

The Politics of Risking Peace Revisited: The Fate of Rebel Leaders Who Signed Peace Agreements

Juliana Tappe Ortiz  ^{1,2}

¹University of Bergen, Norway and ²German Institute for Global and Area Studies, Germany.

Are rebel leaders punished for signing peace agreements? Many studies have found that leaders face domestic punishment for signing peace agreements. However, while this may be true for state leaders, it remains unclear whether this is also the case for rebel leaders. Between 1975 and 2018, I describe what happened to the rebel leaders who signed a peace agreement. One-third of rebel leaders in these countries experienced exile, imprisonment, or unnatural death, while the rest shifted to politics or pursued rebellion. I describe two prototypical life paths after peace agreements of former rebel leaders in Colombia and Niger: the unpunished and the punished. This study shows how the database of rebel leader attributes (ROLE) can be advanced with novel data, enabling the kinds of studies on rebel leaders that scholars have conducted on state leaders in international politics. Future studies should extend research on rebel leader characteristics and peace negotiations.

¿Se castiga a los líderes rebeldes por el hecho de firmar acuerdos de paz? Hay algunos estudios que han concluido que los líderes se tienen que enfrentar a castigos internos por el hecho de haber firmado acuerdos de paz. Sin embargo, si bien esto puede ser cierto en el caso de los líderes estatales, no está tan claro si esto también resulta cierto en el caso de los líderes rebeldes. En este artículo describimos lo que sucedió con los líderes rebeldes que firmaron algún acuerdo de paz entre 1975 y 2018. Un tercio de los líderes rebeldes en estos países sufrieron el exilio, el encarcelamiento o la muerte no natural, mientras que el resto o bien se pasaron a la política o bien se rebelaron. Describimos dos de las trayectorias de vida prototípicas seguidas por los antiguos líderes rebeldes en Colombia y Níger después de los acuerdos de paz: los impunes y los castigados. Este estudio demuestra cómo la base de datos de atributos de líderes rebeldes (ROLE, por sus siglas en inglés) puede avanzar gracias a estos datos novedosos, lo cual permite que los académicos lleven a cabo el tipo de estudios sobre líderes rebeldes en el ámbito de la política internacional. Los estudios futuros deberían ampliar la investigación en materia de las características de los líderes rebeldes y de las negociaciones de paz.

Les dirigeants rebelles sont-ils punis lorsqu'ils signent des accords de paix? De nombreuses études ont conclu que les dirigeants risquaient d'être punis chez eux s'ils signaient des accords de paix. Cependant, bien que cela puisse être vrai pour les dirigeants nationaux, il n'est pas certain que cela soit aussi le cas pour les dirigeants rebelles. Je décris ce qui est arrivé aux dirigeants rebelles qui ont signé des accords de paix entre 1975 et 2018. Un tiers des dirigeants rebelles de ces pays ont connu l'exile, l'emprisonnement ou une mort non naturelle, quand le reste s'est engagé en politique ou a poursuivi une rébellion. Je décris deux trajectoires de vie prototypiques après les accords de paix d'anciens dirigeants rebelles en Colombie et au Nigéria: l'impuni et le puni. Cette étude montre comment la base de données des attributs des dirigeants rebelles (ROLE) peut être améliorée à l'aide de données inédites, et ainsi rendre possible le type d'études sur les dirigeants rebelles que les chercheurs ont mené sur des dirigeants étatiques en politique internationale. Afin de prolonger ce tra-

vail de recherche, des travaux ultérieurs peuvent se concentrer sur les caractéristiques des dirigeants et les négociations de paix.

Keywords: rebel leaders, punishment, civil wars, peace agreements

Palabras clave: líderes rebeldes, castigo, guerras civiles, acuerdos de paz

Mots clés: dirigeants rebelles, punition, guerre civile, accords de paix

Introduction

In intrastate and interstate conflicts, the international community often calls for negotiating peace. However, only some leaders are keen on settling conflicts because they worry about their (political) survival (Bueno de Mesquita et al. 2005; LeVeck et al. 2014; Acosta 2016; Abrahams 2018). Survival is unpromised for rebel leaders suggesting demobilizing and signing peace agreements. As such, the second-in-command of the *Fuerzas Populares de Liberación Farabundo Martí*, Mélida Anaya Montes, was killed by her comrades in 1983 after suggesting a peace agreement with the Salvadoran government.

