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Diplomatic Settlement of Conflicts in the International System: The Cases of Cameroon and Nigeria in the Bakassi Peninsula

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ABSTRACT

Treaties signed between states are one of the primary sources of international law. According to the Pacta-Sunt-Servanda principle, states must keep their agreements. Conflicts between nations are expected in an anarchic global system due to certain governments' violations of this consensus. A dispute can be resolved peacefully or judicially under international law. For a judicial solution, states must accept court or arbitrator jurisdiction. Article 33 of the United Nations Charter specifies peaceful solutions as diplomacy. 1960, Cameroon and Nigeria gained independence, but their geographical and maritime borders were not defined. This border dispute occurs on the Bakassi Peninsula, a 1000 square kilometer wetland rich in fish and offshore oil crucial to maritime boundary delimitation. The Nigerian government claimed the border existed before the British and German agreements in 1913. For its part, Cameroon claimed the German-British border. The Bakassi conflict escalated in the 1980s and 1990s, and to resolve this disagreement, the two nations initiated discussions through diplomatic and peaceful channels. This started with the visit and meeting of the two Presidents. It also included the deployment of U.N. emissaries and the appointing ambassadors and justice ministers in both countries. After the Greentree deal was signed in 2006 and diplomatic efforts were exhausted, the issue was assigned to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. Based on a 1913 treaty between colonial powers, the International Court of Justice favored Cameroon. The ICJ ordered Nigerian troops to depart the peninsula by August 14, 2008. Following this conclusion, which did not devolve into a regional conflict, the Bakassi issue became a model to be followed and reproduced everywhere when borders are challenged. This article analyzes the diplomatic and judicial settlement of disputes in the international system using International Law, sociology, history, and other related sciences. It focuses specifically on the cases of Cameroon and Nigeria on the Bakassi Peninsula.

Keywords: Diplomatic Settlement, Conflicts, Bakassi, International law, Cameroon, Nigeria.

Règlement diplomatique des conflits dans le système international : Les cas du Cameroun et du Nigeria dans la péninsule de Bakassi

RÉSUMÉ

Les traités signés entre les États sont l'une des principales sources du droit international. Selon le principe du Pacta Sunt Servanda, les États doivent respecter leurs accords. Des conflits entre nations sont attendus dans un système mondial anarchique en raison des violations de ce consensus par certains gouvernements. Un différend peut être résolu pacifiquement ou judiciairement en vertu du droit international. Pour une solution judiciaire, les États doivent accepter la juridiction d'un tribunal ou d'un arbitre. L'article 33 de la Charte des Nations Unies spécifie les solutions pacifiques comme la diplomatie. En 1960, le Cameroun et le Nigeria ont obtenu leur indépendance, mais leurs frontières géographiques et maritimes n'étaient pas définies. Ce différend frontalier se situe sur la péninsule de Bakassi, une zone humide de 1000 kilomètres carrés riche en poissons et en pétrole offshore, cruciale pour la délimitation des frontières maritimes. Le gouvernement nigérian affirmait que la frontière existait avant les accords britannico-allemands de 1913. De son côté, le Cameroun

revendiquait la frontière germano-britannique. Le conflit de Bakassi s'est intensifié dans les années 1980 et 1990, et pour résoudre ce désaccord, les deux nations ont entamé des discussions par des voies diplomatiques et pacifiques. Cela a commencé par la visite et la rencontre des deux présidents. Il a également inclus le déploiement d'émissaires de l'ONU et la nomination d'ambassadeurs et de ministres de la justice dans les deux pays. Après la signature de l'accord de Greentree en 2006 et l'épuisement des efforts diplomatiques, la question a été confiée à la Cour internationale de justice de La Haye. Sur la base d'un traité de 1913 entre les puissances coloniales, la Cour internationale de justice a statué en faveur du Cameroun. La CIJ a ordonné aux troupes nigériennes de quitter la péninsule avant le 14 août 2008. Suite à cette conclusion, qui ne s'est pas transformée en conflit régional, la question de Bakassi est devenue un modèle à suivre et à reproduire partout où les frontières sont contestées. Cet article analyse le règlement diplomatique et judiciaire des différends dans le système international en utilisant le droit international, la sociologie, l'histoire et d'autres sciences connexes. Il se concentre spécifiquement sur les cas du Cameroun et du Nigeria sur la péninsule de Bakassi.

