigerian territory.

Another Anglo-German Agreement of 1913 was entered into due to the complaints from the German side over British domination of the Oil River Protectorate. It was the 1913 Anglo German Agreement that altered the territorial boundary between Nigeria and Cameroun from the Rio-del Rey, which is Eastward to Akpa Yafe that was the Cross River tributary on the Western wing, thereby now positioning Bakassi Peninsula on the side of Cameroun. Ate (1992) observed that:

This is a landmark agreement in the history of the Nigeria-Cameroun boundary dispute. By this act which might have done for the administrative, convenience of the two powers, independent Nigeria stood to lose a strategic area of territory as well as a sizeable population to Cameroun control without any compensation, (142).

The Treaty of Versailles, 1919 caused Cameroun to become a mandate territory of both the British and French colonial administrations, after Germany lost grip over the area at the commencement of World War I. Britain rather continued to control the areas as though, a Nigerian territory.

The interest of the United Nations over the need for independence and self-determination, caused France to grant Eastern Cameroun self-government status in 1957. On the other hand, both South and North of Cameroun who were British colonies and in Nigeria, took queue from the above to hold plebiscites to determined their status to be on their own as well. While the Sothern Cameroun held their plebiscite in 1959, the North held theirs in 1961 respectively. They both resolved to join the East of Cameroun. In the words of Ate (1992:145), "there has always been a doubt as to whether or not the inhabitants of the Bakassi Peninsula participated in the United Nations (UN) conducted plebiscites in British Cameroun". Although it is adjudged that the UN secretariat did informed Nigeria that Atabong, Abana, Ine Ataavo, all in Bakassi Peninsula and other villages situate on the East of Rio-del Rey Islands are included into Victoria South-West District of Cameroun to participate in the plebiscite. But Ate (1992), stated that: This is substantially doubtful. A more conclusive evidence would be for the United Nations, Commissioner in charge of the plebiscite to provide proof that the Nigerians actually

voted for the separation of Southern Cameroun from the rest of Nigeria, especially after they had been enlightened as to the purpose of the plebiscite, (15).

Nigeria and Cameroun lived in peace between 1960-1970 due to Organization of African Unity (now African Union), in her declaration in 1964, with the emphasizes that member states should respect colonial boundaries. But the relationship between the two countries took an adverse turn due the encroachment into each other borders. In 1971, the Ngoh/Coker Line Commission was constituted to wad into the dispute, with the mandate to demarcate the boundary between Nigeria and Cameroun. The outcome of the rather resulted into more disputes to Nigeria because the right to Bakassi was granted to Cameroun. The rejection of the Ngoh/Coker Line's Commission by Nigeria further resulted into the constitution of the Maroua Declaration in 1975. In its report, the commission ceded Bakassi to Cameroun, due to its reliance on the agreements of 1913 and 1971 respectively. According to Ate (1992), "the Cameroun government, acting on the strength of the Ngoh/Coker arrangement, had already taken steps to obliterate the identity of all Nigerian settlements on Bakassi by replacing their former names with new names". The development was rejected by Nigeria in 1975 who threatened to resort to war if Cameroun stand the grounds of retaining ownership over Bakassi Peninsula. The subsequent regimes in Nigeria from 1976-1999 were indifferent on the boundary dispute, not until the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999-2007) indicated interest on the dispute, to conform with the African Union objectives to maintain peace among member states.

### **The Place of Bakassi Peninsula and Eruption of Crisis**

According to Atemu (1981), "the Bakassi Peninsula covers a total area of approximately 1000 square kilometer and is a cluster of islands, cut away from each other by ocean water and mangrove swamp forest. It is located on the extreme East of the Gulf of Guinea between Latitudes 4°25' and 5°10'N and Longitudes 8°21' meridian. The word 'Bakassi' is traceable to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is an adulteration of the Efik word, 'Abassi Eke'. It was first written 'Bakassey' by the British sailors who sailed the area in search of slaves". The Bakassi Peninsula is in a maritime zone of the Cross River estuary and lies within the circumference of the coast of the

South of Eastern, Nigeria, on the Cameroun axis at the Rio-del Rey (Atemu 1981).

