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Scarcity of natural resources and pastoral conflicts in northern Kenya: an inquiry

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HORN OF AFRICA BULLETIN

ANALYSES • CONTEXT • CONNECTIONS

Analyses

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Resources

Scarcity of natural resources and pastoral conflicts in northern Kenya: an inquiry

The Horn of Africa, the home to several pastoral groups, is today seen as a battleground for violent conflicts. The problem of ethnic conflicts and violent raids in the past decades is mainly blamed on increases in populations, ecological stress and a dwindling resource-base, and the resulting competing claims over scarce natural resources. Though the precarious ecological and economic position of pastoralists is a fact, the claim that natural resource scarcity induces conflicts has to be tested empirically. Evidence from analysis of inter-ethnic conflicts shows that the validity of this claim is questionable. One interesting question is for instance to what extent the pastoral peoples can fight over or for resources they either do not have or have in short supply. This article wants to look at empirical data for the association of resource scarcity and conflicts among pastoralists. Secondly, it argues for the relevance that such results might have for responses that aim at rooting out the causes of the problem.

Characteristics of pastoral communities and their key resources

Pastoral communities are set apart from other populations by certain common characteristics. First and by definition, pastoralists derive a substantial share of their livelihoods from livestock and share communal rangeland resources. The rangelands are in turn influenced by erratic rainfall that considerably varies between and within years. The rainfall patterns also have direct implications both for livestock mobility and the land-to-livestock ratio (i.e. carrying capacity), or grazing pressures of the rangelands. Second, in the arid pastoral areas the production potential of livestock and the rangeland resources are low due to rainfall patterns. Since livestock significantly contributes to the pastoral production, herd size affects pastoral human welfare and therefore livestock wealth accumulation is a desirable goal. The latter (and restocking) is stated as a major cause for incidents of pastoral conflicts during drought periods.

The pastoralists' areas are harsh and difficult environments prone to high risks. The per capita livestock wealth of pastoral households has continued to decline over the years. As a result, pastoralists today rank high in terms of poverty levels and score poorly when assessed on other social welfare indicators (e.g. education levels, maternal health and nutritional status especially among children under 5 years). The

pastoralists also frequently face basic food security problems, inter-ethnic conflicts that often are attributed to competition for access to scarce key natural resources and ecological stress. Many scholars and policy makers view or merely brush aside the incidences of pastoral conflicts as a “usual phenomenon”. Such perceptions have, unfortunately, tended to misinform the public view and shaped responses to the problem negatively. In combination, these features of the pastoralists provide the background and the context within which pastoral conflicts have to be analysed.

The debate about linking pastoral conflicts to scarcity of natural resources

There is a substantial literature focusing on violent conflicts between pastoral communities. A good deal of this literature attempts to explain, to varying degrees, the causes and the underlying motives of inter-ethnic conflicts between pastoralists, and even between herders and farmers. The main tenets of conflicts among pastoralists are usually seen to be adverse events and ecological stress.

First, severe droughts and outbreaks of animal diseases regularly occur in the dry land pastoral areas. These adverse factors cause considerable livestock wealth differentiations between households and between different ethnic groups. The need to accumulate herds after periods of (differentiated) animal losses due to droughts is usually presented as a strong motivation of inter-ethnic raids and violent pastoral conflicts. This argument makes sense, is convincing and logically consistent. This way of reasoning would mean that periods after droughts would show an increase in inter-ethnic raids, because many livestock deaths during droughts would lead to a greater incentive to restock through raiding others. The key argument is built on the common belief that herd accumulation, for whatever cause and reasons, is one of the most important driving forces of pastoral conflicts. Raiding is argued to constitute a vehicle for climbing out of herd-poverty and for gaining a culturally endorsed social status. The region's increased frequency and intensity of droughts in the past decades and associated heavy losses of livestock is suggested to have increased the number of inter-ethnic conflicts and incidents of human killing in the recent, compared to the distant, past.