Mots clés: Règlement diplomatique, Conflits, Bakassi, Droit international, Cameroun, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

States, the principal and essential international relations and law actors, frequently experience conflicts of interest in an anarchic global system. They regulate their foreign policy because of these conflicts of interest (Akince, 2021). This dispute can arise within the treaty framework between States, sometimes in commercial disputes and most often on the delimitation of border areas. Generally, there are two types of dispute resolution in international law. Alternatives that are both legal and peaceful. The pursuit of peaceful settlements is outlined in Article 33 of the United Nations Charter, with diplomacy as the essential strategy, implying that friendly solutions are equivalent to diplomatic resolutions.

On the other hand, judicial remedies resolve a dispute with judicial bodies created specifically for agreements concluded between States. Indeed, states frequently use diplomatic channels to resolve conflicts before going to international courts. The Cameroon-Nigeria conflict, notably in the context of the Bakassi Peninsula dispute, is an example of this pattern.

Cameroon and Nigeria share a common border, which is 1,700 kilometers long. The land border stretches from Lake Chad in the North to the mouth of the River Akwayafe in the South. Nowadays, Understanding the difficulties associated with this boundary, it is crucial to keep in mind that around the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, Germany, France, and Great Britain signed several agreements to demarcate the borders of their respective colonial territories (Kamto, 2007). The principles of non-intervention and territorial integrity did not eliminate border wars, but they helped tame their escalation and established mechanisms for finding solutions. The existence of international norms and institutions, notably the International Court of Justice (ICJ), has also been essential for conflict resolution, allowing states with disputes to litigate and arbitrate their claims. International instruments are vital in the conflict resolution repertoire, but their invocation often signifies the breakdown of bilateral and regional mechanisms for resolving these conflicts. The principle of *Pacta Sunt Servanda* is based on the respect by States of the agreements of the international system. However, since states live in an anarchic global system, their interests change over time, giving way to specific problems, such as non-compliance with agreements.

After the independence of Cameroon on January 1, 1960, and that of Nigeria on October 1, 1960, the border between the two countries has yet to be settled and demarcated. This study will treat the peaceful

and judicial methods of resolving disputes in international law and its application in the Bakassi case between Cameroon and Nigeria. Three main questions will direct and guide this study. What are the types of disputes and the different modes of settlement between sovereign states in an anarchic international system? What is the nature of the Bakassi conflict and its impact at the regional and global level? What method is used to resolve this border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria? After highlighting the theoretical and conceptual framework, this research will initially focus on the different types of conflicts that can oppose two sovereign States. Then, it will look at the two modes of conflict resolution in international law. Finally, before the final remarks, this study will analyze how the two countries have established peace in the Bakassi peninsula thanks to diplomacy and the international judicial apparatus. As former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated, the Bakassi war's end is "a day of victory for the respect of the law" and an example for Africa to follow in resolving inter-country violence.

Main Actors in The International System

Scholars emphasize how strongly state action is influenced by international law (Janis, 1984). In contemporary civilizations, states retain centralized political power, command the armed forces, and impose laws on people and legal organizations inside their borders. States comprise most of the international community, but today, individuals, non-governmental organizations, multinational corporations, and other entities also play a part in world affairs. It is crucial to remember that complete legal personhood is only explicitly recognized by governments in international law. International organizations have grown in size and significance within the international legal system throughout the 20th century (Schermer, 2011). This change put into question the long-standing legal monopoly of the state.

It is critical to recognize that non-state institutions, such as international organizations and individuals, are inextricably linked to states and do not operate autonomously within the international legal order. Because States create international organizations, define their roles and authority within them, participate in decision-making processes, and carry out decisions. Similarly, states sign accords granting people their fundamental freedoms and rights, and whether or not a person can file a grievance with international authorities depends on their state (Çağiran, 2014). As a result, the foundation of the international legal system is still interstate (Shaw, 2008). In international society, a state's ability to exercise sovereignty, including the freedom to act inside and outside its borders and deny allegiance to a higher power, distinguishes it from others. The international community, which distinguishes it from centralized national societies and emphasizes decentralization, is a horizontal society with equal members and no supreme power because all states are sovereign. Our inquiry will center on the Bakassi war resolution involving Nigeria and Cameroon, which acquired independence in 1960. The issue originated due to the two countries' lack of clear and defined borders upon their independence, which marked the beginning of the Bakassi conflict.

Dispute Resolution Methods in International Law

Dispute resolution in international law refers to resolving conflicts or disagreements related to legal issues (Hutchinson, 2006). Dispute-resolution methods are used in international crime, trade, environment, human rights, and regional agreements. These mechanisms address and resolve issues or incompatibilities that may arise in international treaties (Brack, 2001). Decisions should be contextually appropriate and grounded in laws and rules (Downes, 1999). To guarantee effective dispute resolution, resources must be based on agreements, deadlines must be short, and expenses must be kept low.

