



CHIEFTAINCY SUCCESSION CONFLICTS IN THE BUNKPURUGU TRADITIONAL AREA, NORTH EAST, GHANA

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Abstract

The once cohesive family of Louk has now become a host to many chieftaincy successions dispute. This situation has pushed the researchers to investigate the sources of the chieftaincy succession disputes in Bunkpurugu and their manifestations in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area. To arrive at this, a pragmatic research philosophy was adopted and a deductive and inductive theory development approach was deemed fit for the study. The design employed were both qualitative and quantitative and the data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides, and focused group discussions. The primary data gathered were complemented by extensive literature review on chieftaincy succession disputes in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The analysis of the data was done using content analysis and the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) revealed that the main sources of the dispute were the commodification of thrones, desire to control resources and political influence. It also revealed that the manifestation of the conflict in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area was a stern power struggle between the Jafouk family and the Jamong family. Effects of the dispute include division among the people, avoidance of social functions like funerals and naming ceremonies and disloyalty to the Jafouk Leader (Bunkpurugu chief).

Keywords: North East Region, Bunkpurugu, Chieftaincy, Bimobas, Dispute

Introduction

As observed by Adiyaye and Misawa (2006), the chieftaincy institution in Ghana and Africa at large has played a central role in economic and social development of African communities. Its adoption for the execution of the colonial indirect rule by the British is proof of the institution's vitality from time immemorial. The chieftaincy institution has survived the wave of change that is characteristic of modern, post-modern and contemporary periods driven by advancement in technology and scientific knowledge. Odotei (2010) observed that till date, chiefs act as mouth pieces between their subjects and the central governments, exercise maximum control over land under their jurisdiction, and make vital

contributions to governance and administration in Africa.

Chieftaincy is not valued any less in Ghana. The chief's position is certain in the 1992 constitution of Ghana. The republican constitution of 1992, Article 270 (1) of Ghana upholds the institution of chieftaincy, in connection with its traditional councils as stated by customary law and usage. Article 277 of the 1992 constitution defines a chief as 'a person who hails from the proper family and lineage and has been genuinely nominated, elected or selected, enstooled or enskinned or installed as a chief or queen mother in accordance with the relevant customary law and usage.' Chiefs in Ghana wield a lot of power. Chiefs have greater control over the people and

resources within their jurisdiction. It is therefore no surprise that people fight to get installed as chiefs.

The nature of the Bimoba Kingdom makes their kings and chiefs equally powerful within the northern territories of Ghana and Togo. The Bimoba traditional area has an overlord who is the Bunkpurugu, and the final adjudicator in dispute resolution in the area. He is often supported by two kingmakers, these are the Nankpanduri paramount chief and the chief of Lopaanu (Togo).

The main Louk families among the Bimobas are the Jamong and Jafouk. However, these are not the only Louk clan families in Bunkpurugu. There are other families such as Jatong, Kpakul, Taana, Jakpaikil, Chainleeb and Naapouk beside the two families. All these families belong to the Louk clan (brothers) and they were living peacefully until 2007 when a new chief from the Jafouk family was enskined in Bunkpurugu. After the chief was enskined the other family (Jamong) opposed his ascension to the skin and sent the matter to court for the deskinment of the chief. The crisis escalated during 2012 with the burning of houses and killing of people.

Disputes will continue to occur with humankind. At times, the intercession methods to resolve a conflict right from the beginning can be challenging and consequently be a source of conflict itself. Disputes occur within a certain political, economic, social and cultural dimension. Nowadays, most of the disputes that take place are stated by Kaldor (2004) as identity politics as well as 'new wars' and 'old wars' which are non-conversational, internal, and culture-sensitive (Bello & Olutola 2016). Some of these conflicts that occur are culturally based and relate to their places of occurrence, the family conflict in Bunkpurugu cannot be exempted from this. Most of the inhabitants of the African continent years ago lived as brothers and sisters, peacefully and had their own ways of taking care of their disputes before the colonial masters' arrival. In their bid to establish

administrative structures to make their governance easier, some of the ethnic groups, clans and families were forced into interconnected structures by the colonial masters terminating most of the origins of traditional structures including ways of dispute resolution (Bukari, 2016). Presently, these types of structures has led to most of the prolonged disputes in some parts of the African continent (Bukari, 2016).