Secondly, the pastoral system is based on a flexible property rights regime and on herd mobility that optimises production by rearing diverse livestock species and exploiting the varied patchiness of rangelands. In that system herd mobility transcends national borders. Studies have consistently shown the pastoralists' loss of dry season fallback grazing areas due to other land uses and a decline in per capita livestock wealth in pastoral areas of Africa. The creation of legally protected areas and national boundaries tends to disadvantage the pastoral strategic and opportunistic use of rangeland resources. The reduction of herd mobility due to restrictive policies results in rangeland degradation, which in turn leads to increased livestock deaths while human populations are growing. A low per capita wealth of pastoral households naturally puts human needs obtained from livestock, and other social and cultural obligations fulfilled by animals, at a critical point in the pastoral life and raises doubts about the survivability of pastoralism. Thus, geopolitics clearly have become a factor in environmental conflicts and a cause of environmental insecurity across border lands as political powers define territories and physical boundaries that hinder herd mobility.

To date, empirical works have tended to rely on only a few incidences of conflicts, making any claim weak in its approach and raising serious questions about the validity of the evidence. Among other issues, the trend in incidences of pastoral conflicts has yet to be understood and a better analysis of the underlying causes of the problem is needed. Ethnic frictions and conflicts are non-trivial issues in the Horn of Africa. Incidences of pastoral conflicts are common, but attributable to a number of factors (besides scarcity of natural resources) and their reasons need to be disaggregated. The analysis and results in this article formed the basis of an ongoing research that mainly focuses on pastoral groups in the northern and north-western regions of Kenya, and compares incidents of (violent) conflicts among various groups, but also pays attention to incidences of conflicts with the adjacent groups across the Ethiopia and Sudan borders.

Empirical test of the conflicts-scarce resources relations: the example of northern Kenya

A report cited in UN OCHA-Kenya in 2001 described the Horn of Africa as a region of continuous and endemic security problems of cattle-rustling raids and political instability. However, almost all the claims about inter-ethnic conflicts being a result of natural resources scarcity have been based on analysis of only limited incidents.

Pastoral conflicts are linked to and influenced by a combination of factors that complicate the nature of the problem, and challenge the understanding of the causal factors and their interaction effects. A case study carried out jointly by the authors, embarked on a thorough historical study (i.e. since the early 20th century) of all reported cases of violence in the Marsabit District in northern Kenya. The main aim was to better understand the problem of pastoral conflict. This particular study was set to investigate long-term trends of inter-ethnic conflicts and empirically test the relationships between resource scarcity and violent conflicts among pastoralist populations in the northern region of Kenya. The key research questions were: Have inter-ethnic raids and incidences of violent conflicts increased with the downward trends in rainfall and substantial decline in livestock wealth in per capita terms? And, do conflicts mainly occur during and after droughts, and during dry seasons? The study considered both seasonality and general long-term trends of the association between natural resources and inter-ethnic conflicts. This approach was inspired by the fact that the problem of inter-ethnic conflicts can be addressed with regard to resource availability (with rainfall amounts indicating the level of availability of range resources), and the dynamic changes in livestock wealth.

The study found a negative correlation between violent conflicts and drought, as well as immediate post-drought periods, although those are the periods when scarcity is experienced most, and show most livelihood tensions in pastoral communities. There are clear indications that violent incidences occur much more often in rainy seasons and during relatively good years, than in dry seasons and during droughts. Further, the evidence shows twice as many persons are likely to be killed in a violent conflict during relatively rainy years (i.e. in a time of relative resource abundance) than in the drought (drier) years. This result also reflects herders' viewpoints and explanations. They see droughts as difficult times when animals are weak, survival is hard and people are more inclined to stop fighting, patch up their differences, renegotiate access rules and rights, and reconcile to cooperate. These views suggest that when survival becomes difficult as during droughts, people decide to defer actions to raid until an appropriate time in the future. During the rainy seasons animals are in good condition and strong to withstand long distance trek, manpower demand is low, enhanced chance of rain to wash away tracks and rich vegetation cover, each or all in combination, enable raiding and increase the prospects of successful raiding.