Peaceful Resolution Mechanisms in International Law

The obligation of parties to a dispute to seek peaceful resolution through dialogue, mediation, or other peaceful means is outlined in Article 33 of the United Nations Security Council. The Security Council may encourage parties to settle their issues through various channels (Nations, 2023). The article lists other dispute-resolution techniques, including discussion, cooperative actions, mediation, conciliation, study, and investigation (Sands, 1998). The Security Council may also establish a commission of inquiry to determine whether the dispute threatens global peace and security. States can also call conflicts to the Security Council's attention. Even while the Council has the power to take coercive measures, mediation has proven its most effective strategy, earning it the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988 despite peacekeepers not being part of its mandate (Keskin, 1998).

According to the 1907 Hague Conventions, a "friendly enterprise" is a third party, a state or an international organization, negotiating with opposing parties to hurry dispute resolution (Pazarcı, 2009). This third party works as a "friend" attempting to resolve the disagreement, but the disputing parties decide who can accept or reject the offered resolutions. Mediation, on the other hand, is based on the 1907 Hague Convention and involves a third party, frequently a state or international organization, actively participating in negotiations and personally participating in the proceedings (Mengiler, 2006). An example of this is the involvement of the U.N. Secretary-General in conflict resolution, as seen in the Bakassi conflict, where Kofi Annan played a significant role. Negotiation is a customary obligation for states when resolving disputes.

Due to Russia's request, research and investigation, added to The Hague Conventions of 1907, serve three primary purposes: informing decision-making in international organizations, verifying compliance with agreement obligations, and providing crucial data during dispute resolution (Pazarcı, 2009). If these steps fail, parties can bring the dispute to the Security Council, which may recommend alternative peaceful solutions if the conflict threatens peace and security.

Judicial Resolution Mechanisms in International Law

The International Court of Justice (ICJ), established under the United Nations, serves as the U.N.'s primary judicial organ, regulated by Chapter 14 of the UN Charter and based on the Statute of the

Permanent Court of International Justice. All U.N. member states are also parties to the ICJ's Statute. Member states agree to abide by ICJ decisions in disputes they are involved in, with the option to seek Security Council intervention if obligations are not met. However, the ICJ does not prohibit disputes from being settled elsewhere (Akçapar, 1996). An example of international dispute resolution is the 1982 U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, offering a mechanism for resolving sea-related disputes. This mechanism encourages negotiations, voluntary reconciliation, and the use of third-party methods, as outlined in Chapter 15 of the convention (Charney, (1996).) Article 284 allows for establishing a non-binding conciliation commission in cases where parties seek conciliation, emphasizing flexibility in dispute resolution within the framework of the convention.

There are several judicial bodies in the European Union (E.U.), including the European Civil Service Court, the Court of First Instance of the European Communities, the Court of Justice of the European Union, and the European Court of Human Rights (Brack, 2001).

General presentation of the Bakassi Peninsula

The Bakassi Peninsula is a 600-square-mile swampland in the Gulf of Guinea, bordered to the west by Nigeria and to the east by Cameroon. It is home to roughly 300,000 people, mostly fishermen and their families, who lack contemporary facilities such as clean water, power, and roads. However, the region is treasured due to the discovery of approximately 10 billion barrels of crude oil in the late 1950s (Anyu, 2007). Ownership of Bakassi had long been a source of contention between Nigeria and Cameroon, which grew worse after the oil discoveries. Bakassi Peninsula is located between the Cross River and Rio del Ray estuaries in the Gulf of Guinea. Based on an International Court of Justice judgment, it was transferred from Nigeria to Cameroon. This transfer sparked debate, with the Nigerian Senate opposing it in 2007. Bakassi was eventually returned to Cameroon on August 14, 2008. It covers around 665 square kilometers and is located from 4°25' to 5°10'N latitude and 8°20' to 9°08'E longitude.

As in well-known fishing towns like Newfoundland and Scandinavia, the local population lives mainly from fishing. Even though Bakassi is frequently referred to as "oil-rich," no economically viable oil resources have been discovered there. Because of its proximity to Nigeria's large reserves, the finding of significant oil deposits in Bakassi has piqued the interest of oil firms, notably China Petroleum & Chemical Corporation.

