PSCI 4700: Conflict and Peace Building in Africa
Professor Idean Salehyan
Spring 2009
Research Project – Instructions

For this project, you are asked to pick a contemporary African conflict of your choice. By contemporary, I mean a war that was fought after the country’s independence. You are free to choose any of the conflicts discussed in class; however, if you are choosing a conflict not listed in the syllabus, please consult with me first. You should write approximately 3,000-4,000 words (double spaced), not including the list of references.

The final paper should be divided in three parts:

**Part I:** Conflict background and causes. What were the primary causes of the conflict? Develop a clear argument regarding the underlying factors that contributed to the conflict as well as why the conflict erupted when it did. Discuss relevant issues such as ethnic divisions, economic resources, and political institutions that led to the dispute. Also discuss the specific triggers and events that caused the fighting.

**Part II:** Nature of the war. Describe the history of the war and how the fighting unfolded. The following topics should be covered: Who were the major political actors and leaders? How did the rebels recruit soldiers and gather supplies? How did the government respond with counter-insurgency operations? Where did fighting take place and how did it affect local communities?

**Part III:** Establishing peace. How did the conflict end? If the conflict has already ended, discuss how and why it ended. If the conflict has not ended, discuss the key obstacles to peace. In this section, you should also write about the prospects for long-term peace and stability. What needs to be done to prevent conflict in the future?

**Sources:** At *minimum* you should consult five sources. These must be books, academic articles in scholarly journals, and/or major non-governmental organization reports (e.g. Amnesty International, International Crisis Group). Books will be counted as three sources. You can also consult newspapers and non-academic media sources, but these will not count towards the total. You must cite your sources with in-text citations when appropriate and include a full bibliography (please ask if you do not know how to do this). Direct quotes must be placed in quotation marks, and followed by the author, year of publication, and page number [example: (Herbst 2000: p. 114)]. Failure to do so constitutes plagiarism and will cause you to fail the assignment.

**Review of the literature:** By Thursday, April 9 (or earlier), you must submit a review of your sources. List each of the sources you have consulted, along with a brief (1 paragraph) synopsis of each work. Failure to submit the literature review will result in a full letter grade penalty on the final assignment.

**Due date for final paper:** May 5.

*I encourage (but do not require) you to print on both sides of the page and/or two pages per sheet to conserve paper.