Research Article

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Ceasefire Agreements as an Art of Modern Warfare

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Abstract

This paper investigates ceasefire agreements as an art of modern warfare, positioning them within the greater shift of conflict from conventional interstate wars to complicated, fragmented, and multi-actor engagements. The paper adopts a qualitative design, relying entirely on data from secondary sources, including textbooks, peer-reviewed journal papers and policy reports. The collected materials were analysed and methodically interpreted using both historical and descriptive methodologies, allowing patterns, trends, and consequences to emerge clearly. The study was grounded on securitisation theory, which provides insight into how ceasefires are defined, negotiated, and instrumentalised within security discourse. The paper indicates that ceasefire agreements have experienced significant metamorphosis, evolving from informal, short-term battlefield pauses into formalised, internationally mediated instruments nested inside extended conflicts. While early ceasefires primarily addressed immediate humanitarian issues, current accords perform larger strategic purposes, including escalation control, facilitation of humanitarian access, and support for diplomatic engagement. In asymmetric and hybrid warfare contexts, ceasefires operate mostly as tactical pauses, enabling players to reorganise militarily while altering international opinion. However, its usefulness is hindered by fragmented authority, insufficient enforcement, and ongoing mistrust among conflicting parties, resulting in frequent violations. The paper further suggests that ceasefire agreements remain vital yet intrinsically fragile tools of modern conflict management, reflecting the complex and adaptable nature of contemporary warfare, rather than providing clear pathways to sustainable peace.

Keywords: *Asymmetric Warfare, Ceasefire Agreements, Conflict Management, Hybrid Warfare, and Securitisation Theory.*

1. Introduction

Ceasefire agreements have become an increasingly central tool in the management of contemporary armed conflicts, reflecting the broader transition in modern warfare from dramatic military triumphs to lengthy, dispersed, and politically difficult confrontations. In classical understandings of international relations, the end of war was often marked by unambiguous military defeat or formal peace accords.

However, current conflict dynamics reveal that violence is more frequently managed than totally terminated by temporary or periodic ceasefire arrangements (Akebo, 2016). Across many modern state-level conflicts, ceasefires occur not as final solutions but as pragmatic pauses that allow humanitarian access, political negotiation, and tactical repositioning by the armed participants (Sticher, 2019). This pattern is evident in conflicts such as the Syrian civil war, where multiple ceasefire attempts brokered by actors including Russia, Turkey, and the United Nations have repeatedly collapsed or been partially observed, illustrating the fragility of negotiated pauses in highly fragmented war environments (Murena, 2017). Similarly, in Yemen, ceasefire deals between the Saudi-led coalition and Houthi forces have often functioned as temporary stabilisation measures rather than enduring peace settlements, reflecting the strategic use of pauses in ongoing hostilities.

In modern warfare, ceasefire agreements are increasingly regarded as procedures that structure conflict behaviour rather than simply terminating it. They operate as instruments of conflict management by minimising immediate violence, providing communication channels between belligerents, and enabling humanitarian relief operations in affected conflict areas (Davidson, 2025). For example, the Minsk agreements in the Ukraine conflict were designed to reduce hostilities in Eastern Ukraine while establishing political frameworks for longer-term settlement, yet persistent violations highlighted the limits of enforcement in asymmetric and geopolitically contested environments. The effectiveness of ceasefires is therefore strongly dependent on monitoring systems, credible enforcement, and the desire of parties to comply with agreed terms, all of which remain inconsistent across different conflict scenarios (Akebo, 2016). Where international guarantors or peacekeeping forces are inadequate or absent, ceasefires tend to become shaky and very vulnerable to collapse.

The expanding complexity of modern warfare has further raised the relevance of ceasefire agreements. Contemporary wars are generally defined by asymmetric warfare, transnational insurgency, and hybrid methods that combine military force with cyber operations and information warfare (Pierro, 2021). In such situations, ceasefires usually serve tactical rather than strategic reasons, allowing armed factions to reorganise, rearm, or reposition while maintaining pressure on rivals. This has been observed in conflicts such as the Israeli–Hamas battles in Gaza, when brief ceasefires have occasionally permitted humanitarian supplies access and prisoner exchanges, yet have rarely resulted in a durable cessation of hostilities. As a result, ceasefires are increasingly incorporated inside broader peace processes, operating as interim arrangements that support negotiation while underlying conflict causes remain unresolved (Bell & Wise, 2022).