For state leaders, participation in peace processes is often a risky venture (Schultz 2005; Tomz 2007). Domestic audiences perceive peace agreements as a sign of weakness that puts the government in a position exploitable by its adversary. Leaders signing peace agreements risk losing their followers and becoming vulnerable to extremists (Goemans 2000; Westlake 2000; Debs and Goemans 2010; Escribà-Folch 2013). Indeed, state leaders, such as Yitzhak Rabin and Mahatma Gandhi, were assassinated because others opposed their policies of settlement, concessions, and tolerance. While there is a growing interest in the role of rebel leaders, such as Joseph Kony, Usama bin Ladin, and John Garang, in civil wars (Doctor 2021, 2020; Acosta, Huang, and Silverman 2023; Loyle et al. 2023), the post-peace agreement fates of these leaders remain obscured.¹

I focus on rebel leaders' fate after peace agreements and show whether they are punished for their wartime activities, rewarded for demobilization, or excluded from public life. In this article, I examine the primary

1 Joseph Kony (born 1961) was the founder and leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, and his whereabouts remain unknown; Usama bin Ladin, founder and leader of al-Qaeda (1988–2011) was killed by the US; and John Garang (1945–2005), the rebel leader of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLM/A) in Sudan, was assassinated by domestic state forces.

occupation of all rebel leaders 4 years after signing an agreement between 1975 and 2018. I show that only 37 percent of rebel leaders who signed a peace agreement were exiled, imprisoned, or died unnaturally. Further biographical details show that rebel leaders with combat experience were three times more likely to be imprisoned than those without such experience. I outline who goes unpunished or is punished by intricately describing the life paths of two rebel leaders who signed peace in Colombia in 1991 and Niger in 1994.

These findings can further elucidate the benefits rebel leaders can expect when signing peace agreements in internal armed conflicts. Knowing others' history might create new incentives to end conflicts for rebel groups who cannot win. Practitioners and peace mediators can use this data to convince rebel leaders to risk signing peace. It also contributes to burgeoning research on the political power of ex-rebels after civil wars (Themnér 2015; Martin 2021; Martin, Piccolino, and Speight 2021; Sharif 2022). Additionally, research on leaders is nuanced by showing that, although state leaders with combat experience could be less punished when signing peace agreements (Mattes and Weeks 2019), this is not the case for battle-hardened rebel leaders.

Rebel Leaders' Post-Conflict Fate

Several literature on leaders' post-conflict fate focuses on state leaders, especially autocratic leaders (Debs and Goemans 2010; Epperly 2013), but rarely on post-peace agreement fates. Dictators, personalist leaders, and leaders of regimes between autocracy and democracy are often jailed, killed, or exiled as a consequence of losing power (Goemans 2000; Escribà-Folch 2013; Radtke 2020). In contrast, democratic leaders, monarchs, and rulers of single-party regimes are often unpunished for war outcomes (Debs and Goemans 2010) and will probably live privately and safely after their time in office. Still, expectations about their post-tenure fate influence leaders' decisions while in power, and particularly rebel leaders have reasons to fear decapitation from comrades

or external forces (Acosta 2016; Abrahams 2018). Leaders will reflect upon their future when initiating, continuing, or ending conflict (Auerbach and Greenbaum 2000; Frantz, Kendall-Taylor, and Ezrow 2014; Brutger 2021).

A hawkish reputation could mitigate the loss of political support (Schultz 2005), as voters tend to approve reconciliation efforts if the leader is a hardliner rather than a dove (Mattes and Weeks 2019). Still, losing political power is not the only risk leaders face. For instance, state leaders, such as Burhanuddin Rabbani, UN diplomats, and social leaders advocating peace agreements, have been killed by extremist opponents of peace (Debs and Goemans 2010). Considering this, state leaders will be willing to make concessions if they face a few political and personal risks in signing a peace agreement.

Meanwhile, rebel leaders are tied to their rebel groups and can either lose, win, seek to exist, persist, reach a peace agreement, or ceasefire (Kreutz 2010). During conflict, these leaders are often unaffected by term limits and should worry less about their political survival than about being killed by external and internal forces while in power or about group fragmentation, as research on leadership changes shows (Tiernay 2015; Prorok 2018; Nagel and Doctor 2020). After the conflict, rebel leaders can expect quite different life trajectories depending on the fate of their rebel group. Typically, rebel groups that failed form political parties (Acosta 2014) or sometimes join the military. Strong and big rebel groups might get high political approval after the conflict (Acosta and Rogers 2020).

