
also noted that Canada can play a useful role here in the promotion of pluralist and inclusionary political processes that are based on principles of mutual recognition and participation rather than delegitimation.

The role of *civil society* in African states was also discussed in this regard, and it was observed that groups within civil society often feel excluded from the official institutional expressions of a state's political system. Universities are one of the institutions in civil society that has played a key role in a number of African states in the past by providing a forum for addressing volatile issues in a safe manner, thereby helping to defuse them. Academics in Africa could then be engaged as an important resource for conflict prevention processes, this being one example of the role that civil society can play. It was also noted that the OAU is taking a very holistic approach in its interaction with African NGOs and academics, and is aware of the need to make these groups part of the regular agenda on internal conflict prevention.

B) Identifying Internal Causes of Conflict

The elements which combine to produce internal conflict are many and vary according to time and context. But the recurring salience of refugee migration, human rights violations, and ethnic violence suggest that these issues may be appropriate for a more rigorous system of information-gathering, analysis, and early warning. In the case of Rwanda, for example, the presence of a large group of ethnic Tutsi refugees outside of the country was a key cause of the internal conflict.

So one of the most important contributions that the donor community can make in the prevention of such violence is in the area of *early warning* based on accurate information, and the linking of this with the relevant institutional actors for effective preventive action. For Canada, communications remains an area of comparative advantage, and there is much that can be done to facilitate the creation of *regional networks* for early warning in Africa. The information that is generated in such a early warning system should also be shared freely among policy-makers, academics, and NGOs. It should not be controlled in the name of institutional affiliations. An integrated system of early warning information that pinpoints the internal causes of conflict will in turn help to generate media interest and *political will* for preventive action.