In addition, when changes in incidences of conflicts are normalized by the human populations in per capita terms (i.e. conflict incidents in each period are divided by the corresponding human population) to allow comparison of individual incidents over time, there is no evidence that more violence is occurring now than in past periods. Moreover, it was inquired whether previous drought (and high livestock death) years are associated with (violent) conflicts in the subsequent years. Here, too, no evidence was found that devastating droughts in previous years are likely to be related to more violent conflicts or raids in subsequent years without drought, or receiving above-average rainfall amounts. Therefore, evidence from the case-study analysis of the inter-ethnic conflicts suggests that the validity of the claim that the scarcity of natural resources causes conflicts among pastoralists is not supported. Still, where and why pastoral conflicts occur remain intriguing questions. This evidence shifts to the question why people may not fight over resources they do not have or have in short supply; thus hinting at instances of human cooperation in the face of growing scarcity of key resources.

The direction for future research and policy responses

An investigation of the relationships between resource scarcity and conflict intensity in pastoral areas will continue to be at the core of the development agenda. It would be useful to find out how sideline issues relate to or influence (or even are influenced by) inter-ethnic raids and counter-raids (or revenges). The aim is to cover a multitude of factors behind inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts and to broaden the scope of the investigation and analysis of pastoral conflicts and related issues.

Future research in this direction, in our view, should explicitly look into incidences of pastoral conflicts with a view to changing negative perceptions on the basis of matter-of-fact analysis, and for informing policy responses that attend to the causes of the problem. The case-study evidence reported in this article points to a need for finding a new, innovative approach for dealing with the pastoral conflicts and their concomitant issues. Such an approach entails the categorization of causes of conflicts among pastoralists into indicators, intensity measurements and changes in incidence so as to ascertain the trend in underlying causes of conflict. If adopted, the approach gives an opportunity to carefully analyse the problem to come up with solutions tailored to specific circumstances of groups in conflicts. Regarding such an approach, several issues can motivate future research. For instance, how significant is the role of ethnicity in pastoral conflicts? In talking about livestock raiding the term ethnic conflicts is often used, yet we mean to refer to members of a specific group who are 'practising raiders' who at bare minimum made decisions and took actions to execute actual raiding practice and are a group that transcends age-limits or ethnic group affiliation to be true culprits of an offence. Again, of course, from whose viewpoint such incidents are being looked at matters. Which factors do best explain why at times warring pastoral groups form alliances against others and share resources, but break up other times to become foes only to regroup themselves later as allies?

Another issue for future research is the influence of the proliferation of modern firearms that result in more damaging effects and much higher harms of its victims, replacing the traditional spears and machetes. This is by far the greatest change that is shaping the patterns and nature of conflicts in the pastoral areas. On this note, any effective measure for dealing with pastoral conflicts and mitigating a wide range of related problems is a fundamental concern since temporal aspects of the problem are a valuable consideration. Governance concerns and conflict resolution relate to changes in institutions of raids and conflicts as they were carried out in the distant past compared to how they are executed in the more recent past. The dynamics of local institutions of conflicts that fuel inter-ethnic hatred and violence can be taken into account by using ethnic differences and age-categories (e.g. local elders, youth etc). The *other factors* causing conflicts such as changes in the legal systems, economy and age-set, and politics over (natural and state) resources constitute 'intervening variables'. Taken together, these issues are instrumental in providing insights into the nature and intensity of ethnic rivalry between pastoral peoples, and require attention in future research with relevance for intervention efforts. In a broad sense, such research might also interest development agencies (locally initiated or linked to an international agency) working at the local level. Conflict resolution and peacebuilding strategies between contentious pastoral groups in the Horn should aim either at easing tensions or conflict avoiding options.

Conclusion

Recurring severe droughts that diminish livestock populations, deteriorating environmental conditions, and constrained access to rangeland resources are often seen to be inter-locked with cycles of raids and livestock rustling. These problems are blamed on the growing competition over natural resources, and to weak community-level institutions and reduced power of the local elders for resolving conflicts. In the absence of a framework to broker peace evolving out of local peoples' peacebuilding processes and committed choices of conflict avoidance and mitigation, options for finding an enduring solution are as difficult as they are costly. The case-study results presented here