Despite their frequent use, ceasefire agreements are intrinsically fragile because of the low levels of trust between conflicting parties, insufficient institutional enforcement, and the presence of spoiler groups that gain from continuing instability. Violations may originate from deliberate strategic calculations, fragmented command systems, or misinformation that worsens tensions unintentionally (Last, 2011). Nevertheless, their value in modern conflict management cannot be overemphasised, as they often constitute the only realistic tool for lowering violence in protracted wars where full peace settlements are impossible to reach. In this regard, ceasefire agreements occupy a critical but complex position within modern warfare, functioning simultaneously as stabilising instruments and strategic

tools within ongoing conflicts and reflecting the broader evolution of global security where war is increasingly managed through negotiated pauses rather than decisive endings.

2. Methodology of the Study

This study utilises a qualitative research design, drawing extensively on secondary sources to explore ceasefire agreements as instruments within modern warfare. Data were acquired from relevant textbooks, peer-reviewed academic journals, and policy papers. In addition, a large amount of the literature was acquired from reliable online academic databases and journals to ensure a broad and up-to-date understanding of modern conflict dynamics.

The utilisation of these varied sources allows for a full and fair assessment of how ceasefire agreements function within modern strategic and military environments. The acquired data were rigorously evaluated, critically analysed, and interpreted before being synthesised for use in the study. Both historical and descriptive analytical approaches were applied to expand the depth of understanding.

2.1 Conceptual Review

2.1.1 Contemporary Warfare

Contemporary warfare is often seen as a break from the classic model of state-to-state conflict, evolving instead into a multifaceted and hybrid system affected by technology, non-state players, and dispersed battle arenas. Modern conflict is increasingly marked by asymmetry, irregular tactics, and the integration of military and non-military technologies, including cyber and information warfare (Svete, 2009). This approach is confirmed by Mello (2010), who asserts that wars in the modern era are often "new wars" driven by identity politics and economic fragmentation rather than territorial conquest alone.

However, Gray (2014) disagrees with the idea of a full break from classical warfare, noting that while means have evolved, the core basis of war as organised violence for political purposes remains consistent. Furthermore, contemporary warfare is impacted by the rise of non-state actors, including insurgent groups and international terrorist organisations, which undermine the monopoly of power historically held by nations (Hoffman, 2007). This approach is backed by Arquilla and Ronfeldt (2001), who argue that stress is networked forms of conflict in which dispersed actors adopt flexible and adaptable strategies.

However, Smith (2019) challenges this position, claiming that nations remain the dominating actors in conflict, notably through increased military and technological capabilities. Despite this debate, there is unanimity that the boundaries between war and peace have grown increasingly hard to distinguish. Technological transformation is also fundamental to contemporary warfare, particularly through cyber capabilities, drones, and artificial intelligence, which have reshaped both strategy and execution of military operations (Rao, Harrison & Mulloth, 2020). Therefore, contemporary warfare represents a complex relationship between continuity and change, where classic military logic coexists with emergent forms of conflict driven by globalisation, technology, and divided political authority.

2.1.2 Ceasefire Agreements

Ceasefire agreements are usually recognised as temporary accords between warring parties aiming at halting or lowering active hostilities, sometimes as a precursor toward negotiation or bigger peace procedures. The concept of ceasefires is not only humanitarian pauses but also strategic instruments integrated within the logic of modern conflict management (Forster, 2023).

This position is backed by Clayton, Nygård, Rustad & Strand (2023), who remark that ceasefires are prevalent in intrastate conflicts and often function as methods for managing violence rather than totally terminating it. In contrast, Akebo (2016) believes that ceasefires should be regarded primarily as confidence-building measures that create room for trust and political conversation, rather than as tools of strategic manipulation.

Furthermore, ceasefire agreements are intimately tied to theories of conflict resolution and negotiation, where they are considered outcomes of mutual weariness or strategic recalculation by fighting sides (Bell & Wise 2022). This perspective indicates that ceasefires often develop when continuous conflict becomes too costly or when external mediators put pressure for de-escalation.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study adopted securitisation theory, which was propounded by Ole Waever in 1995 as part of the Copenhagen School of Security Studies. The theory asserts that security challenges are not real threats but are produced by speech acts whereby political actors name certain issues as existential threats to justify extreme measures (Dwivedi, 2023). Balzacq (2010) further extended the idea, emphasising that securitisation is a process that occurs when a referent object is framed as under threat and accepted as such by a relevant audience.

