

**Colonialism as a Source of Boundary Dispute and Conflict
among African States: The World Court Judgement on the
Bakassi Peninsula and its Implications for Nigeria**

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KEYWORDS Colonialism; Bakassi Peninsula; boundaries; ICJ; Nigeria; Cameroun

ABSTRACT The African territories, which have attained independence and national sovereignty, cannot in a strict sense, be regarded as national states. They do not embrace a common past and a common culture, they are indeed, the arbitrary creations of colonialist. The manner in which European nations descended on Africa during the closing years of the nineteenth century in their scramble for territory, was bound to leave a heritage of artificially controlled borderlines, which now demarcate the emergent African states. It is against this backdrop that the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Judgment on the Bakassi peninsula is critically examined. It is the intention of this study to demonstrate that the international agreements of the era of the scramble for Africa are source of conflict among African states, themselves. Undoubtedly, several boundary disputes have broken out between African states and so far, there is no acceptable criteria which may afford the best guide to a settlement of an 'unhappy legacy of colonialism'. Historical research may enable African statesmen to borrow a leaf from their pre-colonial ancestors, whose attitude to 'international' frontiers between one ethnic group and the other was much less emotional, much less rigid and much more pragmatic than that which many African leaders are adopting today. It is therefore hoped that African statesmen would adopt a more objective and 'pan-Africanist' attitude to their boundary problems. This could pave the way for peaceful, brotherly and fraternal relations between Nigeria and Cameroun.