Queen Victoria signed the Treaty of Protection with the King and Chiefs of Akwa Akpa (Old Calabar) in 1884 during the Scramble for Africa, granting the British Empire sovereignty over the entire Calabar region, including Bakassi. However, the exact border between Nigeria and Cameroon has never been defined. Cameroonian authorities claim Bakassi as Cameroonian territory, relying on colonial-era agreements documented by British and German archives.

Bakassi was still under Nigerian jurisdiction until the International Court of Justice ruling in 2002. Following South Cameroon's decision to secede from Nigeria and join Cameroon, this Court ruled that Bakassi should be subject to Cameroonian sovereignty.

The Bakassi Conflict: A Colonial Legacy

Boundary conflicts in Africa have deep historical roots, dating back to colonial-era practices that divided communities into arbitrary zones. After independence, these conflicts persisted as newly established states sought to assert their sovereignty and eventually developed continental rules through organizations such as the African Union (Khadiagala, 2007). These disputes varied in scale and ferocity and were often due to problems arising from colonial cartography and postcolonial leaders' efforts to create stability within inherited colonial lines (Khadiagala, 1999). The origins of the Bakassi conflict can be traced back to African colonial history when artificial boundaries were established solely for the benefit of colonial masters and their shifting interests.

Treaties established the border between Germany and the United Kingdom in 1893 and 1906. Moreover, the western part of this line was modified in 1913 by the London and Obokum Agreements, which made Bakassi German territory and, consequently, Cameroon. However, after the end of World War I, the Treaty of Versailles led to the partition of all German territories, with some coming under British administration and others under French administration. After World War II, the British and French mandates in Cameroon were replaced by trusteeship arrangements under the United Nations.

Cameroon also shares a long border with Nigeria, originally established by the colonial powers. Nigerian authorities initially accepted the colonial borders in 1980 but later challenged them, leading to a military war. In 1981, a clash occurred in Cameroonian territorial waters near Rio Del Rey. In 1987, Nigerian forces invaded many Cameroonian villages around Lake Chad. On December 21, 1993, Nigerian forces crossed the border into Cameroon at the mouth of the Akwayafe River and took control of Bakassi. Cameroon sought justice at the International Court of Justice in The Hague over the invasion. Cameroon filed a petition on March 29, 1994, which was later strengthened by another petition on June 6, 1994. Because of Nigerian legal claims to several locations on the land border and inhabited villages in the Lake Chad area, these petitions expanded the case to include the entire border between the two nations.

The evolution and process of resolving the Bakassi Peninsula Conflict

Nigeria and Cameroon have strained relations for several years due to disagreements over their shared border. Specifically, the 2,300-kilometre land border stretches from Lake Chad to the Bakassi Peninsula and the maritime border in the Gulf of Guinea. As Lake Chad has dried up due to desertification in northern Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Niger, local populations that rely on the lake for their livelihoods have followed the receding waters and resettled regardless of the national borders that divide the lake (Mashood Issaka, 2008). The origin of the Bakassi dispute lies in the continent's colonial legacy with artificial boundaries based solely on the convenience and changing interests of the colonial powers. The dispute has evolved into three phases in which successive governments still need to resolve the issue.

Phase I tensions increased when General Mohammed's government questioned borders inherited from World War I era treaties. Initially, the Bakassi question merely concerned delineating the ocean boundary

to conform with a 1913 Anglo-German Treaty. Nigerian government began to lay claim to the Bakassi Peninsula by declaring illegal the agreement signed on June 1, 1975, by his predecessor, President Yakubu Gowon, and President Ahmadou Ahidjo of Cameroon.

Phase II of the issue, from 1975 to 2006, includes its metamorphosis into a formal legal dispute. It occasionally escalated into a military conflict, with Nigerian armed forces taking over villages in the Lake Chad region. In turn, this caused the relocation of inhabitants after the 1981 skirmish in Rio Del Rey, the 1987 military attacks in the Lake Chad area, and the Nigerian army's incursion at the mouth of the River Akwayafé in 1993. That year, Cameroon filed a petition with the ICJ to determine the sovereignty of the entire boundary. Eight years later, on October 10, 2002, the ICJ, citing the same agreements of 1913 between Great Britain and Germany, reached various decisions on the issue. Arguably, the most significant of them is the confirmation of the sovereignty of Cameroon over Bakassi. After the judgment, Secretary-General Annan arranged a further meeting between Presidents Paul Biya of Cameroon and Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria in Geneva on November 15, 2002, during which both Cameroon and Nigeria agreed to establish the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC). The CNMC would be overseen by the U.N. Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and "consider ways of following up on the ICJ ruling and moving the process forward."

