Foreword

Cedric de Coning

The second volume of 2025 features five articles that cover topics like mediation, peacemaking, peace operations, restorative justice, violent extremism and terrorism, and conflict at schools. Through these five articles we travel from Sudan to Ghana, Lesotho, the DRC, Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region, and Zimbabwe.

In our first article, Munzoul A. M. Assal and Abdelmageed Yahya write about the failure of several mediation and peacemaking efforts to bring an end to the conflict in Sudan. They analyse the nature and scale of the war in Sudan and explain why the complexities that drive the war, as well as the interests of the many internal and external stakeholders involved, have made both internal and external peacemaking and mediation efforts extremely difficult.

In the second article, Linda Akua Opongmaa Darkwa and Philip Kortei Attuquayefio write about the lessons that African institutions can learn to guide the revitalisation of the African Standby Force from the operations that were undertaken by a number of states in East Africa against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as well as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram in Nigeria.

In the third article, Khabele Matlosa and Moeketsi Kali write about the relevance of the African Union's transitional justice policy for Lesotho. They argue that achieving sustainable peace and reconciliation in Lesotho will require institutionalising a robust, context-sensitive transitional justice framework that combines retributive, restorative and redistributive justice approaches to address the structural grievances that drive political instability in Lesotho.

In the fourth article, Joseph Merdiemah and Felix Danso write about enhancing community-based strategies to combat violent extremism and terrorism in Ghana. Their research finds that entrenched governance challenges such as resource and capacity deficits, political interference and weak inter-agency collaboration intersect with socio-economic vulnerabilities to undermine prevention efforts. He makes the case for fostering resilience through community engagement and grassroots participation.

In our final article of this edition, Onismo Rukuni, Geoff Harris and Jason Davis write about how restorative conferences can serve as a conflict resolution tool, based on an action research project that involved teachers, parents and pupils to take collective responsibility for managing conflict at a high school in Zimbabwe.

Together, the articles in this volume address some of the most pressing conflict-resolution challenges of our time. The AJCR aims to curate and share knowledge that deepens our understanding of conflict dynamics and their resolution, and we thank our contributors for helping to advance this vision.