Sovacool, & Hess (2017) challenge the theory's overemphasis on speech and advise integrating sociological variables such as behaviours and institutional environments. The securitisation theory believes that security is not an objective fact but a speech act whereby political actors portray situations as existential threats demanding extreme actions (Balzacq, 2005). It contends that successful securitisation depends on audience acceptability and institutional acknowledgement. The approach emphasises that risks are socially created, not naturally given, and that security moves an issue beyond conventional politics. This process incorporates actors, referent objects, and audiences within specific sociopolitical circumstances.

Applying securitisation theory to ceasefire agreements helps explain them as political and strategic tools shaped by how threats are perceived and controlled in modern conflict. In this view, security is not simply about real violence but about how political actors frame circumstances as significant threats that require immediate and exceptional responses. Ceasefire agreements, therefore, develop when parties to a dispute acknowledge that prolonged conflicts have become too costly or dangerous and when there is a need to temporarily control escalation. Rather than marking the end of conflict, ceasefires often constitute a strategic pause inside an ongoing conflict, allowing participants to reorganise, negotiate, or reposition themselves.

They are used to manage perceptions of threat, ease immediate pressure, and provide room for political involvement without entirely resolving the underlying concerns. From this perspective, ceasefire agreements are not just peace procedures but instruments within modern warfare designed to limit violence and retain strategic advantage.

Evolution of Ceasefire Agreements in Contemporary Warfare

The evolution of ceasefire agreements parallels the greater transition of warfare from conventional interstate combat to complicated, fractured, and multi-actor wars. In early warfare

systems, ceasefires were generally informal, tactical arrangements arranged directly between opposing military leaders. These early truces were often short-term and practical, focusing on urgent battlefield demands such as evacuation of the injured, burial of the dead, or prisoner exchange rather than political settlement.

Even in this crude form, ceasefires revealed an early realisation that temporary stoppage of conflict may serve both humanitarian and strategic reasons, even without formal institutional backing. A fundamental structural shift occurred following the Second World War, particularly with the Korean Armistice Agreement (1953), which institutionalised ceasefire practice inside a legal international framework. The accord, monitored by the Military Armistice Commission and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, created a long-term stop of hostilities without ending the war officially (Stanley, 2009). This marked a crucial transition from informal battlefield truces to systematic, internationally monitored ceasefires. It also introduced a critical aspect of modern ceasefires: conflict freeze rather than conflict resolution, where violence is ceased but underlying political problems remain unsolved.

During the Cold War era, ceasefire agreements became more related to international diplomacy and peacekeeping missions. The United Nations strengthened its role in monitoring ceasefires in conflicts such as the Arab–Israeli wars through missions like UNTSO, demonstrating the growing institutionalisation of ceasefire enforcement (Nan, 2024). However, enforcement remained restricted due to superpower rivalry, selective compliance by belligerents, and insufficient coercive authority of international bodies. Ceasefires in this period were typically utilised as instruments of conflict containment rather than actual peacebuilding methods. The post–Cold War period showed another key change due to the emergence of intrastate disputes.

Unlike conventional interstate battles, current conflicts contain fragmented armed groups, militias, and insurgent formations with decentralised command systems. This has made ceasefire talks more complex and less stable. The Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement (1999) in the Democratic Republic of Congo demonstrates this complexity, as it involved numerous states and rebel factions, with implementation assisted by the UN peacekeeping organization MONUC (Henson, 2014). Similarly, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2005) in Sudan had ceasefire clauses that reduced bloodshed momentarily but also revealed the challenge of executing accords in highly divided societies. Likewise, in the case of the ongoing conflict between Iran, Israel and the United States. Several ceasefire violations have been encountered (Ayeni & Silas, 2026).

