



HORN OF AFRICA BULLETIN

ANALYSES • CONTEXT • CONNECTIONS

Analyses

- ▶ **Environmental conflicts, natural resources and diplomacy in the East and Horn of Africa**
- ▶ **Competing narratives on the causes of Ethiopian Muslim protests**
- ▶ **Somalia: Changing patterns of foreign intervention**
- ▶ **Tana Delta conflict: lessons for Kenya**

News and Resources

Environmental conflicts, natural resources and diplomacy in the East and Horn of Africa

The situation in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region continues to be deplorable basically because of the absence of environmental security-related infrastructure and/or the required level of awareness. Countries in the sub-region are vulnerable to global climate change. This is due to their relative poverty, large and growing populations, and to their relatively fragile ecological situation i.e. farming marginal and arid lands. In addition, their populations will be the most affected by shifts in rainfall patterns, the rise of the sea level, possible increase of storms and other extreme weather conditions, as well as the spread of their drylands.¹

According to the United Nations' Environmental Programme (UNEP), "the scale of historical climate change, as recorded in Northern Darfur, [for example] is almost unprecedented: the reduction in rainfall has turned millions of hectares of already marginal semi-desert grazing land into desert."² Also, since 2003, more than 200,000 people have lost their lives in Darfur, more than two million displaced; with more than four million others becoming dependent on humanitarian assistance.³ The clashes in Ethiopia's Weiyto valley in 1997, causing the death of 17 people, also illustrate these types of conflicts.⁴

Other issues and perspectives touching developments in the sub-region include the environmental security debate and the need for a redefinition of the term 'security'; the Nile Basin conflict; oil politics and conflict in the two Sudans; piracy off the Somali coast; pastoralism in the Greater Horn of Africa sub-region and the concept of 'human security'; the dispute over *Milingo* Island; and the issue of *Deegaan* in Somalia, particularly in the port town of *Kismayo*.⁵ This article aims to provoke the thinking of the academia, policymakers and other members of the wider policy community on some of these issues. It will discuss some of the issues and perspectives touching on developments in the sub-region and at the same time provide some policy recommendations.

Definitions and debates

One of the key issues central to understanding environmental conflicts, natural resources and environmental diplomacy is the environmental security debate. Fronted as early as the 1970s, the environmental security debate highlights the relevance of environmental issues to the overall security of the state. It interrogates the link between the environment and conflict and as such argues that the environmental-conflict nexus is a subset of ‘environmental security’ which is itself a field of inquiry that seeks to determine whether or not the Realist-based traditional notions of security -- which emphasize countering military threats with military power – apply to threats posed by issues like population growth and diminishing quality and quantity of environmental goods and services.

This query was first launched by Brown who proposed a redefinition of the term ‘security’ based on what he perceived as the pre-eminent threat to future human welfare and with emphasis on the increasing gap between the supply and demand of environmental resources.⁶ The same argument advanced by George Kaplan in 1994.⁷ Since then, debates developed and new terminologies emerged. For example, the debate between the eco-radicals vs. the modernists and the emergence of concepts like ‘sustainable development,’ ‘human security,’ the ‘environment’ as an issue of International Relations (IR), and the whole issue of scarcity, abundance vs. management over natural resources.

One of the ways that environmental factors contribute to conflict is through interaction with social, political and economic factors as well as the attendant issue of mass migration. Mass migration stresses the environmental quality and natural resources as people compete for resources. This is particularly the nature of conflicts in the sub-region and more specifically pastoral conflicts which form the more prevalent types of conflict in the sub-region.

Scholars of environmental conflicts, natural resources and environmental diplomacy propose that conflicts over resources can be as a result of scarcity, abundance or management. Scarcities arise as a result of environmental stress, mismanagement, high population growth or unfavorable climatic factors and can occur in a number of ways:-

- Where demand for natural resources exceeds supply and as such the resources cannot meet the needs of the people;
- Where natural resources reduce as a result of degradation, and
- Where access is restricted or is unequally distributed.

In each of the above cases, conflict arises as people compete for the scarce resources available and/or their rights, access to, and control over these resources, especially in the case where they have been marginalized.

Abundance, on the other hand, refers to a situation where a country or a community is naturally endowed with resources, over which there is conflict. Natural resources—both renewable and non-renewable—attract various actors interested in their exploitation. Claims over rights to, access to and/or control over these resources combined with one or more socio-economic as well as political factors to elevate friction are what ultimately contribute to conflict over natural resources.

Issues and perspectives in the sub-region

The East and Horn of Africa sub-region (or the Greater Horn of Africa) represents one of the fastest growing populations in Africa. It has also been the hardest hit by environmental changes that manifest in the form of recurrent droughts and famine and shrinking water catchment resources. In the last decade alone, for example, hundreds of thousands of people have died from famine while pastoralists lost thousands of their livestock in the drought. Since electricity production also depends on amounts of water, countries have experienced power rationing as a result of lower levels in water reservoirs. These varying environmental changes have been attrib-

uted not only to global warming but also to the improper management of available natural resources at the local, national and sub-regional levels.

The sub-region consists of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda, all of which have different weather patterns, demographic as well as resource compositions and topography. Nonetheless, all of them have been characterized by poor rainfall patterns, famine and inter and intra-state conflicts, as well as cross-border conflicts and disputes over natural resources. In Kenya, for example, forests that contribute to rainfall have been depleted through deforestation and change of land use patterns. This has also become an issue in pre-election campaigns as issues of land touch the nerve centre of many. Other issues and perspectives in the sub-region include the dispute over the *Misingo* Island, piracy off the Somali coast, pastoralism, oil politics and conflict in the two Sudans, and the *Nile* Basin conflict.

The dispute over the Misingo Island

One of the major issues affecting development in the sub-region is the dispute over the *Misingo* Island which is between Uganda and Kenya. Located in the Lake Victoria, this island, approximately 2000 square meter (half acre) in size, has been a source of rapidly increasing tension between the two countries. The issues that have fed into the *Misingo* dispute are varied. The island is strategically located from a fishing, security and general trade perspective. It lies on the lake routes that link Kenya and Uganda together and it is one of the more productive fishing grounds in the lake.

The dispute over *Misingo* Island has been attributed to depleting fishing resources owing to overfishing by large foreign ventures, infiltration by the water hyacinth weed which is speculated to be as a result of water pollution and poor fishing management in both countries. Although stalled and no major progress has been made so far, this is a dispute both Kenya and Uganda tried to resolve through their bilateral diplomatic channels and with the option of going to the regional East African Community (EAC) or to the more political Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) still being open to both as a last resort.

Piracy off the Somali coast

Piracy off the Somali coast is another problem facing the sub-region. Over- and illegal fishing by foreign trawlers, water pollution and alleged dumping of toxic waste into the Somali waters are said to be the major root causes of piracy. It is open secret that Somalia has had a conundrum of socio-political and economic problems for the past two decades or so. With the fall of its last government in the early 1990s, its coastal governance systems proved to be especially dangerous for the local subsistence economy in that it opened up the Somali coast to extensive, uncontrollable exploitation on behalf of foreign ventures.⁸

Large commercial fishing vessels emerged as a dominant form of competition against local fishermen pushing some of them to turn to piracy. Grievances over the apparent exploitation coupled with the absence of a central regulatory governance mechanism, led to the development of an illicit, vigilante-like, violent reconstruction of a coastal management authority aimed at ‘taking foreign vessels back to natural ports for ransom in compensation for lost fishing revenue. This later evolved into a more structured form of piracy expanding beyond revenge measures to a lucrative business, not only in the Somali coast but also beyond. Waste dumping by foreign vessels also played a part in the development of piracy.