challenge the widely held claim that inter-ethnic pastoral conflicts are mostly motivated by declining per capita livestock wealth (or wealth differentiation between different groups) or induced by scarcity of natural (or environmental) resources. Yet, there are only a few thorough empirical works on the relationships between natural resources scarcity and pastoral conflicts based on long-term time-series data. It seems a reasonable guess to explain the frequent occurrence of violent conflicts without any prior warning by the failure of local institutions in building peace. It would also seem plausible to assert that pastoral conflicts recur unabatedly because of inefficiencies ingrained in the judicial system and their poor enforcements of the rule of law. The role of ‘formal politics’ and the behaviour of local politicians in election-related violent conflicts, by manipulating ethnicity and emphasizing politics of difference for electoral gains, are also becoming emerging concerns. However, the causes of conflicts in pastoral areas may not easily be understood according to the micro-macro-level categories. Neither can motives of conflicts be combined into a single factor across groups or over time, nor can the problem be isolated from today’s global issues. The ‘practicing raiders’ behaviour in terms of how violent conflicts of whatever cause are conceived, meticulously planned, and fought out are difficult to understand, but extremely important. The landscape of pastoral conflicts changes in an unpredictable way, which is making responses more difficult and research into the realities of these conflicts more compelling.

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Ethnic identity, violent conflicts and the mission of the Church

Introduction

A piece of the Bible was found among the ruins of the Lutheran Church in the Kibera slum, after the fire that struck the Church, the school and the clinic. The piece, which reads “If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they would have swallowed us alive, when their wrath was kindled against us”, was from Psalm 124:2-3. This miraculous act inspired Bishops of the entire leadership of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Kenya (ELCK) to meet at the Scripture Mission Conference Centre in Nairobi from 2 to 9 February 2008. They came from all over the country to seek God’s guidance for a new vision of Unity in Christ towards reconciliation based on truth and justice in Kenya. The basic theological foundation for the work of the Church is deeply embedded in the reconciling power of God, which requires ‘metanoia’, or change of consciousness, i.e. a constant conversion of the heart. Thus, the Church can reach out to the rest of the world with the love of Christ and create an authentic ecumenical community, or ‘Koinonia’, and hence build the capacity to transform communities. This then leads to a perpetual commitment to service, or ‘Diakonia’. In the African cultural setting, reconciliation involves a covenant that is sealed when the offender and the victim all eat from the same dish. It has no pre-condition. It does not need to be stressed that there can be no reconciliation without truth, no reconciliation without transformative justice, and no reconciliation without forgiveness and repentance.

Ethnicity and post-election violence in Kenya and the need for a spiritual and moral regeneration of society

During the 1990s, most countries in sub-Saharan Africa embraced neo-liberal party politics, which were subsequently undermined by the establishment of ethnic oligar-

chies and a personalisation of the civic public realm. Hence, power was consolidated among a few ruling urban elites. It is in this regard that the post-election violence in Kenya led to the unprecedented displacement of Kenyans and created an environment of mental, physical and spiritual ailment. Apart from the destruction of property and the loss of life that left Kenyans hurting, the nation itself was wounded and held at ransom by politicians. We have learnt from the Kenyan experience that elections as a means of contest for political power – while being the pillars of modern day democratic practice – can also lead to the polarization of the communities and nationalities that constitute the state. We have also learnt that where there are weak institutions with no legal instruments to guarantee stability in times of transition there can be great danger. The politics of ethnicity that underpin the crisis of identity and class consciousness are at the core of the national grievances, which have been further exacerbated by the electoral dispute. The politicisation of land distribution and the ethnic monopolisation of state resources were at the heart of the crisis in Kenya. The use of force and instruments of “raw” power within the state, such as the paramilitary and military, accompanied by the doctrine of “law and order” often legitimizes impunity and the use of violence. Kenya is now faced with a prolonged period of national healing that will inevitably require public confidence in the institutions of governance, whose capacity to face the reality of history and also harness the opportunity for moral and spiritual regeneration is being severely tested. The fragile fabric of the public order remains threatened by negative ethnicity and class differentiation in society. There are still a number of internally displaced persons in the country who are living in deplorable conditions in Church compounds and other places of worship, police stations or schools.

When rage is not engaged by the capacity to be human and when self-estrangement and apathy become the defining mode of being, then a trigger of “hatred” could easily lead to a chain of violence. In this regard, there is very a thin line between ethnic affection and religious conviction. However, when ethnic hatred is combined with state complicity with the intent to organise and execute impunity, then genocide is most likely as the case of Rwanda showed. The question of political stability, especially with regards to the security of the state, is intricately linked to harmonious relationships existing between the various ethnic groups that constitute any nation.