In contemporary warfare, ceasefire agreements have evolved further into strategic instruments inside continuing hostilities rather than definitive solutions. In conflicts such as Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, and Gaza, ceasefires are routinely negotiated, violated, and renegotiated under complex geopolitical settings. The Minsk I and Minsk II Agreements (2014–2015) in Ukraine aimed to end violence in the Donbas region but experienced recurrent violations due to mistrust and insufficient enforcement procedures (Tronc & Nahikian, 2020). Similarly, ceasefire arrangements in Syria under the Astana Process and recurrent Israel–Hamas truces in Gaza have often functioned as temporary pauses permitting humanitarian relief, prisoner exchanges, or tactical repositioning rather than enduring peace solutions (Abboud, 2021).

Another major element in the history of ceasefire agreements is the increasing involvement of non-state actors and outsider mediators. Modern ceasefires typically involve rebel groups, terrorist organisations, regional powers, and international organisations simultaneously, making negotiation and enforcement more complex. This multi-actor environment has damaged the predictability and duration of ceasefires, as armed parties may utilise them to regroup or strengthen bargaining positions rather than commit to peace. It is obvious that ceasefires in contemporary conflicts are increasingly tactical devices utilised within broader methods of war management rather than measures toward

quick resolution (Clayton, Nygård & Strand, 2023). Therefore, the growth of ceasefire agreements reveals a clear transition from informal battlefield truces to highly planned, internationally mediated, and strategically instrumental tools of modern conflict management. While they remain crucial for decreasing immediate violence and providing humanitarian access, their increasing fragility reflects the evolving character of warfare, where hostilities are delayed, dispersed, and handled through temporary and frequently unstable arrangements rather than decisively resolved.

3.1 Strategic Functions of Ceasefires in Modern Conflict Management

The strategic functions of ceasefire agreements in modern conflict management are most clearly understood through recent and ongoing conflicts where temporary pauses in hostilities have become central instruments of war regulation rather than final resolutions. In contemporary warfare, ceasefires increasingly operate as structured mechanisms for controlling escalation, shaping negotiations, and managing humanitarian crises in fragmented conflict environments.

In the Israel–Hamas war (2023–2024), multiple temporary ceasefire arrangements mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the United States were used to enable hostage exchanges and limited humanitarian access in Gaza, particularly during the November 2023 truce, which allowed the release of hostages and prisoners while humanitarian aid entered affected areas (Adachi, 2024). Similarly, in Sudan's civil war (2023–2024) between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, repeated ceasefire agreements brokered in Jeddah under Saudi–US mediation were used to temporarily reduce fighting in Khartoum and facilitate humanitarian corridors, although violations remained widespread (Soliman & Demissie, 2024).

One major strategic function of ceasefires in these recent conflicts is escalation control. In both Gaza and Sudan, ceasefires were used to prevent total systemic collapse by temporarily halting intense urban warfare that threatened large-scale civilian casualties and regional spillover. In Gaza, humanitarian pauses enabled the International Committee of the Red Cross and UN agencies to deliver emergency assistance, reflecting the use of ceasefires as operational tools for crisis containment (Jellad, Chaabeni & Ben Saad, 2025).

In Sudan, ceasefires similarly functioned to prevent further destruction of critical infrastructure, particularly hospitals and water systems, even though hostilities frequently resumed shortly after agreements were reached. Ceasefires also function as bargaining platforms in modern diplomacy. The 2023–2024 Gaza ceasefire negotiations demonstrated how temporary truces were directly linked to political exchanges, including hostage releases, prisoner swaps, and discussions on humanitarian corridors. This reflects a broader pattern in which ceasefires are no longer separate from diplomacy but are embedded within ongoing negotiation processes. In Ukraine, the continued instability of the 2022–2025 Russia–Ukraine war has also seen localized ceasefire attempts around humanitarian corridors in cities such as Mariupol and Kharkiv, where temporary pauses allowed civilian evacuation under intense international pressure (Gillah, 2023).

Another important function is military repositioning and strategic recalibration. In Sudan's conflict, both SAF and RSF forces used ceasefire periods to regroup, reposition in urban centres, and strengthen logistical networks, particularly around control of supply routes and communication infrastructure (Wondemagegnehu, 2021). Similarly, in Gaza, ceasefire intervals have been used by armed actors to reorganise command structures and reassess operational strategies in response to international pressure and battlefield developments. This reinforces the argument that ceasefires in modern warfare are often embedded within ongoing military calculations rather than representing genuine cessation of conflict (Haggag, 2025). Ceasefires also play a central role in legitimacy and international perception management. Governments and armed groups frequently agree to ceasefires

to demonstrate compliance with international humanitarian expectations and to reduce diplomatic pressure (Stanton, 2020). In both Sudan and Gaza, for instance, ceasefire announcements were closely linked to external mediation efforts by regional and global actors, reflecting how modern conflicts are deeply influenced by international visibility and reputational concerns. The involvement of organisations such as the United Nations, African Union, Qatar, Egypt, and the United States further illustrates the internationalisation of ceasefire diplomacy in contemporary warfare.