However, in addressing this problem, the international community has failed to address the root causes which are embedded in the structural deficiencies in governance rather focusing on the crime itself which has done little to control it. The fact is that many international actors have contributed to perpetuating piracy in Somalia and without their involvement in resolving the menace—and as part of moving to

the more non-transitional era—as Somalia begins to repair its socio-economic and political fabric. This and other trends are likely to continue to emerge.

In this case, without attending to the concerns of the local fishing communities at the micro level and helping empower the newly-formed ‘federal’ government in Mogadishu at the macro level, there can be no proper coastal management and protection, be it either by the EU-led *Atalanta* operations or by various unilateral anti-piracy units stationed off the Somali coast.

Pastoralism

Pastoralism is a major factor and a complete way of life for millions in the sub-region. Estimated to be more than a third of the sub-region’s total population, there are three clusters of pastoralists in the region. The first and largest is the ‘*Karamoja* Cluster’ which includes the border areas of Ethiopia, Kenya, the Sudan and Uganda; the second cluster is the ‘*Somali* Cluster’ which falls in the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia and the third is the ‘*Dikhil* Cluster’, which links the cross-border regions of Djibouti and Ethiopia.

Pastoral conflicts are primarily caused by depleting agricultural and land resources owing to harsh climatic changes and demographic and environmental pressures including population growth. Not only are pastoral conflicts localized within the state but due to the mobility of the pastoralists, they also have the potential of being trans-boundary in nature. This calls for the need to embrace the concept of ‘human security’ so as to holistically attend to the needs and concerns of pastoralists in the sub-region.

Oil politics and conflict in the two Sudans

China’s entry into the international oil industry has ruffled many feathers, mainly due to its approach in its Africa engagement, and more so in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region. Standing accused by the West of exploitation and for allegedly turning a blind eye to issues of governance and human rights with the United States also capitalizing on the human rights card in its competition with the Chinese, this becomes a potential source of conflict not only between the two Sudans but also between and among a number of powerful countries including European states.

The stalled talks over oil revenues in terms of shipping charges aside, conflict in the two Sudans is of late synonymous with conflict between China and the West. This led to giving more attention to resolving the differences between the two Sudans and less for the more needy Darfuri crisis, or the more compelling developments in the rest of the Sudan, for example problems facing the *Beja* community in eastern Sudan.

The Nile Basin conflict

Bordered by 11 countries (Egypt, the Sudan, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Uganda, Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Tanzania),⁹ the Nile has been a source of livelihood for approximately 160 million people. The world’s largest river, it has been a major source of conflict in the Nile Basin region which has been mainly centered on access and control to the waters. Under the 1929 agreement between Egypt and Britain and the 1959 agreement between Egypt and Sudan, Egypt and the Sudan hold absolute rights over the use of the river’s waters and on a 100 percent scale.

These agreements stifled the competition and consolidated Egypt’s control over the Nile flows. Ethiopia, for example, uses only 2.3 percent of the Nile waters while 86 percent of the flows of the whole *Nile* come from its highlands. But, in 2010, a Nile Basin Cooperative Framework Agreement (CFA) was signed by Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya which was meant to reinforce cooperative diplomatic efforts by the riparian states. Although the donor community helped calm down the tension, this did not make Egypt happy.

This renewed tension over the Nile has security implications not only for the sub-region but also for the wider African continent as a whole since it could refuel existing conflicts in the sub-region and make them more complex and harder to address. This is important, particularly within the Greater Horn of Africa context, basically due to its volatility as well as proximity to the Middle East sub-region. Conflicts emerging from the Nile may also lead to widespread socio-economic as well as political instability for neighbouring states and communities.¹⁰

Treaties, protocols and agreements

Although the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is the most important instrument as it aims to reduce global warming, there is nothing much going on at the regional level. In line with the UNFCCC, other attempts to curb environmental-related issues include a 2005 EAC Protocol in which partner states commit themselves to ensuring sound environmental and natural resources management in the EAC sub-region, for instance, by trying to synchronize the policies on the Lake Victoria Basin.¹¹

IGAD, on the other hand, has a functional Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) and with a reinvigorated mandate to go beyond communal-level conflicts and disputes. This means that CEWARN may be more effective in the next decade or so as it tries to engage in intra and inter-state level conflicts on the same.

Conclusion

Although there exists a rich body of treaties, action plans, and other instruments that concern themselves with environmental preservation and conservation including the prevention of environmental as well as natural resource-based conflicts, they are all, however, for naught without proper implementation and enforcement. This is basically what ails the practice of conflict management in the sub-region: be they environmental, natural resource-based conflicts, or otherwise. But, from the above, in the East and Horn of Africa sub-region, the underlying problem has been one of less knowledge, attention and awareness on the importance and centrality of the environmental security debate. It is also one of management of natural resources as opposed to scarcity and/or abundance; and one of less aggressiveness in terms of the sub-region's active participation in, for example, post-Kyoto Protocol discussions. The centrality of national interests versus the need to embrace the concept of 'human security' and therefore become welfare-oriented, is also partly to blame.

Finally, and possible superpower rivalry and politics over the sub-region aside, at the heart of each and every conflict lies the issue of unequal distribution and greed as opposed to scarcity and/or abundance. Hence, the need to come up with relevant policies and to properly manage natural resources for the betterment of the East and Horn of Africa sub-region.

Ibrahim Farah is a lecturer at the University of Nairobi's Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS). His areas of interest include foreign policy analysis and conflict studies in Africa and the Middle East with emphasis on Somalia and the Greater Horn of Africa while **Caroline Kiarie** and **Peter Durito** are postgraduate students at the same institute.

-
- 1 See AICGS "Environmental Diplomacy," *American Institute for Contemporary German Studies Conference Report*, Washington, DC., November 18, 1998.
 - 2 See Simon A. Mason and Adrian Miller, *Linking Environment and Conflict Prevention: The Role of the United Nations*, CCS and Swisspeace 2008, p.31.
 - 3 Ibid, p.29.
 - 4 Ibid, p.23. See also Yacob Arsano and Baechler, G., "The Transformation of Resource Conflict," in Wenger, A. and Baechler, G. (eds.), 2002, *Conflict and Cooperation: The Individual between Ideal and Reality*, Zürich: NZZ Verlag.

- 5 Preliminary findings by Kowneyn National University's National Research Academy (NRA) show that *Deegaan*, land and its resource base, is central to resolving the Somali crisis, particularly current conflicts in the Jubba Corridor.
- 6 See Lester Brown's article "Redefining Security," 1977; See also Schwartz, Daniel and Singh, Ashbindu (1999), *Environmental Conditions, Resources and Conflicts: An Introductory Overview and Data Collection*, UNEP.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 See Weir, Gary E. "Fish, Family, and Profit: Piracy and the Horn of Africa," Summer 2009:15–29.
- 9 Evans, T. "History of Nile flows," in P.P. Howell and J.A. Allan, (eds.) *The Nile: Sharing a Scarce Resource – An Historical and Technical View of Water Management and of Economic and Legal Issues*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010. pp.27-63.
- 10 Cascao, A. E. (2009) "Changing Power Relations in the Nile River Basin: Unilateralism Vs. Cooperation," *Water Alternatives* 2 (2): 245-268.
- 11 See EAC (2005), Protocol on Environment and Natural Resource Management, June 2005.

Competing narratives on the causes of Ethiopian Muslim protests

The Horn of Africa has seen extreme forms of religious conflicts in recent years. By the region's standards, Ethiopia is so far immune from the religious radicalization and faith-based violence. There is, however, a potential for and signs of such developments in different religious groups in Ethiopia, which has manifested itself in different forms. This ranges from the periodic growing Christian-Muslim conflicts arising in different parts of the country, the contemporary ongoing tension between the Ethiopian Muslim community and the Ethiopian government, the ill-conceived comparative religion in competition to dominate Ethiopia's religious landscape to the de-sacralisation and destruction of houses of worship, etc. Although, certain general conclusions can be drawn about the drivers of such tensions and sporadic conflicts in the country, the author argues that an understanding of local context, including history, politics and culture, is crucial in getting the full picture of the growing multifaceted faith-based tensions in the country, a theme that is beyond the scope of this brief analysis.