Phase III began in 2006 with the implementation of the ICJ ruling and plans to sign an agreement at Greentree, New York. Presidents Obasanjo and Biya and Secretary-General Annan attended the meeting. Germany, France, the United Kingdom, and the United States came as observers (Pontes, 2002).

The resolution of the Bakassi border is the only comprehensive settlement of a border dispute in Africa. It is also the longest border ever resolved by the U.N., longer than the borders between Kuwait and Iraq, Ethiopia and Eritrea, and East Timor and Indonesia combined. Other African border disputes include Chad-Libya, Namibia-Botswana, Burkina-Faso-Mali, Western Sahara-Algeria-Morocco, and Gabon-Equatorial Guinea. The Bakassi conflict underscores the critical role of leaders in peace processes. It also underscores the importance of regular interactions and consultations between contending states. After the ICJ ruling, further meetings between Nigeria and Cameroon led to three agreements that prepared the final handover:

- 1) The December 16, 2003, agreement on Lake Chad, in which Nigeria lost thirty-three villages. However, as part of a compromise, Cameroon ceded two of these villages to Nigeria;
- 2) The July 14, 2004 agreement on the land border between Lake Chad and the sea; and
- 3) The May 11, 2007 agreement on the final handover of Bakassi, which is considered the most difficult of the agreements due to the presence of significant oil, gas, and fish deposits in the area and the complexity of access to the sea for the Nigerian naval base at Calabar.

The Bakassi Peninsula conflict, a territorial dispute between Nigeria and Cameroon, grew over the twentieth century, aggravated by its strategic and resource-rich location. Following lengthy diplomatic conversations and international mediation attempts, the matter was finally resolved in 2002 with a landmark judgment by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling in favor of Cameroon's sovereignty over Bakassi. Implementing this decision in 2008, with international help and steps to preserve

inhabitants' rights, was an essential step toward peace. Nonetheless, continuous issues in border security, governance, and economic development continue to exist, emphasizing the importance of continuing efforts to guarantee the region's peace and prosperity.

The Greentree Agreement

The Greentree Agreement is a treaty between the Republic of Cameroon and the Federal Republic of Nigeria on the withdrawal and transfer of powers in the Bakassi Peninsula. It was signed in 2006 by Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo and Cameroonian President Paul Biya to resolve a long-standing border dispute between the two countries. The dispute was primarily over ownership of the Bakassi Peninsula. The Greentree Agreement was named after the Greentree Estate in Manhasset, New York, where negotiations were held under the auspices of the United Nations. The agreement provided a peaceful transfer of the Bakassi Peninsula from Nigeria to Cameroon. Among the main provisions of the agreement were:

1. The Nigerian administration and armed forces withdrew from the Bakassi Peninsula.
2. The establishment of a particular mechanism, the Cameroon-Nigeria Joint Commission (CNMC), to oversee the transfer of authority, resettlement of the population, and other related matters.
3. The commitment to respect the rights and dignity of the affected populations, including the rights of residents to choose their nationality.
4. The resolution of any remaining border issues through peaceful means and cooperation between the two countries.

The Greentree Agreement played a significant role in resolving the border dispute between Cameroon and Nigeria and preventing potential conflict in the region. The United Nations and other international organizations facilitated and monitored the agreement's implementation to ensure its successful execution.

The withdrawal of Nigerian troops was set for 60 days but allowed for a possible 30-day extension. Nigeria was allowed to keep its civil administration and police in Bakassi for another two years. The dispute between the two states was settled by the International Court of Justice, which ruled in favor of Cameroon. The Nigerian government complied and withdrew its troops, motivated by the risk of losing foreign aid (Beth, 2010). A follow-up committee, composed of representatives from Cameroon, Nigeria, the UN, Germany, the US, France, and the U.K., was created to monitor the agreement's implementation. On August 13 2013, the United Nations Security Council said it welcomed the peaceful end two days earlier of the special transitional regime in the Bakassi Peninsula.