For rebel leaders, joining politics might be unattractive because rebel successor parties often tend to underperform incumbent successor parties (Zeeuw 2008; Daly 2021) meaning that rebel leaders cannot expect to be successful in politics. Also, rebel leaders lose their followers when their ex-combatants join the military or when post-conflict incentives increase group splintering (Manning 2007; Acosta 2014). Thus, Ag Ghaly failed to hold the *Popular Movement of Azawad* (MPA) in Mali together after signing an agreement in 1991, splitting the Tuareg movement into different factions.² On the other side, rebel leaders might continue garnering support from their ex-combatants if they have access to economic resources (Themnér 2015) and create strong community and group ties during conflict (Martin 2021; Sharif 2022).

2 Malian Iyad Ag Ghali (born in 1958), founder of the MPA, signed a peace agreement with the government of Mali at the age of 34. He received military training in Libya and combat experience. He continues to be active in Tuareg rebellions against the Malian government.

The specific fates of rebel leaders who signed peace agreements are obscured. Some state leaders, such as Hissène Habré, distributed cabinet positions to former rebel leaders (Atlas and Licklider 1999). Yet, although some negotiated outcomes include amnesties only applicable to the rebel leaders and not to the entire group (Binningsbø et al. 2012), the fate of acquitted ex-rebel leaders remains unclear. Some ex-rebel leaders, such as Jean Pierre-Bemba, the former rebel leader of the Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) who survived two assassination attempts, had his life threatened; some were killed.³ This ambiguity leads me to empirically investigate the post-conflict fate of rebel leaders without formulating a clear expectation.

Research Design

More than one hundred peace agreements have been signed since 1975. Yet, we currently lack descriptive data concerning the fate of the rebel leaders who signed peace agreements in the last decades to understand the politics of risking peace for rebels. For the descriptives, I combine data on the peace process from the Peace Negotiations in Civil Conflict (PNCC) dataset (Ari 2023) and the Rebel Leader Attributes (ROLE) database (Acosta, Huang, and Silverman 2023). Additionally, I added information on peace agreements between 2014 and 2018 based on the PA-X database (Bell and Badanjak 2019). During this study, there were 94 peace agreements, excluding all peace agreements, in which the rebel group won.⁴ Peace agreements are defined as comprehensive peace deals signed by the belligerents. I identified some missing rebel leaders from the ROLE database and coded all rebel leaders' post-agreement fates through research in multiple languages utilizing newspaper articles and genealogical databases.

Post-agreement fates are unnatural death, exile or undisclosed location, prison, rebel group, military, and

3 Jean Pierre-Bemba (born in 1962), founder of the MLC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), turned the rebel group into a political party when he became vice-president under a peace agreement in 2003 after fighting for 4 years to take the capital.

4 The rebel leaders of the excluded cases were Charles Taylor, Goukouni Oueddei, Nelson Mandela, Norodom Sihanouk, Paul Kagame, Robert Mugabe, Yoweri Museveni, and Milan Martić. I also excluded Pascal Lissouba, the only rebel leader who was overthrown, and Pushpa Kamal Dahal, the only rebel leader who won but did not directly become a state leader until he was formally elected in 2008.

private life. Studies on state leaders' fate have mostly focused on the treatment of leaders at the point of loss of power and have lumped different forms of punishments together (an exception is [Kubota, Hidaka, and Yukawa 2022](#)). I focus on a 4-year time span as the fate of leaders. Therefore, by adding information that tracks the rebel leaders' fate for a long time, I can describe whether rebel leaders are punished after peace agreements or not. I define exile, prison, or unnatural death as forms of punishment.⁵ A full discussion of coding rules is included in the [Supplementary Material](#).

