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COURSE: PEACE AND CONFLICT

QUESTION

Write an essay on violent conflict on the geopolitical zone you're from... not less than 2 pages... times new roman and send to his email; balogunnoah@abuad.edu.ng

Submit on or before 1st December, 2020.

South west

The Ife and Modakeke are both Yoruba of Osun state in southwestern Nigeria. According to local ancestral myth, both are descendants of Oduduwa, the perceived progenitor of the Yoruba people. The sociocultural and political systems of the two communities are essentially identical and their geographical distribution largely overlaps. As related as Ife and Modakeke are, however, both have engaged in protracted conflict for over a century. It remains the oldest intra-ethnic conflict in Nigeria. The Modakeke people are generally considered strangers, tenants, and migrants in Ife. Historical accounts suggest that they migrated and settled in Ife in the aftermath of the collapse of the Old Oyo empire in the nineteenth century, causing a refugee crisis to the south and resulting in the occupation of their contemporary location. Two distinct categories of people were thus created: the original settlers (landlords) and the migrants, tenants, farmhands, and a resettled group considered as refugees (Modakeke). These categorizations form the remote causes of the conflicts between the two groups. Indeed, crises are bound to exist in relationships like this when parties perceive their aspirations to be contradictory and their values, needs or interests divergent. Thus, while from a general sociocultural and identity perspective the two groups are identical as part of the Yoruba race, economic and political gains engendered through superior-subordinate notions have created an overarching challenge to peace.

In 1957 the Modakeke community commenced its agitation and struggle for self determination (ie. Its autonomous local Government separate and distinct from Ile-Ife . This was so because Modakeke as a community was fed up with a situation where “Monkey dey work but Baboon alone dey chop”. That is, the autonomous local Government would put an end to the situation where the Taxes and Due(Revenue generated by the Modakekes were being used to develop Ile-Ife to the criminal neglect and detriment of Modakeke Community. It was gathered that the Ife people are accusing  Modakeke residents of voting against their interest in the August 9 governorship election, which Governor Rauf Aregbesola won.

In a swift reaction, Modakeke youths organised a protest marchbut were quickly dispersed with tear gas canisters fired at them by armed Policemen. This signalled the beginning of what wasreported in the press at the time as the “Ife-Modakeke War” ofAugust 1997. By August 18 1997, full-scale violence had erupted between the Ifes and the Modakekes. There was significant loss of lives and limbs; houses and properties worth hundreds of millions of Naira were burnt, looted and vandalised. Military specification ammunition as well as other sophisticated and traditional instruments of violence such as machetes, cutlasses, axes and clubs were freely deployed to deadly effect by the antagonists. Policemen were initially deployed from the state Police Command in responseto the crisis and later reinforced with deployments from neighbouring states. However, the Police were out-gunned and outnumbered, managing barely to secure parts of the city-centre, leaving the combatants to continue wreaking mayhem in most parts of the metropolis and the outskirts of the city. Policemen drafted to the scenes of the clashes on August 18, 1997 took to their heelswhen they could not curtail nor contain the fighting.

In addition to violations of life and physical security, theIfe/Modakeke crisis has made thousands of people internallydisplaced. Initially in 2000, the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, served as a temporary refugee camp for over 10,000 persons displaced as a result of the communal clashes prior to their moving to other neighbouring towns such as Akure, Ibadan, Ilesha, Lagos, and Ondo.Many businesses have moved out or been ruined and several properties burnt, looted and destroyed. The conflict between the Ife people and the Madokeke people lasted for over 5 years andthe question of accountability for the violations committed by bothsides remains to be addressed or resolved.