The question of identity and the manipulation of state resources over a long period of time may not necessarily be resolved only through new forms of legislation, but also through the moral and spiritual regeneration of the Kenyan society. The politically and ethically justified use of power has been part of the public rhetoric that the current disputes of food and oil distribution can only be resolved by the leaders making hard choices that may negate the interests of groups and communities they represent. This can only take place in an environment informed by selflessness and a spirit of sacrifice. And while referring to the complexity of identity as revealed in reality, i.e. there are a variety of strata of identity within one subject that include several components that may be ethnic, religious, national, racial, gender-related, political and even non-categorical, we are reminded by Paul when he speaks in the Bible that as Christians we are neither Jew nor Gentiles, neither male nor female, but share one common humanity in Christ. Hence, while individual human beings often cross several boundaries of distinctiveness and only exhibit ‘permanent’ or ‘dominant’ forms of identity depending on their social location, this does not take away their belonging to a common humanity. Our common humanity as a people who co-exist within the boundaries of the Kenyan state is informed by the diversities of our cultures, traditions, religious convictions and heritages. For this reason, ethnic identity is transactional and not absolute, and therefore, if the historical grievances underlying our current crisis are resolved, Kenyans who have been separated by the current conflict can be re-united due to the inevitability of their shared humanity. And here the message of Paul becomes more critical, as our identity as human beings is ultimately spiritual, i.e. we are created not in the image and likeness of our tribes, but ultimately in the image and likeness of God. From biblical exposition of the tower

of Babel we experience the conflicting paradoxes of a global human project, which suppresses diversity instead of celebrating it. However, in the New Testament, the Pentecostal experience among the disciples affirms the diversity of identity within the community and allows for complete expression of difference as a manifestation of the power of the Holy Spirit. We can, therefore, use biblical resources to reclaim the authentic expressions of human identity as manifestations of diversity within God's creation.

Colonial legacies and state manipulation of identity

Going back in history, we all know that our current problems have deep roots in the legacy of colonial domestication, which fabricated certain grids of classifying people and also privileging certain communities over others. In some parts of Africa there is confusion even now as to what may be termed a "tribe" in the original sense, or what was initially just a dialect of a certain ethnic group and which for inexplicable reasons was later declared to be a "tribe". In some cases, the people did not in any way regard themselves as belonging to a tribe ethnically, but rather as subjects of a certain chieftain or leader. There are many examples of communities with different dialects which had a common identity under a particular authority. Colonial memory has remained our mode of engaging our primordial self, yet the reality that informs who we really are, even unconsciously, has nothing to do with our preoccupation with colonial memory. Existing evidence suggests that ethnic cleansing and genocide are thought to be the product of longstanding grudges between opposing ethnic groups within a society. However, ethnic hatred alone does not provide sufficient conditions for mass genocide or ethnic cleansing. From the very beginning of internal discontent starting from the Nigerian-Biafran war to the blood bath in Liberia; the 1992 ethnic clashes in Kenya; the Eritrean-Ethiopian border conflicts; the civil wars in Somalia, Angola, Sudan and Sierra Leone; and the Burundi and Rwanda massacres, massive human rights abuses were reported. In most of these tragedies, contesting ideologies and state manipulation of ethnic identity were at the heart of the genesis of the conflict.

The role of the Churches in working towards overcoming conflicts

Yet as a people we remain fragmented by forces of ethnicity, which sometimes make us strangers to each other in our own land. In these times of food and oil crises, the Churches must remain vigilant by utilizing their unique role and opportunity to be actively involved in mobilizing the peasant communities for indigenous food production and distribution. Agencies engaging in peacebuilding are called to be committed partners in supporting the Churches in Africa to provide opportunities for vulnerable groups and communities not only to overcome injustice imposed from outside, but also to have access to information on the conditions that inhibit their complete wellbeing. Whenever there are conflicts on the continent and there is a need for the restoration of peace, there are always historical grievances among communities that are linked to access to resources and class formation imbued with contests for political power. The Churches, and indeed the ecumenical movement, have the basic responsibility not to be entangled in local power struggles, but rather to fulfil the obligation to protect the weak and advocate for justice on behalf of the poor. Churches themselves have to be transformed in their collaboration with the local and global actors of peace. Their capacities must be enhanced to equip the people of Africa to organise themselves and never to be bound by the past, but to march on with dignity towards the new jubilee with the prophetic vision of a reconciled people. And herein we find the vision that must constantly consume us, as with Isaiah, when we long for the day when "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with a calf and the lion. A little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze together, their young shall lie down together and the lion shall eat straw like an ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of an asp