Based on research, I identified all ninety-four rebel leaders who signed an agreement. No female leader was engaged in a peace agreement between 1975 and 2018. On average, rebel leaders were 49.5 years old when signing the peace agreement. Among them, 47.9 percent received military training in a nonstate armed group, 23.4 percent were trained in a national army, and 28.7 percent were civilians. Most rebel leaders who signed a peace agreement were the (co-) founders of their groups (53.2 percent), while only 20.2 percent and 10.6 percent were appointed or elected, respectively. Before becoming rebel leaders, many of them were activists, career politicians, or part of the military (see [Supplementary Material](#)). Almost half (44.7 percent) of all rebel leaders who signed an agreement were still alive by 2018. A total of 30.9 percent died of diseases or other natural causes, while 16.1 percent were assassinated, executed, killed in battle, or experienced fratricide or homicide.

Concerning rebel leaders' post-conflict fate, 37.2 percent were punished through unnatural death, exile, or imprisonment. Meanwhile, 55.3 percent were unpunished, leading a political, military, private, or rebel life. Notably, 40.4 percent of the rebel leaders who signed peace agreements became politicians, while only 12.8 percent died of unnatural circumstances, 13.8 percent lived in exile, and 10.6 percent went to prison (see [figure 1](#)). Moreover, 12.8 percent recidivated and returned to their rebel group, joined an existing one or formed a new rebellion. Unpopular life trajectories after peace agreements were joining the national army or leading a private life (only one and three ex-leaders followed that path, respectively).

Since many studies of state leaders suggest that a reputation for hawkishness protects leaders from punishment and offers them political advantages ([Schultz 2005](#); [Mattes and Weeks 2019](#)), I examined this expectation for rebel leaders by clustering the results by combat

experience during their leadership tenure.⁶ Contrary to expectations based on state leaders' fate, [figure 2](#) shows that rebel leaders with combat experience were less likely to become politicians than rebel leaders without combat experience (31.8 percent versus 43.8 percent).

Interestingly, more rebel leaders without combat experience returned to their rebel lives than those with combat experience. Considering these forms of punishment, rebel leaders with and without combat experience experienced unnatural forms of death at equal frequency, but a few more rebel leaders with combat experience went into exile. However, rebel leaders with combat experience were three times more likely to be imprisoned than rebel leaders without combat experience (22.7 percent and 6.3 percent, respectively). This tentatively indicates that rebel leaders who have been active in combat can face more punishment after signing peace agreements than rebel leaders without such an experience.⁷

A caveat is that the descriptives cannot explain causal mechanisms as they can only inform about trends and correlations. Another problem is that by clustering rebel leaders' fates into single fates, multiple and heterogeneous destinies become invisible. For instance, the rebel leader of the *Comité de Sursaut National pour la Paix et la Démocratie* (CSNPD), Moise Kette, signed a peace accord with the Chadian government in February 1994, but he was executed shortly after staged new attacks.⁸ Yet, by classifying him as an unnatural death, we gain an early insight into the leaders' fates after the peace agreement.

Another limitation is that rebel leaders expecting harsh punishment would not have signed peace agreements. Therefore, the descriptions may be skewed, favoring the unpunished rebel leaders. Nevertheless, there are many cases where even the intransigent rebel leaders signed an agreement because they saw no other strategy.

5 There are reasons to not define exile as form a of punishment (see [Kubota, Hidaka, and Yukawa 2022](#)). However, I define it as punishment to lose personal contact with your home country.

6 Note that [Acosta, Huang, and Silverman \(2023\)](#) code "combat experience before assuming leadership" while I added whether the rebel leaders could have gained a reputation for hawkishness due to combat experience during their leadership tenure. I coded it as combat experience if the leader is proven fighting in an active warzone.

7 The correlation matrix for the main variables is presented in the [Supplementary Material](#). A stronger correlation is evident between serving in the national army and post-agreement punishment than having combat experience.

8 Moise Kette was a military man who founded the CSNPD in 1994 to oppose Chadian President Idriss Deby. A full discussion of how to code multiple fates is in the [Supplementary Material](#).

