

## **A Report on Attending the Eighth Toyin Falola Annual International Conference on Africa and the African Diaspora (TOFAC8)**

**Date: July 3 – 5, 2018 | Venue: United States International University (USIU) – Africa**

**Conference Theme: Beyond History – African Agency**

**Ngah Kiven Gabriel\***

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The themes of the TOFAC8 covered a wide range of issues affecting Africa in various areas including culture; human rights, democracy, and leadership; education; policymaking; development and technology; gender, youth and transformation; health; agriculture; economic development, trade and natural resources; African renaissance and Pan-Africanism, and; innovations in sustainability.

The theme of economic development, trade, and natural resources was relevant to my Ph.D. study since I am addressing coups as a behaviour of non-compliance. In effect, the conference provided me with an opportunity for research and early results on my work as I could present my findings on the economic argument of non-compliance and then receive feedback from scholars coming from different horizons.

My flight on Rwandair WB211 from Douala in Cameroon to Nairobi went on as planned. I obtained a single entry visa at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, Nairobi-Kenya (JKIA). My hotel reservation at The Luke Hotel was equally confirmed upon arrival at the hotel. Since I arrived Nairobi in the early hours of 03 July 2018, I was able to rest then get to USIU-Africa on time for Day 1 of the conference, that is, 03 July 2018, like the bulk of the participants. Registration took place then the conference program went on as scheduled by the organisers.

I presented a paper at the TOFAC8 titled “Natural resources, the bourgeoisification of the elite and conflict over State power in the Central African Republic: 1991 – 2017.” I did a 20 minutes’ oral presentation of the paper at the Library Conference Room of USIU-Africa on Day 2 of the conference, 04 July 2018, at around 12:40 pm. I had an audience of about 15 attendees, including prominent scholars. After the Q&A session, I was approached by the conference organisers for possible publication of the paper.

The conference was attended by over 200 participants with keynote speakers and presenters from over 15 nationalities. Keynote speakers included notable scholars like Professor Funmi Olorisakin of Kings College in London who delivered a powerful paper on African agency in the first plenary session on Day 1, 03 July 2018, and Dr. Kamau Gachigi Kamau of Gearbox speaking in the second plenary session on Day 2, 04 July 2018. Professor Toyin Falola was the Guest of Honour at the conference. Overall, the conference was well organised and went on smoothly. The follow-up was good and organisers ensured that the participants were well catered for. The closing ceremony took place on Day 3 of the conference, 05 July 2018, at the Library Conference Room of USIU-Africa. A communiqué was adopted in the final plenary session presided over by Professor Toyin Falola. The conference ended with a call for the Ninth Toyin Falola Conference (TOFAC9) to take place in Nigeria.

I got to know about the TOFAC8 from my supervisor, Prof. Cheryl Hendricks, who put the conference to me as an opportunity for me to work towards my Ph.D. She assisted me with conference application and read through the paper I presented. I am very grateful for her remarkable follow-up. Many thanks to my HoD, Prof. Suzy Graham, for her support, and to the Division of Internationalisation of the University of Johannesburg for paying my flight ticket.

\* Mr. Gabriel Ngah Kiven is from Cameroon and is currently undertaking Doctoral Research at the Department of Politics and International Relations of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Johannesburg in South Africa, student number 217096472. He studies violent take-over of power in Africa, notably in the Central African Republic (CAR), from a non-compliance perspective.