and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den. They will not be hurt or destroyed on my entire holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.”

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NEWS AND EVENTS

ERITREA AND DJIBOUTI

UN demands Eritrea to pullback, Eritrea rejects

Eritrea has rejected a United Nations (UN) Security Council resolution demanding the withdrawal of its troops from its borders with Djibouti within a period of five weeks. In June 2008 Djibouti accused Eritrea of moving troops across the border. The ensuing fighting killed a dozen of Djiboutian troops. The latest Security Council resolution on the matter (14 January 2009) praises Djibouti for moving forces and equipment to pre-conflict positions. The resolution that was passed under Chapter 7 of the UN Charter does not specify consequences for the case that Eritrea did not comply. It, however, asks UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to report on compliance within six weeks. In a statement on 15 January, the Eritrean government denied Djibouti's accusations and instead criticised the UN Security Council for passing a resolution against Eritrea “on a manufactured ‘border dispute’”.

Reuters

SOMALIA

Puntland: New president elected

Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed “Farole” was peacefully elected new President of the Regional State of Puntland in north-eastern Somalia on 8 January. The 66-seat Puntland Parliament gave 49 votes to Dr. Farole in the third voting round. The former Puntland President Gen. Mohamud “Adde” Muse fell out in the second round of the vote. He congratulated the new President in the inauguration ceremony and admitted his administration's shortcomings.

After his election, the new President addressed the Parliament in a speech that was broadcasted on the local radio and the internet. He described his priorities to be “restoring security, improving public service, developing economic sectors and empowering the free-market economy.” He also stated that Puntland would never declare independence, but would always support the establishment of a national government in Mogadishu. In a letter addressed to UN Special Envoy to Somalia Mr. Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah issued on 24 January, Puntland's new leader stated the regional government's support to “any political and social reconciliation initiative for Somalia.” He, however, urged that appointments for the new parliament “shall be forwarded to the administration and hence appointed by respective communities.”

Dr. Abdirahman Mohamed “Farole” becomes the fourth President of Puntland after Abdullahi Yusuf (1998-2004), Mohamed Abdi Hashi (2004-2005) and Gen. Adde Muse (2005-2009).

Garowe online

While Djibouti talks continue, Baidoa seized

While over thousand Somali politicians are gathering in Djibouti to establish a “Unity Government”, the Islamist group Al-Shabaab has seized control of the central town Baidoa, including government centres like the parliament hall, the police station and a small airstrip. This came shortly after Ethiopian troops completely withdrew from Somalia on 25 January.

In Djibouti, members of the Transitional Federal Parliament (TFP) voted to double the number of seats in parliament from 275 in order to include the Alliance for the Reliberation of Somalia (ARS)-Djibouti (200 seats) and members of the civil society (75 seats). The extended Parliament will then have to elect a new President. Abdullahi Yusuf resigned from his position as Interim President of the Transitional Federal Government on 29 December. It came after rifts between him and Prime Minister Nur Hassan Hussein over the composition of the government and the Djibouti peace process. Under the Transitional Federal Charter, a new Somali president should be chosen by the parliament within 30 days of the resignation of the last one. However, TFP members voted on 27 January to extend the period by five days. ARS-Djibouti has nominated Sheikh Sharif Sheikh Ahmed as their only presidential candidate. Nur Hassan Hussein is also running for the presidency. New members of parliament from ARS-Djibouti joined the parliament on 28 January.