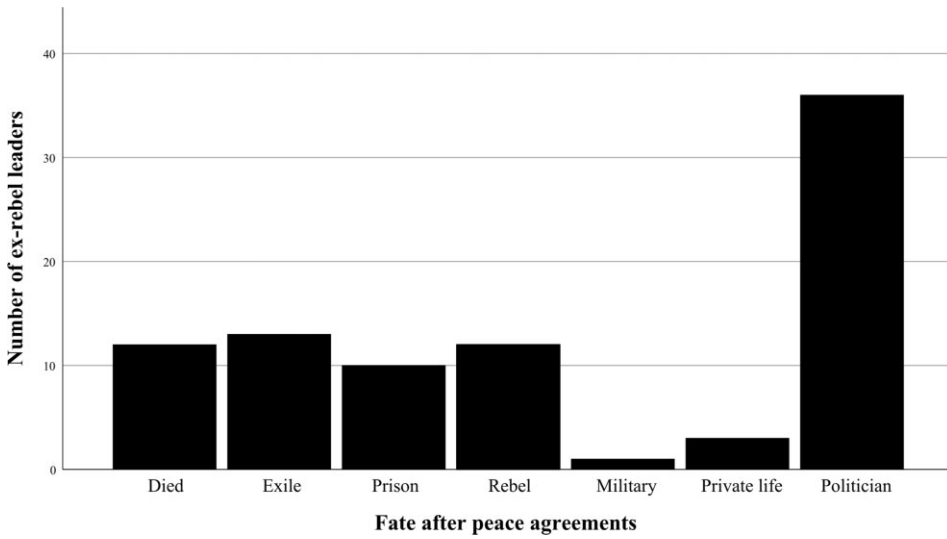


Figure 1. Rebel leaders’ post-agreement fate. For seven rebel leaders, the post-conflict fate after peace agreements could not be found.

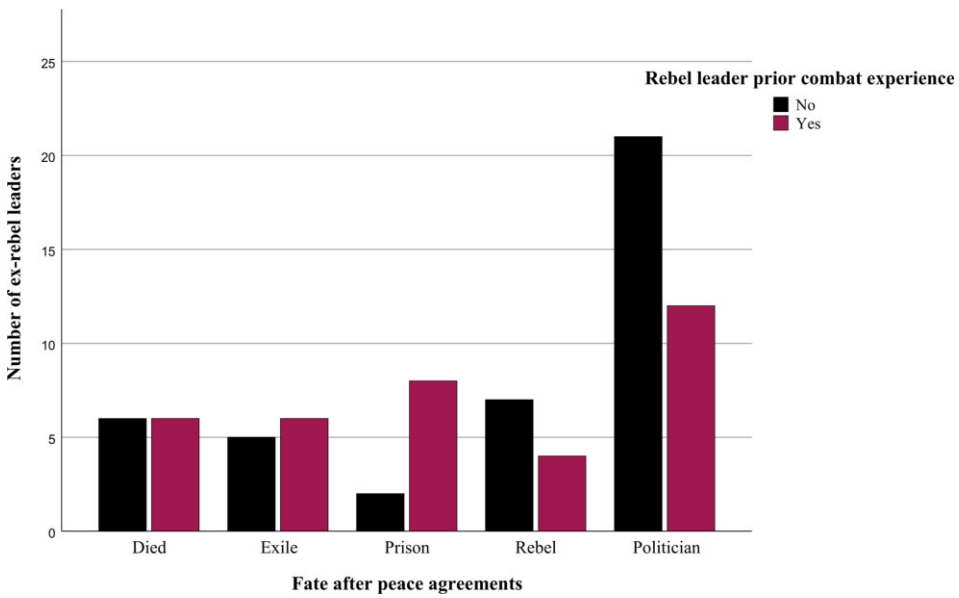


Figure 2. Rebel leader’s post-agreement fate clustered by combat experience. I excluded the rebel leaders not found and the four rebel leaders who chose the military or a private life.

For example, the rebel leader of the *Forces for the Federal Republic* (FARF), Laokein Barde, had to sign a peace agreement with the Chadian government in 1997 because he was cut off from his rear bases in the Central African Republic and Cameroon. He was then killed in action in 1998.

Prototypical Post-Agreement Fates

I chose two prototypical life paths of the punished and unpunished rebel leader to gain a better understanding of rebel leaders’ post-agreement fate. The guiding questions for the cases were which concessions were promised to the rebel leaders in the peace agreements, which life paths

they chose, and what were the main challenges they faced. I chose two rebel leaders who signed peace in Colombia in 1991 and Niger in 1994 because they had written memoirs about their life after peace. I was particularly interested in their personal reasoning in these memoirs to understand how and why they chose a specific path after a peace agreement.