The scope of this short analytical paper is rather limited to presenting the different narratives on the underlying causes and the dynamics of the ongoing contemporary tensions between some Ethiopian Muslim communities and the government. Due to the larger scale of the problem and the dynamic nature of the conflicts, this brief article does not in any way claim to capture all the elements. It highlights the major outstanding contestations on the causes of the dispute.

Religious pluralism in Ethiopia and the shifting fortunes of Islam in Ethiopia's socio-political landscape

There are five major religious groups in Ethiopia which, chronologically, include the followers of traditional beliefs; Orthodox Christians; Muslims, Protestants (evangelical Christians) and Catholics. Ethiopia has the third largest Muslim population in the African continent. According to the 2007 census, Muslims constitute around 34% of Ethiopia's 80 million people next to the country's dominant religious group, Orthodox Christianity (43%). There is no single Muslim denomination in Ethiopia, as it is the case everywhere, but multiple Muslim constituencies, though Ethiopian Muslims belong to the wider *Sunni Muslims* predominantly following the Sha'afi school of thought. Mystical Islam, *Sufism*, is popular in Ethiopia, of which the *Qadiriyya* order is widely practiced and in some places such as in the Jimma area the *Tijaniyya* order is widespread. In the last three decades a wide variety of Islamic reform movements have also been active in Ethiopia, including the Saudi-inspired

Salaffiya (also called *Wahabiyya* by its detractors) with a literal translation and observance of Islamic scriptures.

Though Islam in Ethiopia is as old as itself, the religion has had capricious fortunes in the country's socio-political landscape. The introduction of Islam in the country goes back to the hospitality accorded to the companions of the Prophet Mohammed by a benevolent Christian king (Nejashi), when they arrived in Axum fleeing religious persecution imposed by the Qurayish ruling elite in Mecca. From early on, however, Islam in Ethiopia had to deal with a politically entrenched Christianity (Ethiopian Orthodox) that had political intimacy with the Ethiopian state. Although the Italian policy was not always clear, during their brief occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1945), they consistently tended to be pro-Islamic. Christianity had remained as the official state religion in Ethiopia until the 1974 revolution. During this period Muslims were treated as second-class citizens in the imperial regime, and one instance of such treatments being the government addressing them as "Muslims in Ethiopia", rather than "Ethiopian Muslims." Such prejudices were denounced by Ethiopian Muslims during the grand demonstrations held on 20 April 1974.

The socio-political reforms brought by the 1974 revolution and the end of the Christian monarchy partly redressed the marginalization of Muslims in Ethiopia. According to Hussein¹ (2006: 23), 'although the resurgence of Islam in Ethiopia in the 1970s was part of the worldwide revival of Islam, one of the most decisive internal factors that contributed to the former was the outbreak of the popular revolution that toppled the Ethiopian monarchy in 1974, and created favourable conditions for disadvantaged and oppressed communities such as Ethiopian Muslims to demand a radical change in the state's policy towards them'. This resulted in the military regime (the Derg) establishing a Muslim representative body, the Ethiopia Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (EIASC or *Majlis*). The regime change in 1991 and the coming to power of the current ruling regime EPRDF brought a liberal turn in religious identification in the country. The 1995 Constitution instituted religious freedom and equality through various provisions. Notwithstanding these enabling structures in post 1995 period, Islam in contemporary Ethiopia still faces some shackles in relation to its organizational and public expressions as well as its securitization in a highly ideologically charged geopolitical environment.

Differing narratives on the protests of Ethiopian Muslims

Tensions have been simmering between Ethiopian Muslim activists and the government since December 2011, with protests held almost every Friday after the noon prayers. Initially, these demonstrations were centred at the Awalia Mosque and the Islamic school in Addis Ababa, before spreading to other regional towns. While the demonstrations were largely peaceful, cases of violent incidents have also been reported as illustrated by the killings and injuring of some people in the towns of Asasa (May 2012) and Gerba (October 20th and 21st).

As the protests continued, an arbitration committee of 17 Islamic leaders was created to negotiate with the government on four major points:

- Respecting the Ethiopian constitution's guarantees of religious freedom
- Ending government imposition of al-Ahbash on Ethiopian Muslims
- Re-opening of schools and mosques closed in some parts of the country, and return them to their relevant administration
- Holding new elections for the *Majlis* in mosques, rather than in *kebeles*, thereby ensuring that the community's selection is respected².

As negotiations failed, protests escalated, culminating in the arrest of all seventeen members of the arbitration committee and around total seventy protestors in July 2012. Some of them were held in custody under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation, which allows the security agents to hold a suspect for up to four months in detention during the investigations.

The contemporary stalemate between Muslim activists and the government has gained international attention due to foreign media coverage, concerns of Ethiopian Muslims and non-Muslims in the diaspora, together with different human rights organizations who have all commented on the ongoing protest. Different accounts have been presented by the two warring parties on the underlying causes of the public protests.

The government describes the phenomenon as an element of radicalization, an agitation that is described to have foreign bases. During a discussion on religion-related issues on 13 September 2011, the Minister of Federal Affairs alleged that ‘Wahabiya’ is moving toward forming an Islamic government and labelled it as an ‘extremist’ organization with a military wing operating inside Ethiopia. Arguing along the same line, in mid-April 2012, the late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi told parliament that a “few extremists are working to erode the age-old tradition of tolerance between traditional Sufi Muslims and Christians in Ethiopia.”³ Furthermore, the ruling regime has accused the opposition parties of exploiting the issue of religion for political gains. Clearly, the government has insisted that the causes for the ongoing tension lie in the hands of a few extremists with foreign support and backed by the opposition parties. On 29 October 2012, the government charged twenty-nine Muslim activists with terrorism, accusing them of inciting public disorder, conspiring to declare Jihad and establish an Islamic state by destroying the constitutional order.

On their part, Ethiopian Muslim activists present different narratives as to what caused the current nationwide protests. The key factor identified by the activists is the unconstitutional intervention in religious affairs in contrast to Article 27 of the Ethiopian constitution, which states the independence of the state from religion, and vice versa. According to Muslims activists, the government interference includes supporting of the al-Ahbash’s religious doctrine, a transnational Islamic organization based in Lebanon and founded by an Ethiopian Sheikh from Harar. In March 2008, an official invitation was extended to the Sheikh to return to Ethiopia (Erlich 2010: 178)⁴, a plan that failed due to the death of the Sheikh. Subsequently in July 2011, the EPRDF government invited fifteen Lebanese Ahbash *ulema* to train and promote the ‘authentic’ Islamic teachings of the Sheikh from Harar in the country. It is alleged that al-Hararis’ teachings are considered to be moderate, advocating Islamic pluralism, and opposing political activism, a view utterly rejected by a section of Muslim activists.

It is against this background that Muslim activists have questioned the secular stance of the Ethiopian state, describing the act as unconstitutional interference of the EPRDF in religious affairs.

The second element pointed out by the activists to illustrate an aspect of interference by the state is the caveat put on the organizational expression of Islam in Ethiopia, specifically the Islamic Affairs Supreme Council (*Majlis*). The Muslim activists have alleged the government of manipulating the *Majlis* leaders, thereby interfering with its internal affairs. Consequently, they have framed their quest as an appeal to have an autonomous, legitimate and functional national Islamic organization. The background to such interference goes back to the mid 1990s following the homicide attempt on the Egyptian president in 1995, which brought government repression of Islamic organizations, the tighter control of the *Majlis* and closing down of many Islamic associations and NGOs. On 21 February 1995, a power struggle within the *Majlis* resulted in violent conflict between police and worshippers in the Anwar Mosque, Addis Ababa, causing several deaths and injuries. The government responded with tight control of the *Majlis* leadership, on the pretext of avoiding similar incidents in the future, a move that considerably eroded the popular legitimacy of the *Majlis* headship. The second unconstitutional interference raised by the Muslims protesters relates to this agency of the *Majlis* and its autonomy.