Moreover, this has redirected to a sequence of different disputes on the African continent with varied sources. These disputes include, ethnic, clan and family disputes between rival internal ethnic groups disputes, disputes in terms of power struggles and succession inside the country and this is in line with the crisis in Bunkpurugu (Okpanachi, 2010 & Idowu, 2005). Most of the disputes in Ghana and other parts of Africa are caused by succession conflicts because many of the disputes orbit around traditional quest for power linked to land ownership and chieftaincy. Examples of these are Dagbon chieftaincy, Bunkpurugu chieftaincy, Bimbagu (Tamong and Puri land conflict and Bimobas and Konkombas land conflict), Nankpanduri – Kpemal (Bimobas and Konkombas land conflict) the Akropong-Akwapem and Abiriw land disputes. Nevertheless, methods used to resolve these conflicts right from their inception often do not accept traditional approaches in their resolution notwithstanding the fact that those disputes have a traditional source. As a result, most of these localized disputes have been unduly prolonged with occasional flaring up of violence which has negative effects on social and economic development.

The Bunkpurugu dispute remains one of the localized disputes that has occurred for more than six (6) years having its source from the traditional Bunkpurugu skin. In spite of many years of energies to resolve the conflict through the Nayiri and government, committees of enquiry, the formal courts, decrees and peace enforcement,

the conflict still remains unresolved to bring lasting peace to the Bunkpurugu people. The protracted nature of the conflict and persistent eruption of violence question the current resolution methods. Also, traditional methods have not been explored in a serious way to resolve this conflict.

The research deals with a number of questions; what are the sources of chieftaincy succession disputes in Bunkpurugu traditional area? What are the manifestations of these succession conflicts in Bunkpurugu traditional area? In what way does the succession dispute undermine social and cultural coherence of the people in the Bunkpurugu traditional area? Answering these questions provides the basis for an effective assessment of existing public policy or creating a new one for addressing the problem, and for prescribing measures to counter chieftaincy succession conflicts in Bunkpurugu traditional area and beyond.

The research is situated within the context of conspiracy theory as expounded by Yong (2010) and Game theory as expounded by Von Neumann (2006). Conspiracy theory is the explanatory proposition that accuses two or more persons or an organization of having caused or covered up through secret planning and deliberate action, an illegal or harmful event or situation (Charles, 2007). Game theory addresses zero-sum power dynamics in which one person's gains result in losses for the other participants. Myerson (1991) explains that the conflict theory seeks to scientifically explain the general contours of conflict in society: how conflict starts and varies, and the effects it brings. The central concerns of conflict theory are the unequal distribution of scarce resources and power.

Methodology

The research philosophy that was adopted for this study is the pragmatist philosophy as against either positivism alone or interpretivism alone. Pragmatists declare that there are many different ways of inferring the world and undertaking

exploration, in which no single point of view can ever give the complete representation and that there may be numerous authenticities (Sounders, 2010). This gives room for the usage of multiple research strategies and methods. The researchers therefore settled for this research philosophy which allowed them to use approaches that enable trustworthy, reliable and relevant data to be collected that advanced the research (Kelemen & Rumens 2008). In line with the pragmatic philosophy, both deductive and inductive theory development approaches were used to arrive at conclusions which were derived from the reviewed literature and the primary data collected during the survey. The choice of a pragmatic philosophical approach also informed the choice of the research methodology; a mixed method design was adopted for the study where both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and triangulated for validity and reliability purposes. Wilson (2014) thinks the mixed method is most appropriate for a pragmatic research philosophy so that both qualitative and quantitative data will be used to answer the research questions since pragmatism combines both the positivists and interpretivists philosophies. The researchers interpreted the qualitative data without subjecting it to any rationalization or logic processes. The researchers made meanings out of the illogical statements of respondents about the sources of the chieftaincy succession disputes in Bimoba land and the manifestations of such conflicts in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area. At the same time, the researchers also collected measurable and quantifiable data and compared the responses of respondents with what other researchers have established as the sources of conflict in general. The adoption of a mixed method design required that at some point the researchers became a part of the research as it is done in the interpretivists tradition and it also required that at some point the researchers got detached from the research as it is done in the positivistic tradition. Survey and narrative inquiry strategies were adopted for the

study where quantitative data was collected with the use of a questionnaire and focus group discussions while interview guides were used to gather qualitative data.

The data for the research were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was obtained from the residents of Bunkpurugu traditional area who were eighteen (18) years and above and institutions that are conversant with issues of chieftaincy succession in Bunkpurugu traditional area, while secondary information was obtained from sources such as dissertations, journals, books, magazines, periodicals, newspapers, government reports, discs and internet.

