

Pastoralist Voices

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'Pastoralist Voices proposes strategies for addressing Pastoralists' challenges by bringing Pastoralists' perspective to the forefront of humanitarian and development decision-making.'



TAKE OUR GUNS BUT GIVE US SECURITY

Hundreds of pastoralists crowded a security command centre in Isiolo district to return illegal guns before the January 21, 2010 amnesty deadline. By Monday January 4, 2010, 164 illegal guns and 7,939 rounds of ammunition had been surrendered. As police displayed a cache of surrendered arms, pastoralist communities in Isiolo were worried about their security. They argue that if their neighbouring rivals fail to return firearms, peace would become

elusive in the pastoralist areas.

A contingent of more than 1,000



Some of the guns surrendered by pastoralists in Isiolo. Photo: Hasan Huka 1/1/2010

Kenya Administration Police (AP) and General Service Unit

(GSU) security officers have set up a camp at Buuri District, just seven kilometres outside Isiolo District, in preparation for the forceful disarmament after the amnesty period. The government postponed the disarmament exercise, which was to start on Christmas Eve January 21 January. This was to ensure that pastoralist communities returned the illicit firearms voluntarily to avoid forced disarmament.

The exercise follows a spate of banditry attacks resulting to several deaths with scores nurs-

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The Regional Approach: Making Disarmament Work in the Horn of Africa

Pastoralists across the Horn of Africa argue that disarmament efforts have not been successful in their communities because they have failed to address the reasons why pastoralists arm themselves.

According to several consultations with pastoralists organized by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA), pastoralists,

within the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda border region often take up arms to protect their livestock and themselves as they reside in these insecure and neglected areas.

Reports from a 2007 pastoralist gathering by the African Union (AU) noted that the rampant conflicts in pastoralist regions stem, not only from competition over declining natural resources. Ten-

sions have also resulted from national boundaries that were established without consideration of pastoralists' needs, including weakening of customary conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, decline in mobility and proliferation of small arms.

Many argue that it is unfair to

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Pastoralists Stranded in Disasters : Drought and Floods

Perhaps nowhere on earth are natural disasters deadlier than in areas inhabited by pastoralist communities in the Greater Horn of Africa. Floods that have swept across Kenya have grounded pastoralists' normal life to a halt in Turkana East district of northwest Kenya.

The hazardous floods have caused more harm than good to the already vulnerable Turkana community. The Turkana people are still recovering from previous disasters, ranging from persistent droughts, livestock diseases, cholera outbreaks, food insecurity to resource-based conflicts.

"The pastoralists are sandwiched between disasters such as droughts, famine, livestock diseases, and conflicts, and are now faced with floods. A chunk of livestock were killed and irrigated farms washed away by floods," says Joseph Elim, coordinator of Riam Riam, a local NGO involved in peace building work in the region.

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TAKE OUR GUNS BUT GIVE US SECURITY

ing injuries in hospital. In November 2009, more than 100 armed cattle rustlers overpowered security personnel in Isiolo district. They stole more than 820 cattle and killed three policemen, three reservists and a herdsman. More than 300 police officers have since been deployed to the area to beef up security.



Photo by UN OCHA Kenya 2007

As the security personnel rid residents of illegal firearms in Isiolo region, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), the Government's human rights body, claims that security personnel in previous mop up exercise were involved in gross violation of human rights against the local communities. During the operations, innocent people have lost their lives while women were reported to being abused.

While Kenya Human Rights Commission is not opposed to the exercise, the body urges the government to ensure that disarmament is carried out in a humane manner. The agency further claims that the fight against illegal arms can only be won through constructive engagement. KHRC calls on the government to protect its borders to avoid the proliferation of small arms, which contributes to increasing insecurity in the area. The body urges the government to devise "intelligent" means of gathering security information and to stop criminalising all pastoralists from the region.

To 73-year-old Mzee Suguta, Isiolo

pastoralist, surrendering his G3 rifle which he bought to defend his animals and family, seven years ago, is a matter of life and death. "If the neighbouring communities do not surrender their guns or police fail to disarm them, the lives of my family members are at risk and my animals will be stolen at will" says Mzee Suguta. Pastoralist communities in Isiolo have now pegged their hopes on the ability of the government to protect them and to bring peace to the lawless region.

Report by Matthew Kimaita, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

The Regional Approach: Making Disarmament Work in the Horn of Africa

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disarm pastoralists in very insecure territories without providing security. According to Lucas Ariong of Riam Riam, an advocacy and peace building civil society group, "Pastoralists take up arms to protect themselves because the state has not been able to provide basic security to allow them to sustain their livelihood."

An article published by the International Journal of Conflict and Violence in 2009, entitled *Pastoralists at War: Violence and Security in the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda Border Region*, supports this position, noting that "Governments have failed to invest sufficient human and financial capital in abating the conflict and the underlying underdevelopment in the pastoralist regions. Responding to this conflict with uncoordinated top-down

"disarmament for disarmament's sake" initiatives clearly mask the root causes, and in a number of cases destabilizes communities."