In advance of the latest election of the *Majlis* members on 7 October 2012, several demonstrations took place with protestors denouncing the elections. One of the concerns of the Muslims related to the recent election that took place in No-

vember 2012 is the timing of the election, which coincided with the detention of some of their leaders. More so, they accuse the government of controlling the poll in addition to holding the elections in *kebeles* (the lowest administrative unit) and not in the mosques. The government defended the choice of the *kebeles* in place of the mosques was for security reasons. To demonstrate their dissatisfaction, the protesters agitated for poll boycott and rejection of the election outcome.

Way forward

The foregoing account presents the divergent views explaining the causes for the growing standoff between Muslim activists and the government, setting aside the question of which narrative is more plausible. The pressing need at the moment is looking for constructive solutions as a way of avoiding the escalation of the contentious relationship to violent conflicts, and birth of religious radicalization in the country. Leaving room for dialogue is one possible solution to the growing tension. As the discussion have demonstrated, it is yet not clear which type of secularism is appropriate to the Ethiopian context. This is one of the major issues contributing to the confrontations. Bringing in international experiences on the local adaptation of secularism that accommodates the specific needs of religious communities can be significant in this regard. Furthermore, the government should refrain from involving in internal theological debate of the various religious groups in the country. One of the de-radicalization strategies used by governments regarding Islamic extremists worldwide is ‘endorsing’ the so-called apolitical Sufism as opposed to the ‘militant’ Islamic reform movements. Such deliberation informs intra-religious tensions, which should be avoided as a way of preventing the birth of violent faith-based conflicts, and instead interfaith peace initiatives need to be encouraged. Last but not least, the Religious Directorate within the Ministry of Federal Affairs and the Ethiopian Interfaith Peacebuilding Initiative together with the coalition of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) could be used as the main bodies to play a constructive role in strengthening community resilience.

Zelege Eresso obtained her PhD in social anthropology from the Bayreuth International Graduate School of Africa Studies. She is currently engaged in teaching and research. She can be reached at eressokiyya@gmail.com

-
- 1 Hussein Ahmed. 2006. ‘Co-existence and/or Confrontation: Towards a Reappraisal of Christian-Muslim Encounter in Contemporary Ethiopia’. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 36 (1).
 - 2 *Majlis* is an Arabic term meaning council and in the Ethiopian context and in its usage in this text refers to the national Islamic council. *Kebele* is the lowest administrative unit in Ethiopia.
 - 3 This was a statement which the prime minister made in his speech addressing the members of the parliament. <http://www.mfa.gov.et/weekHornAfrica/morewha.php?wi=349>.
 - 4 Erlich, Haggai. 2007. *Saudi Arabia and Ethiopia: Islam, Christianity and Politics Entwined*. Boulder & London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Somalia: Changing patterns of foreign intervention

In Somalia, the trajectory of State formation has been historically shaped by the way central governments appropriated and redistributed foreign financial flows and development projects. As in much of sub-Saharan Africa, rulers in Mogadishu exploited the norm of international sovereignty to monopolise the management of deals with foreign investors and the coordination of development assistance, in order to promote the sectorial accumulation of power along lineage or regional lines.

The strategic value of Mogadishu as a gate to foreign flows partially explains the higher instability experienced in south-central Somalia, especially if compared with the relatively isolated northern regions of Somaliland and Puntland¹.

Such centralising patterns have been criticized as the underlying reason for the failure of the peace process. While the academic community is divided between advocates of a strong central state² and supporters of a foreign-induced decentralisation³, Transitional Federal Governments (TFGs) in Mogadishu have been repeatedly blamed for corruption and clientelistic dissipation of development assistance. A 2012 World Bank report on the financial position of the TFG for the years 2009 and 2010 highlighted how 68% of government revenues were unaccounted for, with respectively a \$72 million and \$52 million difference between official and assessed balance sheets⁴.

The recent takeover of the capital by the internationally-supported Somali government marks a new phase in the longstanding war. However, contrary to what happened in 2007 after the fall of the Islamic Courts, current trends in the erogation of foreign aid and emerging relationships between regional stakeholders and multinational firms suggest a decreasing role of Mogadishu in the state building process, with potential consequences on the capacity of central rulers to shape political alliances and patterns of economic development within the Somali national space. It remains unclear to what extent this trajectory may help increase the country's overall stability, or just moving the sites of power confrontation away from the capital.

New patterns of Western foreign assistance

Western donors have in the last years shifted their aid strategies. On the one hand, security expenses increased in relation to humanitarian assistance: if the latter accounted for 90% of the overall United States Agency for International Development (USAID) assistance to Mogadishu in 2008⁵, in 2012 the estimated budget of the agency will consist of \$168 million, with allocations for security issues amounting to more than \$142 million⁶. At the same time, military assistance has been redirected from local actors⁷ to more reliable regional partners through the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). Since 2007, the overall contribution of the largest donor, the European Union, amounted to 414 million euros, supporting costs for troops allowances, civilian and logistic components. In September 2012 a further 82 million euros were allocated to allow the mission reach its planned strength of 17,731. The same assumption is valid for US assistance: in 2013, AMISOM should absorb more than 70% of the proposed USAID-Somalia budget⁸.

Mogadishu's gate-keeper position has been partially overcome also in the case of the most prominent programme of military assistance to the Somali National Army: the European Union Training Mission in Uganda. The TFG only partially intervened in the selection process, with the US, AMISOM and EU having the last word in checking potential recruits and ensuring a fair representation of all clans. Soldiers have been trained in a third country under direct donor's supervision, and put under the authority of the central government under AMISOM supervision⁹. Up to now, it seems that the recently-renewed training mission will follow the same pattern.

Humanitarian assistance is more and more channelled without passing *via* Mogadishu's hands too. Deteriorating security conditions on the ground have allowed 'big men' and warlords in control of the countryside to take an autonomous share of these funds through the provision of escort services or the distraction of food aid to black markets, increasing their independency from central rulers¹⁰. Still now, large tracts of the countryside are out of direct government control.

All these data confirm a shift in the institutional architecture envisaged by Western partners, reflecting the dual track policy announced by the US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Johnnie Carson, in 2010. Regional authorities are now the favourite beneficiaries of official and unofficial development assistance: the

last UN Monitoring Group Report on Somalia highlighted how the US was undertaking extensive security support programs in favour of the Puntland administration, without prior approval of the UN Sanctions Committee¹¹.

Multinational firms and enclave economies in northern Somalia

Along with foreign aid, new outlets for power accumulation at the periphery are provided by emerging patterns of investment flows: potential oil extraction in northern Somalia is a case in point. In 2005 Range Resources, an Australian-based oil company, announced a deal with the Puntland government for oil explorations in the Dharoor and Nugaal blocks. Africa Oil, a Canadian company, bought 80% of exploration rights in 2007, selling 20% of its share to another Australian company linked to Range Resources, Red Emperor, in 2010. In 2011, this joint venture gave birth to Horn Petroleum, an oil company concerned exclusively with the Puntland project. Despite early expectations, in August 2012 Horn Petroleum announced the intention to abandon the drilling of the Shabeel North-1 wells, due to unsuccessful findings. The potential value of the Nugaal blocks increased consequently, inflaming the unresolved border dispute between Puntland and Somaliland.