Despite these functions, recent conflicts demonstrate the fragility of ceasefire agreements in highly fragmented war environments. In both Sudan and Gaza, repeated violations, mistrust between parties, and lack of centralised command structures have undermined the durability of agreements. The absence of strong enforcement mechanisms means that ceasefires often collapse shortly after implementation, reinforcing their temporary and tactical nature rather than long-term stability (Haggag, 2025).

Overtly, recent global conflicts show that ceasefire agreements have become multifunctional instruments in modern warfare. They regulate violence, enable humanitarian intervention, facilitate negotiation, allow military repositioning, and serve diplomatic signaling purposes. However, their repeated breakdown in cases such as Gaza, Sudan, and Ukraine highlights a defining feature of contemporary warfare: conflict is increasingly managed through unstable and temporary pauses rather than decisive endings.

3.2 Ceasefire Agreements as Tactical Tools in Asymmetric and Hybrid Warfare

Ceasefire agreements in asymmetric and hybrid warfare are better understood as tactical instruments entrenched inside ongoing conflict systems rather than as means for ultimate peace resolution. In contexts where warring actors possess unequal capabilities, where command is divided, and where conventional force functions alongside irregular violence, cyber activity, proxy support, and information campaigns, ceasefires tend to serve as controlled pauses rather than the ultimate end to war.

Contemporary ceasefire research shows that ceasefires are common in intrastate conflict and are often part of the broader technology of armed struggle rather than separate from it; in fact, ceasefires occur in about 30 percent of conflicts in the Uppsala Armed Conflict Data, and at least 2,202 ceasefires were recorded across 66 countries and 109 civil conflicts between 1989 and 2020 (Stepanova, 2024). This becomes apparent that ceasefires are not uncommon events but ongoing characteristics of modern conflict management. Their tactical nature is also confirmed by work indicating that ceasefires can both de-escalate and intensify violence depending on design and context, which suggests they are influenced by strategic calculation rather than mere benevolence (Last, 2021). One key tactical role of ceasefires in asymmetric and hybrid warfare is force renewal. Armed actors sometimes use pauses in a conflict to reorganise command structures, restock supplies, repair lines of communication, and prepare for further hostilities

In such contexts, ceasefires are not neutral interruptions but are interwoven into calculations of survival, bargaining, and battlefield advantage. This is particularly obvious in asymmetric warfare, as weaker parties avoid direct confrontation and instead utilise short pauses to compensate for material inferiority through flexibility and adaptation (Kriesberg, 2009). Hybrid warfare deepens this dynamic because it mixes military operations with cyber-attacks, proxy support, and disinformation, allowing players to prolong combat in several domains even while direct fire is minimised (Qureshi, 2020).

In this sense, ceasefires are tactical breathing spaces inside bigger systems of conflict, not unequivocal indicators that violence has ended. Ceasefires also act as vehicles of strategic signaling and legitimacy construction (Rosvold & Rustad, 2026). Political and military players frequently proclaim or

enter ceasefires to demonstrate compliance with humanitarian rules, relieve diplomatic pressure, or affect international opinion. In hybrid warfare, when narrative control matters as much as territory, ceasefire declarations become part of a bigger fight over credibility, responsibility, and restraint. Information warfare is crucial here, since propaganda, selective disclosure, and narrative framing can be used to depict one side as reasonable while portraying the other as obstructive or hostile (Berzina, 2018). Ceasefire reporting and monitoring also become politically consequential since observer accounts can organise how compliance and non-compliance are viewed by external audiences (Verjee, 2024).

This implies ceasefires are not merely military arrangements but also public acts of legitimacy management, especially where international scrutiny is high and reputation shapes leverage. Another key function is operational fragmentation management. Asymmetric and hybrid warfare often entail several armed factions, overlapping loyalties, and poor central leadership, which makes full compliance impossible even when ceasefire agreements are signed (Schroefl & Kaufman, 2014). In such situations, ceasefires tend to regulate violence unevenly, creating partial and localised reductions in fighting while broader instability endures.