The location of the boundary is the cause of the dispute between the two countries. On the one hand, Nigeria claimed the Rio-dey Rey as the supposed boundary while Cameroun insists that the provisions of the 1913 Anglo-German Pact subsit and it recognized Akpa-Yafe as the boundary between Nigeria and Cameroun. And the International Court of Justice, in its ruling of October, 2002 adopted the Akpa-Yafe as the boundary. This position ceded Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroun. The Peninsula is bounded with Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria on the West while it is bounded to the North by Akpabuyo in Cross River State. To the East, Bakassi is bounded by Cameroun and to the South, with the Equatorial Guinea (Eto, 2004).

According to Atemu (1981), Bakassi Peninsula is inhabited majorly by about 40 villages which are predominantly of Efik, Efiat and Efut extraction. The population of the area is estimated at about 300,000 inhabitants; who major occupation is fishing. Also, the inhabitants are characterized to be living in abject poverty. The residents mostly lived in huts and tents while the elites and government officials reside in Calabar due to the incessant attacks by the Cameroun Gendarmes.

From the foregoing, it is observed that Nigeria and Cameroun have lived in peace as good neighbours to the time of Nigerian independence in 1960. And through the period there was no thought of any dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula until after a decade from 1960 when the Nigerian government noticed that large deposits of oil exist in area, and began to lay claim over it. The dispute is traceable to the Anglo-German Pacts of 1913, when these colonialist settled on border demarcation without definite terms. In 1971, the "Coker-Ngo" line demarcating the "navigable portion" of the route bordering Nigeria and Cameroun was signed with reference to the 1913. The Chart provided that the offshore demarcation of the Calabar channel of the Peninsula would range to between 3 miles on the two sides of Nigeria and Cameroun. But when Nigeria discovered that the "chart" was not a reflection of the Franco-German Agreement, 1913, she rejected it. In 1975, the Maroua Declaration was made between both countries, where Cameroun made certain concessions to her neighbor, Nigeria. And the International Court of Justice ruling of October, 2002 sustained the ingredients of the concessions.

After 1975, the successive regimes had a different view of both the 1971 and 1975 agreements on maritime border between the two countries. Particular reference is made to the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo who participated in the 2006 Green Tree Agreement in New York. When the agreement was repudiated, crisis resurfaced at the border between them. Omoigu, (2002), asserts that “...one of the biggest lies of the modern Nigerian generation – a lie which has affected Nigerian’s approach over the years unnecessarily cost the lives of Nigerian soldiers”. He continued to say that “a look into Nigeria history books and official maps still located the Bakassi Peninsula within the territorial confines of Cameroun. The very first Nigeria Atlas published in 1976 failed to show Bakassi as part of Nigeria.” Irrespective of the alarm stage of the dispute and the subsequent conflicts between Nigeria and Cameroun, it was only after more than 10 years from independence that Nigeria resurrected its claim over the area. In 1991, Nigeria produced maps to reflect that Bakassi is located in its territory, on the directives of the then military president, Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

#### **Violence in the Bakassi Peninsula**

Among the border points between Nigeria and Cameroun, the Bakassi Peninsula has been in the front burner of the disputes because of the large percentage of oil deposits that was discovered to be present therein. The remarkable commencement of conflict between Nigeria and Cameroun over the Bakassi Peninsula began on May 16, 1981 when Cameroun announced in the National Radio Network Service that “three Nigerian military patrol boats had violated Cameroun’s Navy”. The incident consumed the lives of five soldiers from the Nigerian side. When Nigeria insisted that the conflict occurred in Akpa-Yafe River thereby acknowledging the recommendations of the 1913 Anglo-German Agreements, Cameroun had to apologize and made reparations. This diplomatic resolution resulted to calm, leaving the incident to become the focal point of Nigerian-Cameroun external relations therefrom.