The international community hopes that a more inclusive Somali government will be able to reach out to armed groups in Somalia. On 16 January, the United Nations (UN) Security Council renewed the authorisation of the African Union (AU) peacekeeping force in Somalia (AMISOM). The 15-member body also expressed its intent to establish a UN force when conditions permitted that step. It requested Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to develop the mandate for a possible UN force by 15 April. The “follow-on” UN force is, however, subject to a further decision by the Security Council to be taken on 1 June 2009. The Security Council furthermore urged African nations to boost AMISOM’s troop strength to 8000. Currently around 3000 troops – from Uganda and Burundi – are in the country and have increasingly become targets of insurgent attacks. *Shabelle Media Network, BBC, DPA, Reuters, Garowe Online, UN News Service*

UGANDA

Military campaign against the LRA in DRC

A joint military operation against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) called “Operation Lightning Thunder” is currently carried out by military forces from Uganda, DRC, Central African Republic and South Sudan. The operation started with an airstrike on LRA camps in north-eastern DRC on 14 December 2008. The offensive came after LRA leader Joseph Kony had rebuffed the international community three times in 2008 by failing to sign a peace deal with Uganda that had been negotiated over the previous two years. Those negotiations came to a halt in late November 2008. However, according to analysts, the LRA camps were largely empty, which, together with the failure to cordon off the camps and cut off escape routes, could point to flaws in military planning. Now, scattered LRA are stretched across hundreds of kilometres and violence has multiplied since “Lightning Thunder” has set off.

According to Human Rights Watch (HRW) and Justice Plus, a Congolese Human Rights organisation, combatants of the LRA killed at least 620 civilians and abducted more than 160 children between 24 December and 13 January. HRW and Justice Plus carried out a two-week mission to north-eastern DRC and researchers collected detailed information. They call for the protection of civilians.

Different voices question whether the military offensive could lead to a solution of the problem. Professor Morris Ogenga Latigo, leader of the opposition in parliament from Northern Uganda, for instance stated “The army should accept the operation is not succeeding, instead of wasting national resources. This operation (...) failed to take [out] the LRA leadership.” Archbishop Odama from Gulu in northern

Uganda, who chairs the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative, told Ecumenical News International on 22 January “This is not solving the problem. It is not solving the problem. It is creating more challenges to the region.” He called on the international community to act: “I urge the international community to come to rescue the people. The U.N. should have a resolution to stop this campaign and fighting. The two sides have to come to the negotiating table.”

Institute for War and Peace Reporting (AR No. 197), Reuters, Human Rights Watch, Ecumenical News International

RESOURCES

GENERAL

African Journal on Conflict Resolution

The African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes (ACCORD) launched this academic journal focusing on conflict transformation in Africa in 1999. Thereby ACCORD fulfilled a long-held ambition to contribute to the intellectual development of thinking, writing and dialogue in the field of conflict management on the continent of Africa. The papers of each issue can be accessed at:

www.accord.org.za/publications/ajcr/downloads

“Horizontal inequalities and conflict: understanding group violence in multiethnic societies” (April 2008)

Edited by Frances Stewart, this book looks at violent conflict in multiethnic societies. Drawing on original quantitative and qualitative research, this book shows that horizontal inequalities among religious or ethnic groups, in political, social, economic or cultural dimensions, are an important catalyst of such conflicts. The contributors identify policies to reduce horizontal inequalities and argue that such policies should now be routinely incorporated into the development agenda. For more information, see:

www.palgrave.com/products/title.aspx?PID=277729

“Fragile states” (January 2009)

This working paper published by the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity (at University of Oxford) aims at making the concept the concept of ‘fragile states’ operational for development policy. The paper proposes a three-pronged definition of fragility: states may be fragile because they lack authority (authority failure), fail to provide services (service entitlement failure) or lack legitimacy (legitimacy failure). The authors argue that each captures different aspects of state vulnerability, and that they are related to each other causally. The paper points to some policy implications of the proposed approach to fragility. Throughout, it draws on six case studies – Indonesia, Nepal, Guatemala, Côte d’Ivoire, Nigeria and Sudan – which are presented at the end of the paper.

www.crise.ox.ac.uk/pubs/workingpaper51.pdf

“Negotiating Disarmament: Reflections on guns, fighters and armed violence in peace processes, Volume 2” (30 November 2008)