Using Cochran's formula, a sample size of two hundred and seventy-five persons (275) were

selected from a total adult population of nine thousand (9000) at 95% confidence level. A voters' register was solicited from the Bunkpurugu/Nankpanduri District Electoral Office. This was used as a sampling frame. The names of respondents were grouped into twenty-five different clusters according to their polling units. The researchers used simple random sampling technique in selecting four (4) persons from each cluster. Additionally, ten (10) key informants from the Northern Regional House of Chiefs, District Security Council, Bunkpurugu Traditional Council and Bimoba Students Union (BISU) were selected due to their in-depth knowledge about the subject matter. The table below shows the demographic characteristics of respondents who were picked for the study.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents according to age, chieftaincy gate, religion and Occupation.

Background	Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age			
	18-25	85	31
	26-35	80	29
	36-45	65	24
	46+	45	16
	Total	275	100
Chieftaincy Gates			
	Bunkpurugu	60	22
	Nankpanduri	50	18
	Najong 1&2	50	18
	Bimbagu	60	22
	Others	55	20
	Total	275	100
Educational status			
	Formal	230	84
	Non-Formal	45	16
Occupation			
	Housewife	55	20
	Trader	60	22
	Farmer	70	25
	Civil/Public Servant	50	18
	Student	40	15
	Total	275	100.0

Source: *Field Survey, (2019)*

As indicated in Table 1. above, majority of the respondents were still in their middle ages (31%).

The respondents were fairly distributed across the four chieftaincy gates in Bunkpurugu

Traditional area; Bunkpurugu (Louk) (22%), Nankpanduri (Louk) (18%), Najong 1&2 (Bauk & Nadong) (18%) and Bimbagu (Tamoung) (22%). Those respondents who never belonged to any of the gates constituted 20% of the total respondents. Most of the respondents (84%) have had some form of formal education, only 16% never had any formal education. The respondents derived their livelihood by engaging in various activities such as farming (25%), trading (22%), and being house wives (20%). Few were employed in the public sector. The information generated from the respondents was supplemented by the literature related to the topics of conflicts, chieftaincy succession, and the history of the Bimoba. The review provided understanding of the global and national dynamics of the problem based on existing research knowledge, and from policy-driven conferences and workshops. Media tracking and records of chieftaincy succession conflicts in Northern Ghana provided further sources of information.

Qualitative data obtained from the survey were analyzed using Moritz (2010) 'Processual' content analysis where events, actors and processes were interpreted by the researcher taking into consideration the backgrounds and institutional factors that might have influenced events or actions. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze quantitative data where raw data was coded, tables and relevant graphs drawn to aid understanding. Pearson Correlation was used to determine the association between the chieftaincy gate of respondents and the commodification of thrones as a source of conflict so as to determine if there was a relationship between the dispute and social and economic development of Bunkpurugu. Cross tabulation was also run to see if the age, chieftaincy gate and occupation of respondents had any bearing on the answers they gave as the

sources and consequences of chieftaincy conflicts in Bimoba land. Findings were tied up to the reviewed literature and the theoretical frameworks that were employed to guide the study.

Sources of Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in Bunkpurugu land

Chieftaincy in Ghana is an ascribed status from particular families or ethnic groups. Among the people in southern Ghana, ascension to the stool is through maternal lineage whilst tribes in northern Ghana ascend to the skins through the paternal lineage. In the case of Bimoba land, the skins are specifically reserved for paternal descendants of the royal family. In the past, the roles of chiefs were exclusively to lead their people to war and defend, protect and extend their territories (Odotei, 2000). The nature of warfare for the chiefs in contemporary times has changed. The enemy is now poverty, hunger, diseases, squalor, illiteracy, crime, injustice, environmental degradation, depletion of resources, greed, and ignorance. The problem now is, rather than mobilizing the people against these new 'enemies', some chiefs are engrossed in material acquisition. Chieftaincy in some jurisdictions constitutes one of the fastest means of getting money (Ali, 2009). Apart from the powers that chiefs wield, they control resources such as land, forestry, and mineral deposits. These generate huge wealth for them through royalties and rent (Coleman, 2007). This explains why acephalous societies which were not organized under the domain of any chiefs have been galvanized and condensed under chiefs for easy control and are gradually beginning to appreciate and revere the institution of chieftaincy (Dokurgu 2011).

When the respondents were asked to indicate what they thought were the sources of the conflicts in Bunkpurugu, their responses were varied as shown in table 2 below.

Table 2. Sources of Conflicts in Bunkpurugu land.