This is consistent with recent findings that local ceasefires can trigger both short-term escalation and de-escalation, with more durable reductions in violence emerging only when agreements are implemented step by step and when parties have a prior history of interaction (Lundgren, Svensson & Karakus, 2023). The problem of fragmentation is especially acute where proxy warfare is involved, since external backing, indirect command, and many chains of authority make enforcement difficult (Wither, 2020). For this reason, ceasefires in hybrid war are generally fragile, selective, and contentious rather than comprehensive.

Ceasefires in asymmetric and hybrid warfare also fulfil humanitarian and diplomatic enabling tasks, even when their strategic worth remains dubious. Temporary pauses in hostilities are often utilised to permit civilian evacuation, emergency relief, prisoner exchange, and limited political discourse (Adey, 2017). This dual purpose provides ceasefires a particular place in modern conflict management, because the same halt that saves lives can also allow space for military repositioning or renewed coercion. Humanitarian logic is therefore inseparable from strategic logic.

Therefore, ceasefire success emphasises that the meaning of a ceasefire depends on whether it promotes persistent restraint, confidence-building, and reduced violence, rather than only a momentary halt in conflict situations (Akebo, 2016). In mixed contexts, however, the humanitarian and tactical dimensions often overlap, since the halt itself may be employed to stabilise one front while raising pressure on another. That duality is one reason ceasefires remain such significant and contentious tools in modern warfare.

Nevertheless, ceasefire agreements in asymmetric and hybrid warfare remain very fragile since confidence is poor, authority is split, and enforcement methods are frequently restricted. Violations are widespread, not only because of deliberate opportunism, but also because command structures are decentralised and incentives for compliance are uneven. Ceasefires consequently operate best as adaptable instruments rather than permanent solutions.

Their effectiveness depends less on formal wording than on monitoring capability, third-party credibility, reciprocal restraint, and the strategic calculations of the actors involved (Clayton, Nathan & Wiehler, 2021). This fragility does not decrease their value; rather, it illustrates that ceasefires are crucial to how contemporary warfare is managed. In a war environment driven by asymmetry, hybrid tactics, and information rivalry, ceasefires remain one of the few mechanisms capable of temporarily reducing violence while political and military confrontations persist beneath the surface.

3.3 Challenges of Compliance, Monitoring, and Enforcement in Ceasefires

Ceasefire agreements fail to obtain sustained compliance in current conflict contexts partly because they operate under fundamentally fractured structures of authority where enforcement capacity is weak or altogether absent. In many asymmetric and hybrid warfare scenarios, armed formations are not regulated by unified command structures, meaning that agreements reached at the leadership level are frequently not executed at operational or local levels (Korybko, 2015).

This creates a chronic gap between legal promises and actual battlefield action, making violations structurally frequent rather than unusual. In this context, ceasefires lack binding effect because armed actors retain independent control over violence and interpret agreement terms based on changeable tactical realities rather than fixed commitments (Cook & Lounsbery, 2017). As a result, compliance becomes selective, inconsistent, and largely dependent on local command discipline and battlefield incentives (Dickinson, 2010). This structural fragmentation is further compounded by the strategic logic behind the actions of conflict participants, who typically perceive ceasefire agreements as transitory tactical pauses rather than meaningful steps toward peace.

Instead of lessening animosity permanently, ceasefires are frequently utilised to relocate forces, solidify territory gains, and replenish logistical capacity in preparation for renewed confrontation (Sticher, 2019). This instrumental use of ceasefires undermines their legitimacy, as sides are aware that opponents may exploit pauses in conflict for military gain. Consequently, ceasefires become incorporated inside ongoing fighting cycles rather than serving as tools of resolution. This supports opportunistic compliance, where adherence is maintained only when strategically favourable and infractions occur when conditions shift in favour of escalation (Beckman, 2016). The problem of ineffective monitoring and enforcement further increases ceasefire instability, as verification mechanisms are generally hindered by limited access, inadequate resources, and security constraints imposed by conflict parties. Third-party monitoring missions frequently lack the capacity to independently verify infractions in real time, diminishing their deterrent effect and eroding accountability mechanisms (McAllister, 2012).