The Puntland government is actively exploiting the financial resources and external web of connections provided by foreign firms operating within its territory, in order to increase its bargaining power in face of neighbours. The June 2011 and 2012 UN Monitoring Group Report denounced the illegal agreement for the provision of military hardware, training and logistics between the Puntland government and Saracen International/Sterling Corporate Services, a security company led by an Australian citizen and former Executive Outcomes official¹². Originally enrolled by the TFG for the creation of an anti-piracy fleet, in 2011 Saracen turned to Garowe. Using its connections with Gulf countries and international financial hubs, it enabled the Puntland government to import modern weapons not available on local markets, in breach of the UN arms embargo, and train a powerful militia. Via non-state actors, Garowe can thus increase its military stance and territorial claims over the resource-rich Nugaal district, in a way that share similarities with the enclave economy described by William Reno in the case of Angola¹³.

The government of Somaliland resorted to similar strategies. The concession to Horn Petroleum is strongly contested by Hargeisa, which claims sovereignty over the Sool and Sanaag region in reason of the border demarcation inherited from the colonial period. For his part, Hargeisa released oil concessions to the UK companies Asante Oil and Prime Resources. Even if these agreements have so far remained suspended in the air, the concession on the Nugaal block to Asante Oil added an external dimension – the confrontation between competing multinational firms – to the controversy with Garowe, increasing the chances to gain external support on the matter. After all, Great Britain is one of the few countries where Somaliland officially displays a foreign chancellery.

The lack of international recognition deprives agreements between regional entities and oil firms of any legal protection. However, the foreseeable weakness of central governments in Mogadishu in the near future increases the cost-opportunity to assert *de-facto* territorial control over contested areas, as certified by past unsuccessful attempts of the TFG to claim authority over oil deals. More and more frequent armed clashes between the two parties have been registered in the last year: clan militias supported by Garowe repeatedly attacked Somaliland forces in Las Anod in mid-2011 and July 2012¹⁴, while the Somaliland army undertook a large scale offensive near Buhodle in the first months of 2012.

Foreign induced decentralisation in southern Somalia

Another potential hub of resource conflict is the Jubba valley. The high incidence of political instability is partly a consequence of state intervention in the landscape of the area in the 1970s and 1980s, through the infusion of large Western-financed rural

development projects aimed at promoting cash crop agriculture. Former President Siad Barre exploited land registration programmes to distribute valuable natural resources to fellow kinsmen and political allies, paving the way for the contemporary controversies between original Bantu inhabitants of the area, which claim land under the flag of their ancestral rights, and newcomers supported by the state. The civil war added a new dimension to the dispute, as clan militias previously excluded from power sharing seized the plantations to take control of the related revenues¹⁵. External actors introduced further variables into the civil conflict, as in the case of the so-called “banana war” in the mid-1990s, when clan militias exploited the commercial competition between the American multinational Dole and the Italian firm Somalfruit for obtaining financial support and military hardware¹⁶. Along with irrigation infrastructures, the biggest stake in the struggle for political supremacy is represented by the city of Kismayo, whose sea port provides important revenues from the taxation of charcoal exports and sugar imports.

The support of Kenya and Ethiopia to the Jubbaland project through the patronage of IGAD reflects longstanding geopolitical and economic concerns. Along with the territorial dispute over the maritime platform in the Indian Ocean and the Northwestern District, Nairobi opposes the resurgence of old patterns of central state intervention in the Jubba Valley’s cattle trade. While Somali rulers historically promoted livestock exports via Kismayo and Mogadishu, in order to obtain hard currency and concentrate capital accumulation in the hands of urban merchants, the civil war led Somali pastoralists to move cattle trade along transborder routes, consequently increasing the incomes of middle-men along the Kenyan border and lowering consumer prices for meat in Kenyan markets¹⁷.

For Ethiopia, concerns for stability in the Ogaden region intersect with the struggle for the control of water resources. Addis Ababa’s interest in the Jubba river, which flows from the Ethiopian territory, dates back to the Derg opposition against the Bardere Dam Project in the 1980s¹⁸. The Ethiopian government’s commitment to rural development paved the way, in 2008, for an appraisal study on the Generale-Dawa river basin, where two of the Jubba’s main tributaries are located. An African Development Bank report envisaged a total capital investment of Ethiopian birr 41,466 billion for dam and irrigation projects in the next 20 years¹⁹.

Since 2010, Somali stakeholders in the valley exploited external interests to create independent patron-client relationships with regional powers. Different branches of the Kenyan government built alliances with local armies such as the Ras Kamboni brigade, Ahlu Sunna Wal Jamma, Gedo region clan militias, and the self-declared Azania State²⁰. The leader of Ras Kamboni was released from prison by Addis Ababa in 2009 and he joined the new federal parliament; since 2011, the Ras Kamboni has allegedly obtained military and logistical support from Nairobi *via* the strategic border town of Dhobley. Another prominent Marehan stakeholder in the Jubba’s political scene was released by Addis Ababa in 2012 to join the military effort against al-Shabab²¹. These two proxies of the Ethiopian-Kenyan coalition in Kismayo are nonetheless longstanding power competitors:

Despite expectations that a regional approach to state building may address the historical deep roots of dispute, the IGAD-sponsored peace process seems to replay old patterns of power contestation. Since the Nairobi meeting of June 2012, the executive committee of the Wagosha Movement – representing Bantu peoples in southern Somalia – accused the organization of clan bias in favour of Ogaden and Marehan, discognising the legitimacy of negotiations. Rising tensions are also expected between the would-be Jubbaland state and the government in Mogadishu, which unsuccessfully tried to assert its claims of authority over the Kismayo seaport on 7 November 2012.

Conclusions

Local empowerment and formalisation of (neo-)traditional forms of resource governance are often portrayed by international donors as a tool to decrease resource

conflicts. In the Horn of Africa region, Ethiopia is a point of reference for testing the efficacy of a system which combines administrative decentralisation and the territorial fixing of primordial identities within the framework of a federal architecture. Nonetheless, many authors have shown how administrative decentralisation does not always coincide with less power contestation. Instead, it is often a major driving force in moving the *locus* of resource conflicts at a local level, increasing the necessity of central government's intervention to mediate between the parties involved²². In the Ethiopian case, the monopolisation of the gate-keeper state prerogatives – control of foreign aid flows, retention of the authority to deal with large foreign investors – is crucial to govern centre-periphery relations and mediate between competing actors. On the contrary, in the Somali case the disengagement of Western donors and regional powers from the commitment to rebuild a strong central government, as well as the growing autonomous interconnections between local stakeholders and foreign firms, risk merely to move the arena of power contestation away from Mogadishu towards the resource-rich peripheries of the country, without a proper counterbalance in the capital.