This paper is part of the ‘Negotiating disarmament’ project of the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue. This project includes a range of activities such as analysis of how weapons control and violence reduction are negotiated in specific peace processes; publication of thematic briefing papers and opinion pieces on related issues; development of a database of clauses related to weapons and violence from peace agreements concluded during the last 30 years to assess trends; convention

of experts meetings on discrete themes; and, work with armed groups on security arrangements. The paper, edited by Cate Buchanan, brings together a rich collection of voices and experiences on security issues in peace processes, with the aim of contributing to the various debates and discussions around these difficult subjects. www.hdcentre.org/files/Viewpoints%20Edition%20202.pdf

“Going with the grain in African Development?”

(in: *Development Policy Review*, 2008, 26 (6), pp. 627-655)

In view of the disappointing performance of the Good Governance agenda in Africa, policy-makers are asking whether better results could be obtained with approaches that attempt to ‘work with the grain’ of African societies. In this article, Tim Kelsall explores what this might mean. The article identifies a core set of beliefs and values – concerning power, accountability and social morality – that have proved extremely durable and remain powerful drivers of behaviour across sub-Saharan Africa. It finds that, in general, Western institutions sit ill with these traditions. The question is, therefore, how to redirect development efforts so that they stop working against, and start to build upon, the extant notions of moral obligation and interpersonal accountability in the region. www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/121429502/abstract?CRETRY=1&SRETRY=0

Another version of the paper (Published on behalf of the Africa Power and Politics Programme by the Overseas Development Institute) can be accessed at: www.ansa-africa.net/uploads/documents/publications/APPP_Discussion_Paper_1_Kelsall.pdf

KENYA

New book analyses the impact of globalization on the Kenyan media system

“Globalization’s impact on the African countries’ media systems – the case of Kenya” (2009)

Most research on globalization has concentrated on the economic aspects of the process. The impact of globalization on the less developed nations’ media systems remains under-researched. Dr. Mustafa Y. Ali addresses this gap and analyses the impact of globalization on the Kenyan media sector as a case study of the less developed countries’ media systems.

SOMALIA

New ICG report

“Somalia: to move beyond the failed state” (23 December 2008), the latest International Crisis Group (ICG) report, argues that the withdrawal of the Ethiopian army, which intervened in December 2006, opens a new period of uncertainty and risk but also provides a chance to launch an inclusive political process. www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?l=1&id=5836

“Land, property and housing in Somalia”

This report focuses on the Somali legal frameworks and institutional systems relating to land and on the historical background of the current landholding and ownership patterns in Somalia. However, it also looks at a much wider range of social, cultural, political, economic, and environmental contexts relating to land and examines some of the theoretical debates on land issues, in order to apply them to Somalia. It was commissioned or funded by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT). www.unhcr.org/refworld/pdfid/496dfeb82.pdf

SUDAN

“Darfur’s challenge to international society” (December 2008)

David Black and Paul Williams (Canadian International Council) look at the Darfur crisis and the role of international actors from the perspective of the theoretical concept of “international society”.

www.canadianinternationalcouncil.org/download-nocache/publicatio/behindtheh/volume65/bth_vol65_~7

“Against the gathering storm: Securing Sudan’s Comprehensive Peace Agreement” (January 2009)

This Chatham House Report by Dr. Edward Thomas assesses the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) signed by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army and the Government of Sudan in 2005. It focuses on three areas of current or former conflict in Southern Sudan, Southern Kordofan and Darfur. The report argues for sustained and committed international engagement to ensure that the provisions and principles of the CPA are adhered to. It also sets out areas that may be problematic over the next few years.

www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/12941_0109sudan_r.pdf

UGANDA

“No excuses: the end of the Lord’s Resistance Army is in sight” (January 2009)

Statement by the Enough Project and Resolve Uganda on “Operation Lightning Thunder”.
www.enoughproject.org/files/publications/Joint_LRA_statement_jan_16_Final.pdf

“Offensive against Kony backfires” (January 2009)

Peter Eichstaedt, who is the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) Africa Editor, comments on the military operation against the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

www.iwpr.net/?p=acr&s=f&o=348930&apc_state=henpacr348166

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Editorial information

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

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.