Response	Percentages
Commodification of thrones	75
Desire to control resource	17
Political influence	7
Loss of Institutional Policies	1

Source: *Field Survey, (2019)*

As indicated in Table 2 above, 75% of the respondents representing 94 of the total respondents mentioned the commodification of thrones as the main source of the various chieftaincy succession disputes in Bimoba land. They said chieftaincy was a highly respected institution, however it has become a money-making venture for kingmakers. They said whenever there is a vacant skin, people who are deemed qualified within the succeeding gate will begin to lobby. This lobbying, they claim, has taken a different trend in recent times. When those interested go to lobby they go with money for the king and the kingmakers and in most cases the highest bidder gets the throne, thus creating dissatisfaction among other people who are qualified but may not be well resourced to bid for the throne. An informant corroborated this when he said

“.... chieftaincy institution was the preserve of honest and upright people who were role models in the society.... our skins are now being ‘auctioned’ to the highest bidder because of monetary gains.”

Sulemana (2008) also found out that the chieftaincy conflicts in Dagbon were partly fuelled by the arbitrary installation of sub-chiefs by the Yagbon skin. Suaka, Tseer and Kombiok. (2018) also found out that the Bimoba-Konkomba conflicts in Bunkpurugu /Yunyoo got escalated because of the arbitrary installation of chiefs in the Bimoba and Konkomba communities in Bunkpurugu Yunyoo District by the Nayiri, the overlord of Mamprugu land. Intertwined with the commercialization of the throne is the desire to control resources within the

various divisions of the Bimoba traditional area. Tonah (2012) observed that one of the reasons that northern Ghana is noted for a delusion of chieftaincy conflicts is because the chiefs have over the years, rather than concern themselves with serious issues that affect their subjects, are busy selling lands and taking bribes from subjects, self-interested persons and also engaging in partisan politics at the expense of their dignity and loyalty from their subjects. These have made them lose the respect of their subjects to the extent that their pronouncements are no longer respected, thus a state of anarchy being created. 17% of the total respondents stated that the conflicts arise from the fact that Louk skin is endowed with a lot of natural resources like vast cultivable and grazing lands. Once one is made a chief, he has control over this resource. This situation is best explained by the Game theory; the source and intensity the conflict emanates conforms to the zero-sum power dynamics of the Game theory. The enskinment of any of the parties in the succession conflict is conferment of power and authority on the beholder that will not be accessible to those denied the chance. It thus becomes a zero-sum power game in which one chief is enskinned, the powers and the values that are conferred and transferred to that chief cannot be exercised by another person contemporaneously. This finding is not different from the finding of Coleman (2007) when he discovered that conflicts surrounding who gets what are often difficult to resolve because if there is insufficiency of a given resource or what is being competed for and no more can be found or created, it becomes a win-lose situation. Once one gets, the other loses.

The researchers also observed that most of the areas where the succession conflicts often occur in Bimoba land are areas where there is land. Collier (2003) also opined that the desire to control natural resources by groups is a major cause of conflict. Myerson (2009) found out that in the Middle East, disputes over oil fields in Kuwait, among other issues, led to the first Gulf War. It is therefore not surprising that the desire to get access or control resources could bring about chieftaincy succession conflict among the Louk clan.

Another factor that came up strongly as one of the sources of the chieftaincy succession conflict in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area was political influence. 40% of the total respondents mentioned that the appointment of the Jafouk family, as chief was politically motivated. Many of the key informants also mentioned political influence as the source of the succession conflict in Bunkpurugu. Awuriba (2016) found that there is a very strong correlation between the New Patriotic Party and the current/sitting Bunkpurugu Naaba (chief). Mahama (2015) established a positive correlation between chieftaincy disputes in northern Ghana and Ghanaian politics. Awedoba (2016) also observed that politicians in Ghana take advantage of the disputes between chieftaincy gates to galvanize the support of one gate over the other, thereby worsening the conflict situation.

Manifestations of the Bunkpurugu land Conflicts in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area

The Bunkpurugu Traditional Area has a system of chieftaincy rotation which permits only persons who have occupied the Bunkpurugu skin to ascend the throne of the Louk chieftaincy. Chief Abuba Nasinmong was installed by the Nayiri; this is constitutional. This was contested and appealed to the Northern Regional House of Chiefs who look into the concerns of chiefs in the Northern sector. This verdict was cancelled by the Judicial Committee of the Regional House of

Chiefs making Chief Abuba Nasinmong, the rightful successor to the Bunkpurugu throne, However, the constitution provides that only the Nayiri has the right to appoint and install a divisional chief. He has appointed his nephew (Abuba) as chief. How this is resolved determines whether Bunkpurugu will be in a hell hole or heaven's gate.