Luca Puddu is a post-doctoral fellow at the Department of Social Sciences and Institutions, University of Cagliari, Italy. He can be reached at luca.puddu@unica.it

-
- 1 William Reno, *Somalia and Survival in the shadow of the global economy*, QEH Working Paper, 100, 2003.
 - 2 Peter D. Little, *Reflections on Somalia, or how to conclude an inconclusive story*, Bildhaan, 3, 2003.
 - 3 Jort Hemmer, Ana Uzelac, *When the centre doesn't hold: imagining a different Somalia*, Clingendael Research Unit Policy brief, March 2011.
 - 4 World Bank Summary of financial diagnostic assessment of "Audit Investigative Financial Report 2009-10", 30 May 2012.
 - 5 Hussein Ahmed Warsame, *Role of International Aid and Open Trade Policies in Rebuilding the Somali State*, Bildhaan, 11, 2011.
 - 6 USAID, Congressional budget justification, Foreign Assistance, Summary Tables, Fiscal year 2013. Disponibile sul sito USAID.
 - 7 Ken Menkhaus, *Somalia: tragedy in five acts*, African Affairs, 106, 204, 2007.
 - 8 USAID, Congressional budget justification, Foreign Assistance, Summary Tables, Fiscal year 2013. Disponibile sul sito USAID.
 - 9 K. Oksamytna, *The European Union Training Mission in Somalia: lessons learnt for EU security sector reform*, Istituto Affari Internazionali Working Papers 11-16, June 2011.
 - 10 Susanne Jaspars, Daniel Maxwell, *Targeting in complex emergencies: Somalia country case study*, Feinstein International Center, July 2008.
 - 11 Report of the Monitoring Group for Somalia, June 2012.
 - 12 Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2002, 27 June 2012.
 - 13 William Reno, *African Weak States and Commercial Alliances*, African Affairs, 96, 383, 1997.
 - 14 Daniel R. Forti, *A pocket of stability: understanding Somaliland*, ACCORD Occasional Paper, 2, 2011.
 - 15 Catherine Besteman, *Unraveling Somalia: race, class, and the legacy of slavery*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia, 1999; Lee Cassanelli, C. Besteman (eds.), *The struggle for land in Southern Somalia: the war behind the war*, Haan, London, 2003.
 - 16 Christian Webersik, *Fighting for Plenty, the banana trade in southern Somalia*, paper presented to the conference on multinational corporations, development and conflict, Oxford, December 2003.
 - 17 Hussein Mohamud, *Livestock Trade in Kenyan, Somali and Ethiopian borderlands*, Chatham House Briefing Paper, September 2010; Abdi I. Samatar, *Social classes and economic restructuring in pastoral Africa*, African Studies Review, 35, 1, 1992; Peter Little, *Conflictive Trade, contested identity: the effects of export markets on pastoralists of southern Somalia*, African Studies Review, 39, 1, 1996; Abdi I. Samatar, *Somalia's post-conflict Economy: A political economy approach*, Bildhaan, 7, 2007.
 - 18 Abdullahi Elmi, Hussien Iman, *Hydropolitics in the Horn of Africa*, in B. Calas, M. Martinon, *Shared waters, shared opportunities: hydropolitics in East Africa*, IFRA, Nairobi, 2010.

- 19 African Development Bank Group, Ethiopia: Generale-Dawa river basin integrated resource development master plan study, Project completion report, http://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Evaluation-Reports/Ethiopia.%20GENALE-DAWA%20River%20Basin%20Integrated%20_EN.pdf, Visited on 15 December 2012.
- 20 Ken Menkhaus, *After the Kenyan intervention in Somalia*, Enough Project, January 2012.
- 21 Raxanreeb.com, Somalia: Barre Hirale heads to Kismayo, 19 September 2012,.
- 22 John Unruh, *Changing conflict resolution institutions in the Ethiopian pastoral commons: the role of armed confrontation in rule-making*, *Geojournal*, 64, 2005; Catherine Boone, *Africa's new territorial politics: regionalism and the open economy in Cote d'Ivoire*, *African Studies Review*, 50, 1, 2007; Fekadu Beyene, *Property rights conflict, customary institutions and the state: the case of agro-pastoralists in Miseo district, eastern Ethiopia*, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47, 2, 2009; Tobias Hagmann, Mulugeta A. (2010), *Pastoral conflicts and state-building in the Ethiopian lowlands*, in: Hurni H., Wiesmann U., *Global Change and sustainable development: a synthesis of regional experiences*, Bern.163-73.

Tana Delta conflict: lessons for Kenya

Between 3 August 2012 and 10 January 2013, the Tana Delta district in south-east Kenya was in the news, all for the wrong reasons. In a month of violent cycle of agro-pastoralists conflicts and revenge attacks pitting the Orma against Pokomo communities. 118 people lost their lives and more than 13,500 were displaced. More than 30,000 people were affected by the ethno-political clashes that went into January 2013.

On the morning of 14 August 2012, Kenya woke up to media reports of burning of six houses and killing of women in Kipini. Two days later up to 180 mutilated heads of cattle were discovered at Ozi and Chara villages. Two other violent incidences took place on 8 September where at least 13 people were killed by suspected Orma raiders at Chamwanamuma village, and on 10 September 38 people including 9 police officers were reported killed by Pokomo raiders. The deceased include 16 men, five women, nine police officers and eight children. Five of the dead officers were from the General Service Unit (GSU), two from the Administration Police and two regular police officers .

In December renewed fighting ensued. 30 people were killed on 21 December in a brutal raid in the wee hours. . On 9 January 2013, 11 people were killed in fresh fighting when suspected Pokomo raiders attacked Nduru village killing six Ormas. Villagers countered the attackers killing two raiders on the spot, and two more as they pursued them. Another assailant died from injuries while fleeing . The attack also resulted in the burning of 19 homes in the village which is approximately 20km from the Nduru village which had been attacked a day earlier .

On 10 September 2012, the Kenyan president declared dusk-to-dawn curfew and ordered the deployment of 2000 GSU officers to the Tana Delta. In addition, the president commissioned a judicial inquiry to investigate the violence. With these measures an uneasy calm returned to the area paving way for flow of humanitarian support and inter-community engagements. Other interventions involved dialogue meetings facilitated by various institutions. However, the tit-for-tat violence continued for six months defying all these interventions.

The 2012-2013 crisis in the Tana Delta was perhaps the worst of its kind since Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election crisis and nastiest by Tana Delta standards. The conflict featured prominently in the media. Public emotions ran high. State security officials on the ground were blamed and so were political leaders for failing to restore normalcy in the region. Humanitarian workers were stretched; and peace building groups engaged unsuccessfully in countless mediations and desperate calls to deploy the military were made.

The nature of conflict

Pastoralists-farmer conflicts are a common feature of the Tana River region. They are often bloody and destructive. Reading through historical reports, there is no telling apart these conflicts. For instance, a colonial intelligence report dated 5 January 1950 from the District Commissioner's office (DC) to the Provincial Commissioner (PC), Coast Province, read as follows:

'It is reported that, fighting amounting to [ethnic] war broke out on the 9th and again on the 11th (December 1949) between Oromo and Pokomo...One Pokomo man was killed; two Pokomo women and three Pokomo men were injured. One Oromo is believed to have been killed though the body has not yet been found and two Oromo women were injured ... the initial blame lies clearly on the Oromo who begun the first attack' (KNA, 1940-1950).

The 50 year old report sounds just like one filed in the year 2013 and many more in between. While for long, the nature of these conflicts remained fairly 'traditional', along the years, new twists to the clashes have emerged changing the nature of the conflict. The introductions of guns and hired militia altered the conflict resolutions methods, the number of deaths and scope of destruction . Starting in December 2000, for instance, violent gun conflict erupted after the introduction of land adjudication exercise in the Tana River area. The two communities stood on the opposite sides of the process. The Pokomo embraced the process while the Orma opposed the adjudications. The Orma feared the programme threatened their livelihood while the Pokomo believed the adjudication would end pastoralists-farmer conflicts. In similar fashion, one media report in 2000-2001 reads, "Some 70 people have been killed over the last year [2000] as a result of repeated clashes between the Pokomo and Ormas". A different report stated that "the bodies of at least 30 people killed in ethnic clashes in Kenya are reported to have been dumped in the River Tana. Kenyan television quoting local officials said armed gangs from the pastoral Wardei community attacked members of the Pokomo community in the area." (*BBC News*, 19 September, 2001) . Such perennial conflicts have led to simplification of the causes of conflicts in the region.