The Anglophone Cameroun crisis of the early 1990s experienced the oppression, suppression and violent attacks on Nigerian residents in Cameroun. In February 1994, Nigeria deployed 1000 troops to the Bakassi Peninsula in defence of the attack of fishermen and traders by the Cameroun Gendarmes. Many soldiers and civilians

lost their lives and on March 1994, Cameroun filed the matter in the International Court of Justice but Nigeria challenged the jurisdiction of the court. On February, 1996 Nigeria deployed additional 1000 troops who invaded and took occupation of the area irrespective of the fact that the matter was before the International Court of Justice for determination. In the words of Jeune Afrique (1996:13), "by May, 1996, according to inventory of conflict and environment ICE Case Study No: 163, more than 50 Nigerian soldiers had lost their lives and several others taken as prisoners of war according to diplomatic sources. The African Magazine, Jeune Afrique analyzed the situation in blunt terms saying that all the factors necessary for a major military conflict were present in the case of Bakassi. It went further to stress the strategic economic importance of the Peninsula to both countries as a pivotal factor for the escalation of the conflict. The Hague herein, sued for calm to await the determination of the matter before the International Court of Justice but both countries were adamant to remained on the area with their armed forces.

In 1982, Cameroun consolidated the claim over Bakassi Peninsula by imposing their citizenship on the Bakassi people by remaining their villages, the use of their currency, payment of taxes to the Cameroun government and renunciation of Nigeria citizenship. Atemu (1981), recorded that, "in 1982 the South West Province Governor in Cameroun went to Bakassi with 100 gendarmes and forced fishermen and their families with guns to renounce their Nigerian citizenship to become Cameroun indigenes and remit their taxes to the same authority". He noted that, "those who refused to obey were beaten and detained". In the words of Ekpe (2002), "six Nigerian fishing villages were annexed". A move that remain unchallenged by Nigeria, except the Cross River State government who intervened intermittently to secure the release of its detained indigenes. In corroboration to Ekpe, (200) above, Atemu (1981) asserts that certain Bakassi localities were as well renamed. But in a reprisal attack, Nigeria on December, 1993, during the military junta of Sani Abacha deployed several troops to counter the gendarmes of Cameroun and to protect Nigerians. The Nigerian troops were able to detonate Cameroun troops and protected part of the disputed territory. At the behest of the International Court of Justice provisional ruling of March 15, 1996 on the request of Cameroun for Nigeria to vacate the disputed

area on February, 13 1996, the Cameroun government took advantage therefrom and occupied part of Bakassi-Atabong East until August 14, 2006 when most part of the Peninsula was handed over to Cameroun. It is noteworthy that the conflict did not culminate into war, irrespective of the tension built by the presence of military forces from both Nigeria and Cameroun. But the uncertainty of peace caused by the dispute halted human activities with lasting consequences in the lives of the people of Bakassi.

### **Raison d'être for the Debacle Between Nigeria and Cameroun**

According to Mukong (1990:80), "it is a common opinion that one of the causes of the debacle between Nigeria and Cameroun over Bakassi Peninsula is politically orchestrated to distract citizens from bad governance". On the Cameroun side, were human rights abuses ranging from killings, torture, jail terms and slashing of civil servants' salaries and doubling of the salaries of members of the armed forces. On the other hand, Nigeria the perpetuation of the military was sacrilegious. Although observed with human abuses, Nigeria is better at it than Cameroun, but political killings include that of Kenule Saro Wiwa in November, 1995, Kudirat Abiola, Shehu Musa Yaradua, M.K.O. Abiola, Papa Alfred Rewane, Dele Giwa, Kalgho among others still remain a mystery of human abuses.

Furthermore, it should be noted that before Cameroun filed the dispute at the ICJ, there were fierce stretched tight situations in both countries. For example, Cameroun newly introduced the multi-party system in their polity and their elections results were adjudged to be rigged. Therefore, to be in conflict in such a circumstance with another state served a diversionary purpose from domestic affairs to external disputes. Economically, the discovery of large oil deposits in Bakassi Peninsula caused the dispute. Also the waters that surround the Peninsula gave an opportunity for fishing activities and wildlife activities. The recordings of Wikipedia, (2006:25), has it that, "the fertility of Bakassi as a fishing ground is comparable only to Newfoundland in North America and the Scandinavia in Western Europe." Therefore, the prospective oil deposits and the fishing opportunity for revenue gave rise to the supremacy debacle, mostly on the Cameroun side over Bakassi Peninsula.