This background shows one thing; the Nayiri had lost control over his subjects. Fifty-six per cent (56%) of the respondents mentioned that the Nayiri is losing control over the divisional chiefs because of mistrust. A key informant corroborated this;

"It appears Nayiri himself takes money and installs chiefs, so there is a certain degree of mistrust between him and some of the divisional chiefs". Some other respondents (42%) opined that there is also mistrust between some of the subjects and some divisional chiefs. This lack of trust often results in insubordination where some of the divisional chiefs object to the Nayiri's installation of chiefs. This situation has always created tension among the supporters of Nayiri installed sub-chiefs and the supporters of the other people in the Mamprugu divisional areas. Explaining the reasons why the Nayiri had to appoint his nephew as the Louk chief in Bunkpurugu, seventy-five (75) respondents representing 47% of the total respondents mentioned that the inability of the Jamong gate members, whose turn it was to occupy the Bunkpurugu skin, to be able to influence Nayiri to choose their candidate pushed the Overlord into making that decision. A key informant said this;

Blood is thicker than water. The other Family could not convince him enough to really turn it to their side. In other to install anyone of their choice since the nephew was interested in it. Although the departed chief was from their side. I was there, the selection was not done fairly.

The researcher observed that almost all the respondents who were from the area also shared a similar view, however only one person from the

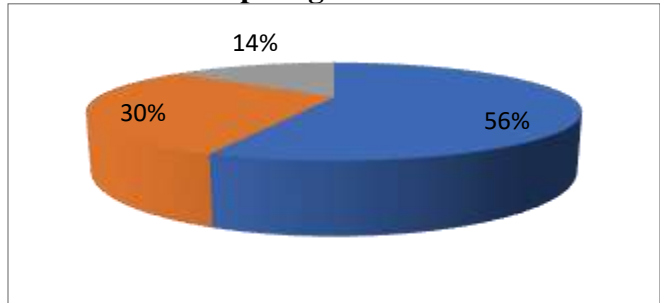
Jafouk gate held a different view. Most of those from the Jamong gate felt it was the manipulations of the Nayiri and some influence from the central government that made it impossible for their elders not to arrive at a consensus on the chosen candidate. The researcher also observed that the Jafouks appointed Bunkpurugu chief was very young as compared to the other person who was competing for the skin.

Effects of the Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area

Mortz (2010) analysed the various stages of conflict escalation where he noted that conflicts escalate from small to large. Prutt and Kim (2004) also outlined the stages of conflict escalation where they said escalations start when parties begin to invest in the conflict such as the purchase of arms and ammunitions. From there it shifts to persuasions to violence where parties become more interested in attacking the opponent rather than the argument, then it gets to a stage where there is an increase in the number of people involved in the violence, for instance, the case of Konkombas and Basalis in Chereponi. The magnitude of the damage caused by any conflict depends largely on the stage of escalation. At the moment, the chieftaincy succession conflict in Bunkpurugu has not got to the final stage of escalation yet but the effects it has had on the people cannot be underestimated. Suaka and Tseer (2019) found out that whenever there is a conflict that has fully escalated, lives and properties are lost, people are displaced and trust is broken. Tonah (2012) discovered that apart from the physical damages caused by conflicts such as destruction of lives and properties, conflicts create long lasting psychological effects on victims which cannot be easily erased. Even though the conflict in Bunkpurugu has not got to the full stage of escalation, inhabitants have had to live with its social and economic effects. When the researchers asked the respondents to mention some of the effects of the chieftaincy succession

conflicts in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area, their responses were as varied as shown in the graph below.

Figure 1. Effects of Chieftaincy Succession Conflicts in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area



Source: Author’s Construct, (2019)

As shown in Figure 1 above, many of the respondents (56%) opined that the conflicts have greatly undermined the social cohesion that characterized the Bunkpurugu Traditional Area prior to the emergence and escalation of the conflict. This was corroborated by the response of a key informant during an interview;

We are all from the same family so we related as brothers and sisters.... the division is stronger between the Jafouk family members and the Jamong family members, even though one could see some elements of a cross gate support