Causes of the 2012-2013 conflict

For historical reasons, the 2012-2013 clashes in the Tana Delta have erroneously been linked to ethnic animosity. In a BBC interview the Coast Province Provincial Commissioner summed up the problem in saying that "Unfortunately, our people like to fight." Such a primordial reason has been refuted by many reports (Goldsmith 2012; Martine 2012). According to Paul Goldsmith, "nothing in literature alludes to a long-standing state of conflict between herders and farmers in [Tana Delta]" . These communities have for long depended on each other. Goldsmith further argues that the symbiotic relations between nomadic pastoralists and agriculturalists were a basis for the emergence of the mono-cultural pastoralism practice exercised by the Orma and Wardei Somali counterparts; and Pokomos the agriculturalist. Such interdependencies are the reasons for harmonic neighbourliness between the Orma, and inhabitants of the Lamu County and Tana River. Although "occasionally frictions arise, especially when cattle wander on to farms, and no doubt individual Orma and Pokomo may respond aggressively in such circumstances" but nothing makes this a permanent response. In fact, the same communities in other regions of the Tana County have local arrangements to prevent violent conflict between the two major ethnic communities. Although the inter-communal violence is not refuted it does not account for the level of hostilities between the two communities.

The Orma's real competitors are their pastoralist cousins the Wardei, (Goldsmith 2012; Martine 2012) whom they accuse of using group ranches to annex large tracts of communal rangeland, and the Somali Abdalla clan, whose cattle raids during the 1980s forced the Orma to acquire firearms.

The last Orma-Pokomo conflict in 2002 and 2004 stemmed from the expansion of riverine farms that block herders' access to the river. In addition to pasture and water, political control of the Tana River County, political boundaries, and shrinking land space have gained prominence as reasons of the clashes.

Local communities and civil society organisations are contesting the acquisition of an estimated 25,000 hectares by Mumias Sugar and Mat International for sugarcane production. That leaves another 100,000 ha of what is currently misclassified as government land with fear that it will be illegally allocated pushing out local inhabitants. It is noteworthy that the region is generally underdeveloped and falls within the arid and semi-arid regions. This means that only a small segment of the region is arable and that is the region that is in contestation causing the latest spell of violence in the Tana Delta. "The chief obstacles standing in the way are the pastoralists, well-armed warriors prepared to die defending their ancestral lands; while the progress of the draft Community Lands Act through Parliament is shrinking the vultures' window for action". Just as in the past conflicts in 2002 and 2004, politicians from the region were alleged to have contributed and it was stated the conflicts were political. One member of Parliament was arraigned in court for incitement but was however acquitted.

In the heat of the conflicts, the government of Kenya responded by adopting a security approach leaving out a crucial aspect of ending the violence by addressing the causes of the conflict through other interventions. At first, the police presence appeared doomed to fail. According to Paul Goldsmith, "stationing the poorly equipped 'strangers' unfamiliar with the physical and human terrain, whose ability to respond was limited by lack of adequate transport, only increased the scope of the human tragedy". After mysterious assailants killed a number of the newly posted officers, Kenya's Parliament endorsed the deployment of the Kenya Defence Forces. Additionally, the presence of security personnel only pacifies the community temporarily while the real issues remain unresolved and are bound to emerge at any opportunity.

Could the conflict have been avoided?

With a rich history in conflicts one would think peace building would have been automatic. However, going by conflict patterns and indicators in the region and in absence of sustainable conflict management/transformation mechanisms, nothing shows that the 2012-2013 Tana Delta conflict could not have been avoided.

As early as June 2012, the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of State for the Development of Northern Kenya and Arid Lands National Drought Management Authority pointed out below average performance of the long rainy season. A rainy season that was erratic and poorly distributed across all livelihood zones. It also reported livestock migration towards the dry season fall back areas in the Tana Delta, along the riverine areas of the marginal mixed farming zone and towards the national parks. Tension among the farmers and herders was expected to build up as livestock concentration continues mounting in those areas. Human-wildlife conflicts in terms of crop destruction, livestock predation and human attacks reported across the livelihoods zones, have continued to be of concern as a food security threat. Worse still, with this anticipation falling within a campaign period – with the myriad governance changes and the ethicized politicization of politics – the conflict was bound to escalate.

Part of the response was to suspend the Peace Committee's role in the restoring peace. First, the conflict was ongoing, secondly, the Committee is majorly composed of the same warring communities and above all, this conflict was beyond the elders' abilities to address. Despite the conflict's changed nature where now guns and not spears are being used and where contrary to tradition direct attacks on women, children and animals have become modes of conflicts, community conflict management institutions (such as the *Gasa* and *Matadeda Council of Elders*) remain a useful tool.

The history of perennial conflicts among the Pokomo and the Orma/Wardei notwithstanding, the 2012-2013 could have been avoided. Conflicts between communities in the Tana River basin region, particularly the nomadic pastoralist and the agriculturalists, are known to be about 'fear and survival' caused by among many things resource competitions triggered by the lack of water and grazing land, and environmental factors such as droughts that increased the movements of pastoralists from the hinterland to the riverine areas. Discussions on boundaries and now capture of political space as a resource threatens the survival of different livelihoods.

Conclusion and recommendations

In the end, violent conflicts in this part of Kenya need not take place because of the associated devastation. In the absence of such realisation, deliberate actions must be taken to secure and restore peace. As a country, the need to establish an effective early warning system to prevent violent conflicts cannot be overemphasised. When violence is allowed to take place in one part of the country it is easier to triggers others. These are lessons that Kenya must take from the Tana Delta region conflict 2012 and 2013.

The 2012-2013 violence was extended to security agents, media reporters and dead attackers beside the local communities. The real causes remain multiple and heavily linked to survival and hope of the people and no one can guarantee that Kenya has seen the last of it. Thus Kenya leaders and members of public should work towards:

1. *Promotion of Livelihood*: Kenya should guarantee the survival of all in the Tana County and other neighbouring counties promoting sustainable livelihoods in the region. Pastoralism, agriculture and hunting gathering are important livelihoods whose guarantee increases the symbiotic relation among the people in the Tana Delta. In promoting livelihood, there is a need to take into considerations issues of land in particular community land for the settled and moving communities. Kenya must minimize land speculation; in addition, increase transparency about land deals in the Tana Delta to limit fears and give hope to these communities.

2. *Invest in lasting security*: the security situation in most marginalised areas in Kenya is found wanting. Serious security operations are mounted only when there is an outbreak of violence. The presence of security tools and good infrastructure are needed. Use all soft mechanisms to contain the violence and secure peace. Thus the use of and empowering community elders augment well in building lasting security.

3. *Political Accountability*: The 2012-2013 conflicts have been linked to politics. Despite that no politician was found to have incited member of public into violence. To minimize the feeling of marginalisation which sometimes is the basis for violence, there is a need to promote inclusiveness and equality among citizens. Equally, there is a need to address historical injustice issues, in particular those related to ethnic violence. This will be a deterrent and will also limit politician influence on their representatives'.

Adam Hussein Adam is a human rights defender, project management specialist and a Peace Ambassador with the National Cohesion and Integration Commission. He is working as the Equality and Citizenship Program Officers at the Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa

Bibliography

1. Police officers among 38 killed in Tana River http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000065858&story_title=police-officers-among-38-killed—in-tana-river
2. <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/-/1056/1648922/-/x8wukhz/-/index.html>
3. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-20807736>
4. <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/Eleven-more-killed-in-Tana-Delta-clashes/-/1056/1661280/-/gxqe8j/-/index.html>

5. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2013/01/201311082028453451.html>
6. https://www.kenyaredcross.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=385&Itemid=124
7. <http://www.nation.co.ke/News/UN-condemns-inhumane-Tana-violence/-/1056/1662478/-/9gqc6r/-/index.html>
8. Pilly Martin (2012) "Conflict between Pastoralists and farmers in Tana River District" in Spaces of Insecurity Human Agency in Violent Conflicts in Kenya (Pp 167-193) *Africa Study Centre Africa study collection*, Vol 45 Ed. Karen Witsenburg and Fred Zaal p. 174
9. "KENYA: Tana River farmers claim compensation", at <http://www.irinnews.org/report>.
10. Armed Conflicts Report, Kenya (1991 – first combat deaths), update: January 2006.
11. See Paul Goldsmith (15th September 2012) "Tana Delta clashes do not fit the farmer-herder competition for resources narrative" <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/OpEd/comment/Tana-clashes-do-not-fit-farmer-herder-competition/-/434750/1508556/-/item/2/-/5v89rp/-/index.html>

NEWS

Life & Peace Institute leads call for clarity in Swedish aid to the Sudan

Development and humanitarian needs in the Sudan are immense. Yet, the Swedish government seems to lack a clear vision at a time when support to the Sudanese people is most needed. Eight Swedish organisations - Church of Sweden, Diakonia, International Aid Services, Life & Peace Institute, Operation 1325, PMU, Save the Children and Swedish Fellowship for Reconciliation - now urge Sweden to present a strategy for continued long-term development support to the country.