In consideration of ethno-cultural bias, inhabitants of Bakassi were Nigerians who did not want to lose their citizenship to Cameroun. There was pressure on the president to reject ceding Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroun and to go into war instead of yielding to the International Court of Justice ruling. This fact is not to be taken as valid because both countries share millennial affinities. This resurrects the fact that the demarcation of African borders by the colonialist served as one of the leading causes of conflict. The ethno-cultural ties between the two countries gave Nigeria the impetus to lay claim over the ownership of the Bakassi Peninsula. The protection of the sphere of influence propelled Nigeria and Cameroun to fight over the ownership of the disputed area. The two countries projected security threat as their attachment for going into the use of force in the settlement of the dispute. While in 1981, Cameroun claimed that Nigeria invaded her space of authority, thereby threatening the national security of her sovereignty on one hand, Nigeria sustained the claim of deploying armed men to the Peninsula for the protection of Nigerians who dwell there and are engaged in fishing and trading. Again, the access to the Calabar port was infringed upon by the ownership of the Peninsula. Aside the sovereignty and resources of various dimensions, the wellness of Nigerian citizens was the paramount security consideration by Nigeria.

Constitutionally, Nigeria and Cameroun owe their citizens the obligation of protecting the territorial boundaries of their state. According to Okuwa (2006) "what complicated the Cameroun case however, was the fact that many Nigerian reside in Cameroun territory, where they spend parts of their lives to fish or farm. While there in search of livelihood, they often crisscross the boundaries. Also, fishermen and traders did not bother about the actual position of the borders, while in the territorial waters of each of the two countries, until they were advised or confronted as the case may be".

The above statement is presumptuous of the fact that Shagari knew that the Bakassi Peninsula is a Cameroun territory, while the border dispute was a mere maritime matter that citizens of the Nigerian state could not comprehend but misconstrued it to be a Nigerian territory. National interest was also a cause of the conflict. While the inhabitant of the Peninsula from Nigeria identify

themselves with Nigeria, those from Cameroun and adjudged to be the owners of the disputed territory tilted to remain in Cameroun, and even are attempting a secession.

Another cause identified to be underlying to the dispute is the involvement of third parties. The parties to the Anglo-German Treaty, Britain and Germany, Equatorial Guinea and France are adjudged to have meddled into the dispute at the disposal of Cameroun. Meanwhile, Nigeria solicited for a bilateral settlement between her and Cameroun because she was apprehensive that Gilbert Guillaume, the President of the Court and indeed a French national and other justices, Rasalyn Higgins, a Briton and Carl-August Feishhauer, a German national would be biased to favour Cameroun. A member of the legal delegation for Nigeria, Chief Richard Akinjide summarized his opinion on the influence of third parties when he stated in *Newswatch* of November 4, (2002), that;

We must accept that, that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) judgement is 50% international law and 50% politics. And as far as the case between Nigeria and Cameroun was concerned, the dispute was really between Nigeria and France. Cameroun was just the proxy for France. There is no doubt that in law and in fact that Bakassi belongs to Nigeria because that is supported by a lot of documentary evidence, which were tendered before the court. But which the court ignored... you don't ask somebody to transfer to you what belongs to you. So as far as I'm concerned, the judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is a complete fraud and unacceptable... if indeed Bakassi belongs to Cameroun, how can Camerounians be asking them to transfer it to them, (47).

From the foregoing, it is observed that the immediate causes of the dispute are economic and security. Then other causes were flimsy, just to distract the citizenry in both Nigeria and Cameroun.