This generates ambiguity regarding responsibility for violations and encourages minor events to grow into repeated conflict. In hybrid warfare scenarios, monitoring becomes even more problematic due to the presence of cyber operations, disinformation efforts, and proxy actors, which make attribution difficult and compliance harder to assess (Naseeb, 2024). These factors severely degrade the efficiency of ceasefire regimes and decrease their power to govern conflict conduct. Beyond monitoring issues, enforcement inadequacies remain a significant factor for ceasefire failure.

Most agreements lack coercive mechanisms capable of inducing compliance or punishing violations, leaving enforcement mostly dependent on political will or voluntary restraint (Scott & Stephan, 2004). Where external guarantors are involved, inconsistent application of pressure further reduces credibility, as conflicting interests among mediators impair coherent reactions to breaches. This fosters a situation where infractions carry few penalties, promoting calculated defection from ceasefire terms. In such situations, enforcement failure strengthens the notion that ceasefires are reversible and non-binding devices rather than enforced commitments, hence weakening the long-term stability of accords (Sosnowski, 2020).

Another crucial aspect is the continuing trust deficit among conflict actors, which considerably decreases willingness to comply with ceasefire agreements. Many parties function under conditions of intense distrust formed by past grievances, previous breakdowns of accords, and fear of strategic exploitation by opponents (Hoffman, 2007). This mistrust leads to defensive action, when actors sustain low-level conflicts even during ceasefires to avoid being disadvantaged militarily. The notion that opponents will utilise ceasefire times to regroup or rearm strengthens a cycle of reciprocal

insecurity, making continuous compliance extremely difficult. Trust deficiencies therefore transform ceasefires into fragile arrangements frequently threatened by pre-emptive violations and rising uncertainty (Kaldor, 2013).

Therefore, the presence of various actors and spoilers inside conflict contexts significantly reduces ceasefire sustainability. Even when central leaderships agree to ceasefire terms, splinter factions, local commanders, or independent armed groups may reject the agreement or pursue autonomous aims. This fragmentation is particularly obvious in asymmetric conflict, as power is decentralised and control over armed actors is uneven. As a result, ceasefire agreements typically fail to restrict violence at the local level, even when legally recognised at higher governmental levels. This multi-actor complexity assures that ceasefires remain fragile, contested, and difficult to preserve in practice, especially in hybrid conflict contexts where lines of power are muddled and continually altering (Sticher & Vuković, 2021).

3.4 The Role of International Actors in Negotiating and Sustaining Ceasefire Agreements

International players such as the United Nations (UN), African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and the European Union (EU) have been deeply involved in ceasefire negotiation, monitoring, and enforcement in modern conflict situations. Their involvement has risen dramatically since the post–Cold War period, shifting from sporadic mediation to constant institutional engagement in hundreds of ceasefire accords globally (Damtie, 2024).

The United Nations alone has been involved in over 50 active or historical peacekeeping operations and has directly supported hundreds of ceasefire agreements and armistice monitoring arrangements since its first deployment in 1948, when it began supervising the Arab–Israeli truce through the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization (UNTSO) (Theobald, 2009). This illustrates that UN ceasefire involvement is not episodic but structurally rooted in global security governance. Over time, the UN has built specialised institutions for ceasefire supervision, including military observer missions, peacekeeping forces, and political missions entrusted with verification and compliance monitoring (Myers & Dorn, 2022).

For example, UN operations such as UNIFIL, UNMIS, and UNAMA were explicitly mandated to monitor ceasefire arrangements, supervise force disengagement, and facilitate implementation of peace agreements. The UN Department of Political and Peace-building Affairs (DPPA) has also institutionalised ceasefire mediation advice, reflecting decades of cumulative experience in negotiating and sustaining ceasefire agreements across multiple conflict situations (Okorie, 2024). These mechanisms illustrate that ceasefire management has become a key UN conflict-resolution function rather than a secondary diplomatic activity.

At the regional level, the African Union (AU) and ECOWAS have progressively assumed direct responsibility for ceasefire enforcement and monitoring, notably in African conflict theatres. ECOWAS has intervened in several ceasefire procedures through peace enforcement missions and mediation frameworks, especially during civil war scenarios where state authority has crumbled (Yabi, 2010).