Source: <http://www.bistandsdebatten.se/debattartiklar/>

African Union

Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn was appointed as the African Union's chairman replacing Benin's president in the one-year post. The appointment comes only five months after he took over the leadership of Ethiopia after the death of the former Prime Minister Meles Zenawi. He managed an apparently smooth transition with no major changes in policy, though there was fear of instability as a result of the power change.

Before becoming prime minister, Hailemariam was president of Ethiopia's Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region, and was appointed to be deputy prime minister and foreign minister in 2010 after the ruling coalition party's fourth election win.

Related to its role in the continent the AU has been urged to prioritize human rights violations in six countries, among them Kenya. The Human Rights Watch raised issues of human challenges in Kenya and Zimbabwe that need to be addressed particularly ahead of elections. Other countries in the Horn of Africa with human rights violation record that AU needs to discuss include Sudan and Somalia.

Source: Daily Nation, 28 January 2013 and Daily Nation, 22 January 2013

Eritrea calm for now, but challenge to president far from over

On 21 January, a group of 100 rebellious soldiers seized Eritrea's Ministry of Information and forced the media to broadcast their list of demands. Government troops managed to put an end to what some are calling a failed coup attempt. However,

Eritrean experts assert that the challenge to Eritrean leadership that has made the country one of the most isolated and oppressive in the world is far from over. Information available suggests the mutiny was spontaneous and poorly planned, hence the failure.

A small country in the Horn of Africa, Eritrea is one of the most tightly controlled and highly militarized states in the world. It has mandatory national service for people ages 18 through 55 and it bans independent organizations not controlled by the state or ruling party. This means the military, or a segment of it, is inevitably involved in any changes that take place in Eritrean society. While the Eritrean government affirms that the capital is calm, opposition activists point to growing dissent within the military.

Source: World Politics Review, <http://www.worldpoliticsreview.com/trend-lines/12656/eritrea-calm-for-now-but-challenge-to-president-far-from-over>

Kenya

Kenya political coalitions held party primaries that identified aspirants for the various positions in the 4 March 2013 elections. The coalitions bring together various political parties and although united under single presidential candidates, parties within the coalition will be contesting individually for other elective positions during the elections. The internal nomination process was characterised with flaws that led to aspirants shifting parties within the coalitions.

In the meantime, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has cleared 12000 candidates who will be vying for various positions in the general elections. The voters will cast six ballot papers to elect president, governor, senator, members of parliament, county women representative, and ward representative.

Source: Daily Nation, January 28, 2013, Daily Nation, 8 February 2013

Kenya's election choice will have consequences

Britain has warned that relations between Kenya and Britain will be severed if Jubilee candidates are elected in the coming general election. On the same, the United States of America alerted that election of Jubilee candidate as the president "could be negatively received" without stating the implications. The statement comes a day after the US president said they will not endorse any candidate and that it is up to Kenyan people to make responsible choices. These statements come after Tanzania affirms that they are ready to host the International Criminal Court Trials of the four suspects.

RESOURCES

Africa is wide awake but still hungry

One of the most remarkable turnarounds in development occurred in the last decade in many countries south of the Sahara. Economies have been growing even in the face of economic and financial instability elsewhere in the world, poverty has fallen and child mortality has dropped considerably. But the number of people suffering from undernourishment, a euphemism for hunger, has been rising. But there are reasons to be optimistic about Africa despite the fact that hunger remains pervasive. Sub-Saharan Africa is wide awake, dynamic and on the move, but still hungry, according to this report by Oxfam.

Source: <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/africa-is-wide-awake-but-still-hungry-263494>

New book and course: “Conflict assessment and peacebuilding planning”

3P Human Security is proud to announce the release of Director Lisa Shirch’s new book titled “Conflict Assessment and Peacebuilding Planning: A Strategic, Participatory, Systems-Based Handbook on Human Security.” Readers will learn a simple conflict assessment framework to identify key concepts, practice designing rigorous research to conduct conflict assessment, and monitoring and evaluation based on collecting and prioritizing data that is valid, accurate and triangulated; identify key components of strategic planning including conflict assessment, self-assessment, theories of change, and monitoring and evaluation; and prioritize information and make complex decisions to design a comprehensive peacebuilding strategy.

For more information about the book, visit <http://3phumansecurity.blogspot.com/2013/01/book-launch-conflict-assessment-and.html>

Crisis Group Report: Kenya’s 2013 Elections

As Kenya goes into elections in March, there are both hopes and fears about the outcome of the hotly contested elections owing. Even after the promulgation of a new constitution and reforms in various public institutions such as the electoral body, the judiciary and security sector, there is still fear of election related violence. The potential of violence could be triggered by the nature of campaigns between different political groups. However, nongovernmental organizations as well as religious institutions have a responsibility to press for free, fair and peaceful elections.

To read the full report

<http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/kenya/197-kenyas-2013-elections.pdf>

Policy brief – The US recognition of Somalia: implications and the way forward

The policy brief highlights the implications of US recognition of the new Somali government in January 2013. It outlines the benefit and opportunities of such recognition for the newly formed government that has the opportunity to reinstate Somalia’s position and involvement in the international community. It also outlines the essential role of internal and external actors in making use of this opportunity.

For the full policy briefing

<http://www.heritageinstitute.org/index.php/sample-sites/policy-briefing>

Gap between theory and practice in peacebuilding

There is a persistent gap between theory and practice in the field of peacebuilding, which was the primary reason that inspired the LPI programme in the Democratic Republic of Congo to arrange for an occasion for practitioners and academics to come together to share their perspectives on peacebuilding. Peacebuilding in Africa: Bridging Theory and Practice, attended by more than 60 delegates, took place in Bujumbura, Burundi, at the end of November 2012. Civil society activists from the Sudan, Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia contributed the Horn of Africa perspective to the conference.

Find a summary report in English and French at: <http://www.life-peace.org/>

Horn of Africa Bulletin, Volume 25, No. 1, January-February 2013

Editorial information

The media review Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) was published by the Life & Peace Institute between 1989 and 2006. The re-formatting of HAB as an e-bulletin 2007 was done in close collaboration with the Nairobi-based All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA).

The electronic base of HAB is LPI and the editor is Shamsia Ramadhan, shamsia.ramadhan@life-peace.org.

For subscription matters contact: Tore Samuelsson, tore.samuelsson@life-peace.org

For a link to HAB and more information see www.life-peace.org

This publication is produced with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Bread for the World and Church of Sweden. The donors are not involved in the production and are not responsible for the contents of the publication.

Editorial principles

The Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) is an international newsletter, compiling analyses, news and resources primarily in the Horn of Africa region. The material published in HAB represents a variety of sources and does not necessarily represent the views of the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) or the cooperating partners, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA). Writers and sources are normally referred to, although in exceptional cases, the editors of the HAB may choose not to reveal the real identity of a writer or publish the source.