The Unpunished

Over 50 percent of all rebel leaders who signed peace agreements went unpunished. One example is Bernardo Gutiérrez Zuluaga, one of the leaders of the *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (EPL) when the group signed a peace agreement with the Colombian government in 1991. Moreover, 95 percent of the rebels were demobilized and disarmed under Gutiérrez's leadership, but a splinter group of the EPL continued to fight. However, in recent years, the lack of leadership has led to further fragmentation into smaller criminal groups (Pizarro Leongómez 2018). The EPL originated in 1967 as the armed wing of the Colombian Communist Party with the main goal of promoting a socialist revolution. However, it never gained as many followers as other Colombian guerrilla groups, such as the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC) and the *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) (Chernick 1999).

Gutiérrez (born in 1958) became the commander of the EPL in 1987, which he had joined in 1978 after fighting in the FARC for 5 years. Under the 1991 Colombian peace agreement, the government granted the EPL full amnesty for its political crimes and two seats in the National Constituent Assembly, which enacted a new political constitution for the country, replacing the century-old constitution of 1886 (Gobierno de Colombia 1991). During the peace negotiations, the EPL formed a political party, the *Esperanza Paz y Libertad*, and joined the *Alianza Democrática M-19*, a party alliance of former guerrilla groups. Gutiérrez was not among the delegates to the assembly but won a seat in the Senate with the *Alianza Democrática M-19* in the 1991 elections.

Before the peace agreement was signed, Gutiérrez's first wife, Amparo Tordecilla, also an EPL *guerrillera*, disappeared violently in 1989 under unexplained circumstances during the peace negotiations. According to his biography, this motivated him to fight for a quiet life for his children and to sign the peace agreement (Gutiérrez Zuluaga and Gamboa 2021, 122, 188). He remarried, but soon feared for his family's life and his own, as the FARC and EPL dissidents threatened him with death. Four years following the peace agreement, Gutiérrez went unpunished but still had to seek refuge in

Italy in 1994. The FARC had continuously viewed him as a traitor since he left the group in 1978, and following the 1991 peace agreement, some former EPL fighters began fighting against the ELN and FARC in newly formed paramilitary groups, such as the *Autodefensas Campesinas de Córdoba y Urabá*. This reinforced the FARC's perception of Gutiérrez and other demobilized EPL fighters as traitors and enemies.⁹

Gutiérrez had a tranquil life in Rome as a secretary to the Colombian government at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Still, his post-agreement life had its challenges. In 2003, he peacefully occupied the Colombian embassy in Rome to protest his transfer to Jamaica for fear of lack of security (Gutiérrez Zuluaga and Gamboa 2021). Then, he remained in exile in Italy and died in Rome in 2008. During those years, he continued his political movements in Colombia by pushing for a base of the party *Polo Democrático Alternativo* in Italy.

Gutiérrez's fate after the peace agreement demonstrates that life after a peace agreement can be superficially free of punishment if one engages in politics. However, fears of old and new enemies persist and surface on a personal level, affecting the quality of life. Vigilance to the assumption that former rebel leaders lead comfortable lives after signing a peace agreement must remain, considering that only a few former rebel leaders were not killed, exiled, or imprisoned.

The Punished

Less than 40 percent of the rebel leaders who signed a peace agreement were killed, exiled, or imprisoned, and less than 15 percent of those returned to their rebel group, joined an existing one, or formed a new rebellion. One of them is Mano Dayak, president of the *Coordination of Armed Resistance* (CRA), who signed a peace agreement with the government of Niger in October 1994. The CRA joined the rebel groups that had formed the Revolutionary Army of Northern Niger (ARLIN) and the *Front for the Liberation of Air and Azawad* (FLAA). The latter had been founded in 1991 by Dayak, among others, to achieve Tuareg autonomy, introduce Tuareg quota in the administration and the army, and develop northern Niger

9 In total, around 200 former combatants of the EPL were murdered in the years following the peace agreement. For instance, in the massacre of La Chinita in Apartadó, the FARC attempted to kill several demobilized EPL combatants, resulting in the killing of 33 civilians and two ex-combatants.

with a massive investment (Kisangani 2012). Dayak was appointed chair of the CRA in 1993.