When the researchers asked if the conflict has affected social functions in the community, 78% of the respondents mentioned that they still attend social ceremonies like marriages, funerals and cultural dances together but not with the same passion that used to characterize such occasions. Most of those who were more concerned about the disintegration of the social cohesion were persons aged between 18 to 36. This is indicative of the fact that people at those ages are mostly youthful and energetic and love to socialize with their peers. Those who were older were more worried about the effects of the conflicts on the image of the Bunkpurugu throne. Forty-seven (47) persons representing 30% of the total respondents mentioned that the authority of

the Bunkpurugu chief over the Jamong family is at its lowest ebb because of the conflicts. They said on many occasions, the Bunkpurugu chief invited the Jamong family members but they never went. To them, these are indicators that point to the fact that the Jamong family had little or no respect for the paramountcy; 80% of those who held this view were from forty years and above. This is indicative of the fact that the aged are more worried about preserving the customs and traditions of Louk clan in the Bimoba land. Interestingly, the researchers observed that farmers and traders were more worried about the effects of the conflict on the development of Bunkpurugu traditional Area. When the researchers asked how the existence of the chieftaincy conflicts has affected development in the area, 20% and 30% of the respondents, who were farmers and traders respectively, mentioned that since the conflict started, Bunkpurugu township and its surrounding villages have not witnessed any development because as it stands there is no chief who can steer the affairs of the traditional area or lobby for development projects from the government. Besides, investors are scared to invest in the area since it appears Bunkpurugu township is sitting on a time bomb. 28% of the key informants agreed that development was hampered by the conflict since people fear to do any long-term investment because the conflict can go violent at any moment. The researchers further observed that most of the people from Bunkpurugu had relocated to other parts of Bimoba Traditional Area for fear that Bunkpurugu could be in flames any moment. Collier, (2004) found out that there is a strong diabolic correlation between conflicts and failures in development: conflicts powerfully retard development; and equally, failures in development substantially increase proneness to conflicts. Collier (2004) further indicates that the poorest communities or countries are likely to be stuck in a 'conflict trap; a cycle of war and economic decline.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The cohesiveness of the Kingdom has been undermined by the various conflicts that seem to have engulfed the Kingdom which characteristically takes the form of installation of sub-chiefs that are dear to the Nayiri and the divisional chiefs. This ugly situation is traceable to internal corruption of both the overlord and the divisional chiefs who rather than adhere to the provisions of the selection or chieftaincy successions, resort to hand-picking individuals to serve their personal interest. This has reduced the institution of chieftaincy in Louk clan to a self-serving contraption.

The direct implication of this is that the institution of chieftaincy has lost its leverage of controlling the people and maintaining social cohesion. It is obvious that chiefs are no longer there to serve the interest of the people but for the pursuit of their parochial interests such as personal enrichment, control of resources and acquisition of power. This situation is gradually reducing the once cohesive and centralized kingdom to a state of anarchy. The Bunkpurugu throne is unable to exercise authority over some of the divisional chiefs, so are the divisional chiefs to the sub-chiefs up to the subjects. The Nayiri installs chiefs who are not recognized by the divisional chiefs. In defiance, the divisional chiefs also install their own chiefs in the same communities. The 1930 constitution, however, has empowered the Nayiri to appoint any divisional chiefs which means the Nayiri could disregard any pre-arranged chieftaincy rotation plan that is in place and appoint any one he chooses among the royal family. This is what has brought the stalemate in Bunkpurugu Traditional Area. While the Jafouk family leader and the Jamong family leader were neck-stucked in a power struggle, their supporters or beneficiaries picked up arms against one another. The central government has been apt in nipping the escalation in the bud, but there have been pockets of violent attacks within the Bunkpurugu township and its suburbs resulting in loss of lives

and properties, break down of trust among families and between chieftaincy gates and displacement of people. Development has also been stifled as investors have fled and new ones are scared to come. Resources that would have been used for development are channeled into de-escalation and prevention of violent outbreaks.

Recommendations

In the long run, there must be concerted efforts by the central government and all stake holders to address the conflict and find a long-lasting solution to the chieftaincy succession conflicts that has engulfed Bunkpurugu Traditional Area and the entire Bimoba Traditional area. The Ministry for Chieftaincy and Local Government Affairs should liaise with the National and Regional Houses of Chiefs in order to ensure that chiefs are well resourced so that they can take initiatives that will diversify their income base. This would end the incidences that chiefs take money before performing their duties or allow monetary benefits to cloud their sense of judgment. Again, there should be the need for government, political parties, the Bunkpurugu/Nankpanduri District Assembly and the stakeholders to show greater sense of morality and refrain from exploiting ethnic sentiments for electoral favours.

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