### **Implications of Compliance to the Regulatory Regimes**

Multi-lateral and bilateral relations have averted out broken war between Nigeria and Cameroun over the ownership of Bakassi Peninsula. After the attack on Nigeria by Cameroun on May 16, 1981, the then president of Nigeria demanded for an apology from Cameroun for the lives of five soldiers on the strength that the victims were not attacked in the

Rio-del Rey location, rather in the Nigerian side of Akpa-Yafe. The action is suggestive to the fact that Nigeria conceded to the demarcation by the 1913 Franco-German Treaty. More so, the demand for apology from Cameroun for the hurt signifies acquiescence to the fact that Cameroun had sovereignty over the disputed territory. In confirmation of ownership, Cameroun tendered the apology and made reparations to the families of the victims on July, 1981. Nonetheless, the dispute was rejuvenated, to show that the main cause had not been dispensed with. After several alarms of crisis over the Bakassi Peninsula, Cameroun filed the case against Nigeria in 1994 at the UN to avert further destruction of human and material resources. In June 11, 1998 the International Court of Justice dismissed the preliminary objections filed by Nigeria challenging the jurisdiction of the court and declared that the claims of the Cameroun government are admissible in the circumstance of the case. Equatorial Guinea filed an application at the International Court of Justice on June 30, 1999 for the intervention in the matter to protect its rights, rather than been joined as a party. The case was heard between February 13, 2002 and March 1, 2002 respectively, while judgement was given on October 10, 2002 in the ratio of 13:3 votes verdict which declared and order that the Bakassi Peninsula belongs to Cameroun. Nigeria rejected the judgement and sued for diplomatic solution to resolve the dispute.

On the strength that the International Court Justice lacks the executory jurisdiction of its judgements to sustain peace between Nigeria and Cameroun, Kofi Annan, the then Secretary General of the UN called for a summit on September 5, 2002 between the Presidents of both countries. He convinced them to respect the outcome of the International Court of Justice judgement and ensure that it shall be implemented (Jack Christofides, in Ramcharan, 2005). The initiative was supported by all of Britain, the United States and France. On November 15, 2002, both countries requested the UN Secretary General to set up a Joint Commission of Nigeria and Cameroun which was to carve out modalities for the implementation of the International Court of Justice ruling. The success of the Nigeria-Cameroun mixed commission in the dispute records a new approach in the praxis of preventive diplomacy and resolution of disputes between warring states in Africa.

As a compliance regime, the Nigeria-Cameroun Mixed Commission was able to broker peace between the two countries. It also made a way in the reactivation of the functioning of the Nigeria-Cameroun Joint Commission on November 30, 2002 in the capital of Nigeria, Abuja. Although the diplomatic relations between the two countries ameliorated the tendencies of war, but there are relics of recorded damages against the well-being of the inhabitants of Bakassi.

On June 12, 2006 the Green Tree Agreement was entered into as a fall-out of diplomatic relations to justify the International Court of Justice ruling over the dispute between Nigeria and Cameroun. It aimed at brokering peace through acquiescence from the two countries. Its implementation is a prototype of a compliance regime which is applicable to structural organizations of international institutions. Etzioni (1971), refers to compliance as "both to a relation in which an actor behaves in accordance with a directive supported by another actor's power, and to the orientation of the subordinated actor to the power applied. "He maintained that the subordinated actor can be characterized as positive (commitment) or negative (alienation)". Compliance is adjudged partially by the extent to which the manipulation of the subordinated power is taken to be right, and on the other hand, its magnitude in relation to the action desired. There are usually two parties in any compliance regime; that which in reality exerts power, and that which responds to the subjection of that power. States are bounded by the Charters of the international organizations which they are members. Hence, Nigeria and Cameroun as members of the UN are so bounded by its Charter. It is obvious on a general note that the measure of compliance to agreements by states is difficult to determine due to the fact that they mostly would comply at times, and renege, whenever their national interest is threatened (Rosenau and Czempiel, 1992).