Figure 1: Cameroonian President Paul Biya (left) and Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo (right) sign an agreement on the Bakassi Peninsula dispute with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (centre) in Green tree, Long Island, New York, June 12, 2006. (<https://www.un.org/africarenewal/>)



Lessons Learned

One of the most important lessons of the Bakassi case is that it rescued the world community from disaster and highlighted the importance of proactively preventing disputes from turning into conflict. Other essential lessons from the Bakassi dispute resolution were as follows:

- 1) The function of political leadership The most crucial driver of success or failure in peace negotiations is constructive leadership. Preventive diplomacy prior to judgment, tolerance of opposing ideas, and consensus among leaders to focus on relationship normalization are critical preconditions for success in dispute settlement. It was also stated that the ICJ judgment would not have sufficed to end the issue; good leadership reduced tensions and created a favorable environment where the ruling could be implemented.
- 2) The mediators' role should be to seek long-term inclusive solutions rather than fast fixes. In other cases, like Bakassi, the U.N. should maintain its quiet, trustworthy, behind-the-scenes peace-making role, even if it is not involved initially. Former Secretary General Annan developed tight relationships with Presidents Obasanjo and Biya, and being a West African himself, he had greater regional credibility than other world officials. Furthermore, the resources for the Mixed Commission provided the U.N. with the requisite leverage to mediate without impediment. Quiet diplomacy, or the U.N. Secretary General's "good offices" role, is critical for building trust and continuing discussions.
- 3) The importance of handover agreements and monitoring systems stems from their potential to ease the transition during settlement implementation, ensuring a gradual transfer process with minimal negative impacts on residents. While the Joint Cameroon-Nigeria Border Commission, established in the mid-1960s, played an essential role in guiding diplomatic efforts even during periods of violence, both parties were concerned about the potential difficulties in implementing the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling in the absence of additional facilitative measures. The Greentree Agreement and the

CNMC established flexible mechanisms for carrying out the judgment, making them extremely important in this context.

4) the rule of law, compliance, and trust building. The Nigeria-Cameroon agreement illustrates the effects of better governance in both nations. The relative advancement of democracy in both countries contributed to a mood of optimism. Both desired to be accepted into the world community and viewed as upholding the rule of law. The widespread broadcast of the ICJ judgment and ongoing attempts within the current Nigerian administration to further normalize bilateral relations have also been beneficial.

5) Time's Function Dispute resolution as a process is need-based, and speed is critical. When the procedure is rushed for expediency, the settlement is frequently jeopardized. Much bloodshed has occurred following the signing of peace treaties, frequently due to poor timing (Wallensteen, 2007). The Bakassi conclusion took a long time to obtain, but dissatisfaction with the conditions could have been greater if the process had not been balanced with patience and careful timing.

6) The disputants' external appearance The Court's decision was also used to encourage a burgeoning culture of peace in Cameroon, Nigeria, and elsewhere. As a regional hegemon, Nigeria's acceptance of a court ruling, such as that of the International Court of Justice, was exemplary in the region and boosted its moral clout.

Conclusion

African boundaries evolved to reflect their historical significance, yet they remain permeable due to ongoing political, social, and economic ties and the risk of state instability. Borders are critical in defining sovereignty and accountability, which might deteriorate due to fragmentation. The Nigeria-Cameroon conflict demonstrates that disagreements can be settled amicably via political will and U.N. mechanisms. This resolution influenced the post-judicial Mixed Commission, legal arbitration, and diplomatic efforts. Finally, the Bakassi pact demonstrates Nigeria and Cameroon's adherence to international law. This accomplishment shows how local and international cooperation may pave the path for realistic and harmonious solutions. Because of their shared history, culture, and geographic proximity, the authorities of both countries understood the importance of preserving good relations. Former Secretary-General Kofi Annan was instrumental in fostering trust and emphasizing the need for mediation in conflict resolution. The Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission (CNMC) efficiently oversaw and executed the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rulings and the Greentree Agreement. As a result of this pledge, the Bakassi area was successfully transferred to Cameroon on August 14, 2008. This transfer process demonstrates the necessity of preventive diplomacy and devotion to the rule of law in such situations. To address geographical concerns honestly, scientific methods, satellite technology, and surveys must be used, especially as borders lose their initial political relevance. The African continent is aggressively tackling the issue of state disintegration due to its potential to spark problems like refugee crises, which can strain and harm adjacent countries. The International Court of Justice

(ICJ) released its final judgment on October 10, 2002, after an eight-year process that comprised the following vital points:

1. The ICJ upheld the boundary demarcation of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) and demanded that Nigeria immediately and unconditionally withdraw its administrative presence, armed forces, and police from Cameroon's territory.
2. The International Court of Justice established the border between the two countries from Lake Chad to the Bakassi Peninsula.
3. It established Cameroon's sovereignty over the designated peninsula.
4. Additionally, the ICJ outlined the demarcation of the maritime border between the two countries.

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