Before founding the FLAA, Dayak (born in 1949) had studied social sciences in the US and France and was not actively involved in the Tuareg cause (Lecocq 2004). He married a French woman, and they founded a tourism agency called Temet Travels in the early 1970s, which provided some economic boost to the region through tourism. Dayak saw himself as the chosen one to promote Tuareg culture and protect it from the Niger government (Dayak 1996b, 145). He radicalized and founded the FLAA in the early 1990s when government pressure on the Tuareg increased and many Tuareg actively resisted (Krings 1995; Kisangani 2012).

The peace agreement allowed for the establishment of *collectivités territoriales*, where the CRA was offered free administration of its territory. The Niger government also promised to improve the social and economic infrastructure in northern Niger (Ouagadougou Accord 1994). However, shortly after the agreement was signed in October, the ARLIN split off and other rebel groups were formed (Krings 1995). Dayak refused to participate in the succeeding peace negotiations and instead formed a new version of the CRA, which did not sign the forthcoming peace agreement in April 1995. His opinion became meaningless when other Tuareg fighters decided that only the *Union of Forces of Armed Resistance* should speak on behalf of all groups.

When a constitutional crisis reached Niger, Dayak continued to advocate for the cause of the Tuareg. In the months following the agreement, Dayak continued to work for the travel agency he had founded. He also published a book on Tuareg culture and history and one autobiography (Dayak 1996a). In December 1995, he wanted to resume peace negotiations, but his plane exploded unexpectedly on the way.¹⁰ In his autobiography, he made it clear that he would not give up fighting for the Tuareg cause, and peace was the only viable option for him if the safety of all Tuareg and concrete provisions for economic development were guaranteed (Dayak 1996b, 147).

The case of the Dayak shows that rebel leaders can be punished when they continue to fight for their cause and a peace agreement fails. Moreover, the fate of post-agreement leaders who continue to be rebels depends on the environment they are living in. If they live and stay in an environment full of civilian and military supporters, they may remain unharmed, but if their leadership is threatened or they leave a supportive area, enemies may

execute rebel leaders who have not complied with the peace agreement.

Conclusion

Do rebel leaders experience punishment when signing peace agreements? Work on state leaders answering this question with a resounding yes (Schultz 2005; Mattes and Weeks 2019). I add to his debate by studying the adversary of state leaders in peace deals: the rebel leaders. Persuading them for a peace agreement is a core factor in successfully terminating conflicts. Between 1975 and 2022, most rebel leaders went unpunished after signing a peace agreement, indicating that the risk of signing an agreement seems to be low for rebel leaders, at least based on the descriptives. However, the risk for punishment has been higher in the past for rebel leaders with combat experience during their leadership tenure than for those without. Altogether, these descriptives tentatively suggest that peace agreements have a higher risk for rebel leaders with combat experience than for battle-hardened state leaders who benefit from their combat experience when embarking on signing a peace agreement.¹¹

In the two case studies, the framework provided in the peace agreements was for the benefit of the rebel groups, especially their leaders. The case study from Colombia further shows that the lives of rebel leaders after peace agreements can go unpunished, but death threats and fears affect the quality of life, similar to Bernardo Gutiérrez of the EPL case. In contrast, the Niger case of Mano Dayak shows that rebels return to violence when they are unsatisfied with the agreement. Post-agreement life might end abruptly when rebel leaders leave or lose the environment where their supporters and military personnel protect them. The descriptions and the case study presented here indicate that rebel leaders in the past were only punished if they did not comply with the peace agreement for personal motives, left or lost their safe environment, and the government had the power to arrest or kill them. Yet, rebel leaders, practitioners, and peace mediators can assume that there is no elevated risk of signing peace agreements if the rebels are interested in demobilizing.

Future research should follow the lead of Acosta, Huang, and Silverman (2023) and examine the characteristics of rebel leaders on which the nonbindingness of signed peace agreements depends. In addition, future research should also examine the causal mechanisms for rebel leaders' return to violence. Rebel leaders' decisions

10 Dayak's death was coded as an "unnatural death" since many speculate that his death was staged by the government.

11 Note that the pieces by Schultz (2005) and Mattes and Weeks (2019) do not directly show that state leaders with combat experience sign more peace agreements.

for or against violence remain far less well researched than state leaders' motives, yet both are just as critical to conflict outcomes.

Supplementary Information

Supplementary information is available at the *Journal of Global Security Studies* data archive.

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