The desire to protect the integrity of a state is observed to have been the major ingredient for compliance in the dispute between Nigeria and Cameroun over the Bakassi Peninsula. Grandson (1968), in considering political compliance, did traced the consequences to the relations between the elite and the citizens, and he categorized the lower cadre as mobilized congregations. This may have been integrated in David Easton's (1965) observations of

the compliance theory when he observed about political support, positive, neutral and adverse romans towards constituted authority, with the behaviour of commitment, neutrality and alienation. Article 3 of the Green Tree Agreement provides for the ingredients that capture the interest of the Bakassi people. Its contents is on the protection of Nigerian nationals and the protection of their rights. By so doing, it places some obligations to be achieved on Cameroun, who is the beneficiary or judgement creditor over the disputed area. The change in the ownership of Bakassi Peninsula placed the inhabitants under a different administration and may result to unwanted consequences. Shaw (1986), has rightly observed that;

In international law, a change in ownership of particular territory involves also a change in sovereignty, in the legal authority governing the areas. This means that the nationality of the inhabitants is altered, as is the legal system under which they live, work and conduct their relation (236).

In reference to Obasanjo's broadcast, Onyekakeyah (2006) inquired that, "Nigerians living in Cameroun as what and for what... as Nigerians living in Cameroun, under which law will they live? Who will be governing them and under what kind of administrative framework? These questions certainly betray the fate of the inhabitants in the area that was under dispute. From expressions of the inhabitants of Bakassi, Harry quoted in Onah (2006), stated that "it is obvious that Cameroun will not give us the type of freedom, joy and hopes that we had during the administration of Nigeria". The concerns over apprehensions expressed by Nigerians was suggestive that Cameroun may not comply with the recommendations of the Green Tree Agreement. This was evident in the maltreatment of the people by Cameroun Gendarmes and exorbitant taxes (Imhanobe, 2005).

The people had to abandon the system of education in Nigeria to adopt another system of education in Cameroun. The school calendar was automatically altered. The ceding of Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroun adversely affected the socio-cultural and political inclinations of the inhabitants. According to Commission on Human Rights Resolution, (1993) and (1977):

By its nature, displacement is a disruptive and painful process. Economically and culturally... it creates a high risk of improvement that typically occurs along one several of

the following dimensions: landlessness, joblessness, homelessness, marginalization, food insecurity, morbidity and social distraction.

In the midst of these absurdities that faced the people of Bakassi, resettlement was the only alternative choice made available for them to adopt in order to avert other unpleasant consequences that may await them if they continue to stay in the disputed area. In the words of Imhanobe, (2005) quoting a resident of Bakassi Peninsula, stated that:

But no matter the gospel, the Bakassi Peninsula still maintain that there is no justification for the handover. The whole argument is even more annoying. We're told that we can be resettled or we may decide to live in Bakassi to be owned by Cameroun. (Vanguard, August 22, 2006).

In the face of the resettlement option open to the people of Bakassi, it is implied that Nigeria could not fulfil the promise, after handing over 33 villages to Cameroun. Only a proposed site for their resettlement has been achieved, with many people left stranded at Ikang while others resettle with their relations elsewhere. More so, the Six Billion Naira budgeted for the resettlement of the people is yet to be released by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The above facts could be a corroboration our worries among which is that, those who relocated could be still be abandoned in abject poverty, joblessness, and no access to their fishing business.

The option to resettle the people of Bakassi has disposed them to insecurity, in land for farming, their lives and property and even food. The succor of the people of Bakassi is reposed only in the benevolence of the Akpabuyo people who sympathize with them due to their ethic and cultural affinity and share a common heritage to the stool of the Obong of Calabar who has ensured that they are integrated with their Efik brethren. According Nandam, (2004), the circumstances may trigger xenophobia in the future, as was evident in the Ife-Modakeke episode in Osun State. Again, the conflict between the indigenes and non-indigenes in Jos, Plateau States – Nigeria is still in sight, that is, the Taroh and Hausa settlers. Unless the prescribed criteria of resettlement are strictly adhered to, there remain the likelihood of resurgence of conflict between the indigenes of New Bakassi and their host community, Akpabuyo.