Its most significant operational contribution includes the deployment of ECOMOG soldiers, which combined military involvement with ceasefire supervision and compliance enforcement. Similarly, the AU Peace and Security Council has aided ceasefire discussions in countries facing internal conflict, deploying observer teams and supporting transitional security measures aimed at stabilising shaky agreements (Majinge, 2011). These measures reflect the growing operationalisation of regional security governance in ceasefire management. The European Union (EU) has also played an important role in ceasefire monitoring and post-conflict stability, particularly through civilian monitoring

missions and diplomatic engagement. The EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia, established following the 2008 ceasefire agreement, is a major example of systematic regional monitoring aimed to check compliance, observe troop movements, and report violations in real time (Martin, 2009). EU cooperation typically extends beyond monitoring to include sanctions regimes and political incentives intended at sustaining ceasefire compliance through economic and diplomatic pressure (Cardwell & Moret, 2023). This echoes the EU's broader approach of combining soft power instruments with institutional monitoring systems.

In addition to these structured interventions, international players collectively contribute to what may be regarded as a global ceasefire regime, where different organisations coordinate mediation, verification, and enforcement support. This includes joint UN–AU missions, EU–UN cooperation frameworks, and hybrid monitoring systems that merge regional legitimacy with global technical competence (Pergantis, 2016).

Such coordination is particularly critical in complex asymmetric conflicts where no single party has adequate power or resources to assure compliance unilaterally (Damtie, 2024). However, despite this considerable institutional engagement, the efficiency of ceasefire agreements remains inconsistent due to political differences, insufficient enforcement mechanisms, and low cooperation by conflict parties (Badran, 2014).

Overtly, one can state that international actors have been involved in hundreds of ceasefire arrangements internationally, with the United Nations alone monitoring and supporting more ceasefire processes than any other organisation, followed by regional bodies such as the AU, ECOWAS, and the EU. Their roles are not limited to negotiation but extend to enforcement support, monitoring, verification, and post-ceasefire stabilisation (Barsa, Holt-Ivry, Muehlenbeck, Case, Easthom, O'Reilly & Federer, 2016). Nevertheless, while their institutional presence is widespread and historically significant, the persistence of ceasefires ultimately depends on the political will of conflict players and the legitimacy of enforcement measures on the ground.

4. Discussion of Findings

In the discussion of findings, it can be postulated that ceasefire agreements have changed dramatically alongside the changing nature of warfare, evolving from informal, short-term battlefield truces to complicated, internationally mediated instruments inside lengthy conflicts. Initially, ceasefires addressed immediate humanitarian needs, but modern accords serve broader strategic goals such as limiting escalation, permitting humanitarian aid, and promoting diplomatic conversations.

In current conflicts typified by fragmented entities and hybrid warfare techniques, ceasefires typically operate as tactical pauses rather than permanent solutions, allowing sides to recover or redeploy militarily while managing international impressions. The involvement of many state and non-state entities complicates compliance, making ceasefires weak and frequently breached.

Monitoring and enforcement issues, compounded with mistrust among parties, further erode their endurance. International organisations have a significant role in negotiation and supervision; however, the effectiveness of ceasefires depends heavily on political will and enforcement legitimacy. In all, ceasefire agreements today are crucial tools for controlling violence and humanitarian crises but remain ephemeral and unpredictable, reflecting the complex, multi-dimensional realities of modern warfare rather than ultimate conflict settlement.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, ceasefire agreements have evolved from simple, tactical pauses in ancient warfare to complicated, strategically vital tools in contemporary conflict management. Their evolution follows the move from clear-cut interstate warfare to complicated, fractured, and multi-actor confrontations characterised by asymmetry and hybrid tactics.

While ceasefires serve crucial roles in lowering immediate bloodshed, improving humanitarian access, and permitting diplomatic engagement, their effectiveness is typically restricted by issues such as fragmented authority, enforcement difficulties, and deep-seated mistrust among parties.

Despite active involvement from international and regional organisations, ceasefires typically remain fragile and transient, serving more as instruments of conflict regulation than sustainable peace solutions. This emphasises the continued complexity of modern warfare, where managing hostilities through unstable ceasefire arrangements has become a key although fundamentally imperfect feature of sustaining fragile peace and stability.

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