Another implication of the compliance to the Green Tree Agreement by Nigeria is the likelihood of secession by the people of Bakassi Peninsula. Attempts have been made to the secession effect after the Green Tree Agreement on June 12, 2006. Varying opinion between the elders and the youth have divided the people. While the youth have resolved to take their fate in their hands, under the aegis of Bakassi Movement for Self-Determination (BAOSD), the elders resolved for resettlement. The idea of secession may meet a brick wall, from the experience of secessionist struggle as evident in the cases of Katanga in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Igbo who ventured into an abortive secession for the creation of Biafra from Nigeria in a war that lasted from 1967-1970. Therefore, the people of Bakassi Peninsula who are resettled at Akpabuyo are urged to consider the futility in the attempt to venture into the agitation for the state of Bakassi. The futility of the attempt is strengthened in the lowering of the Nigerian flag in the disputed area on August 14, 2006.

### **Conclusion**

The methodology which was adopted in resolving the Nigeria-

Cameroun debacle over the Bakassi Peninsula defied human imagination. This serves as a model to African countries and of mankind, to the extent that it exposes the truism that territorial boundary disputes can be brought to end by means other than going to war. This was experienced in the case of Montenegro, which broke out from Serbia in a non-violent manner as extinct Yugoslavia (Wikipedia, 2006). Adjudication and negotiation or their combined application can be adopted to resolve disputes between states. Also, dialogue and diplomacy are ways of resolving territorial boundaries between states.

The input of other actors cannot be swept under the carpet, anyway. Taken to mind is the Green Tree Summit, the survivors of the dispute. Of essence, is the continuing dialogue between the two countries on how to integrate the displaced people. From the treatise, it was observed that the pursuit of goal should be done through legitimate means. Also, the cause of the dispute was from the unbalance criteria adopted by the colonialists in demarcating the territorial boundaries between Nigeria and Cameroun. Further, the development of human capital resource should be given priority to mineral resources for

faster growth and development. This shall avoid the outbreak of incessant dispute between territorial state.

## REFERENCES

- Afrique, J. (1996). Nigeria/Cameroun: Blundering into battle  
London: Africa. Confidential.
- Ate, B. (1992). Nigeria and Cameroun in B. E. Ate and B. A. akinterinwa (Eds), Nigeria and its immediate neighbours: constraints and prospects of su-regional security in the 1990s. Lagos:punmark, 141-151.
- Atem, G. (1981). Cameroun-Nigeria relations (1884-1961): A study in political economic and social interaction between two neighbouring states. Unpublished Ph.D thesis Department if History, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Easton, d. (1965). A systems analysis of political life. New York: Wiley.
- Ekpe, A. N. (2002). Continuity and change in Nigeria's foreign policy towards South Africa, 1975-2000. Assessment unpublished Ph.D thesis department of Political Science, University of Calabar, Nigeria.
- Etzioni, I. (1971). A comparative analysis of complex organizations. London: The free press.
- Imhanobe, S.O. (2005). Legal issues and documentation in boundary dispute settlement. Seminar paper presented at national summit on boundary dispute in Nigeria, Abuja, May, 13.
- Mukong, A. (1990). Prisoner without crime. London: Calvert's press.
- Nandam, L. (2006). The scars of war. The Emancipator, 1 (7), 24-30.
- Okuwa, A. B. (2006). The Bakassi Peninsula problem. Retrieved October 11, 2022 from [www.nigeriaworld.com](http://www.nigeriaworld.com)
- Omoigui, N. (2002). The Nigeria-Cameroun dispute over the Bakassi Peninsula: A conceptual and strategic exploration. The Nigerian Army Quarterly Journal, 5, 54-79.



Onyekakeyah, L. (2006). Lament over Bakassi. Vanguard August 3, 2006 from <http://www.nigeriannews/guardiansnews>.

Ramcharan, B. G. (2006). Conflict prevention in practice: Essays in honour of JIM Sutterlin. New York: Martins Nijhoff Publishers.

Rosenau, N. & Ozempel, E. (1992). Governance without government, order and change in world politics. Cambridge: Cambridge university Press.

Shaw, M. (1986). Title to territory in Africa: International legal issues. Oxford: Carendom Press.

Wikipedia, (2006). Secession Retrieved October 11, 2022 from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/secession>.

Wikipedia, (2006). Territorial dispute: Retrieved October 11, 2022 from [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org)