Pastoralists occupy the porous borders of Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and Somalia. Some of these countries are engulfed or emerging from civil wars, and have rebel groups commanding the remote frontiers with limited presence of governments' security forces. The article further states: "The spillover effects of wars in southern Sudan and Uganda—including the proliferation of high-powered assault rifles—have transformed otherwise low-intensity tensions into full-scale massacres."

According to the Centre for Minority Rights Development (CEMIRIDE), there are estimated 45,000 guns in Pokot, another 40,000 in Karamoja and 40,000 in Turkana. CEMIRIDE believes that pastoralist areas in northwest Kenya and northeastern Uganda hold more than 200,000 illegal guns fuelling conflicts in the region.

The same article in the International Journal of Conflict and Violence indicates that, a 2008 Small Arms Survey study in Eastern Equatoria State (Sudan) and Turkana North (Kenya) reveals that nearly half of all respondents had witnessed a violent event in their lifetime. "Between 1994 and 2005, pastoralist districts in Uganda and Kenya lost an estimated 460,000 livestock worth over US\$75 million, and as of 2003, a total of 164,457 people had been displaced by conflict in northern Kenya. Similar patterns are prevalent among pastoralist communities in neighbouring countries," states the article.

Governments across the Horn have woken up to the dangers, but at the moment responses are mainly focused on civilian disarmament. According to *Between a rock and hard place: Armed Violence in African Pastoral Communities*, a 2008 report by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the use of small arms in pastoral conflict has led policy-makers to focus on weapons as the primary source of violent conflict rather than deeper social, political and economic factors. "The result is that state

MAKING DISARMAMENT WORK

interventions have tended to focus primarily on disarmament, and have failed to adopt a holistic approach of including demand-reduction strategies, effective policing, and comprehensive supply-side measures to stem

the movement of weapons into these communities,” says the report. It further states that: “Assessment of these disarmament interventions have shown that they often intensify insecurity for disarmed groups, in some cases prompting raids from neighbouring tribes who seek to take advantage of their neighbours’ temporary weakness.” Arms acquisition by pastoralist communities, the report notes further is “as much a response to threats, as it is an attempt to gain offensive capability – in effect a misdiagnosis in which symptom is framed as cause.” The UNDP report concludes that pastoralist communities have also been unwilling to disarm as returning their weapon without adequate security in place leaves them vulnerable to attack by armed neighbouring clans.

The effectiveness of disarmament interventions is also undermined by ‘perceptions’ of government role in arming communities across the border areas. “In Kenya and Uganda, where the military’s role is restricted to responding to large-scale incidents and carrying out community disarmament programs, governments have armed local defense units to provide security at the local level. These comprise civilians who are given a registered firearm and ammunition without any training or remuneration,” adds the International Journal of Conflict and Violence.

The Journal article also mentions that in Kenya, for instance, the Kenyan Police Reservists (KPR), armed with Kalashnikov-pattern and G3 assault rifles, function as a community task force mandated to respond to local crime and disputes. While the KPR are sometimes effective in defending communities against cattle raids, they are known to lend out their weapons to warriors for raiding purposes,

“Most of the affected and displaced population by the current floods was part of communities still experiencing heightened food insecurity due to prolonged drought.

Drought affected an estimated 3.8 million people in pastoral, agro pastoral and marginal agricultural areas.” KRC Jan 2010

undermining the very security they are supposed to protect.

“Furthermore, it is widely believed that the government of Sudan in Khartoum provides arms to pastoralist communities in the South in order to destabilize the government of Southern Sudan’s power base, and to challenge the authority of the SPLA,” adds the article.

undermining the very security they are supposed to protect.

Making Disarmament Work

The article, *Pastoralists at War: Violence and Security in the Kenya-Sudan-Uganda Border Region* by Jonah Leff of Monterey Institute of International Studies, United States, which appeared in the International Journal of Conflict and Violence; Vol. 3 (2) 2009, gives suggestions of making disarmament work in the region:

Improved Security & Peacebuilding

- Governments need to install adequate law enforcement in the pastoralist regions. They need to offer sizeable incentives so that security forces will not resort to corruption as a way of supplementing their income. Security posts should be positioned on borders and at violence hotspots where tribes are known to clash.
- Governments and international organizations should support and build the capacity of local Civil Society Organizations that are working locally to mitigate conflict and sensitize communities with workshops and peacebuilding campaigns. This includes, but is not limited to, supplying vehicles and CB radios so that Civil Society Organizations can effectively contact authorities for early response.
- A regional body of Civil Society Organizations should be formed to enable local organizations to share knowledge, form partnerships, and work cooperatively toward peace.
- Build feeder roads connecting main

roads to small villages so that authorities can quickly reach affected areas. Knowing that security providers have access to villages and kraals would act as a deterrent to raiding warriors. Improved road transport would also enable pastoralists to partake in local commerce.

Sustainable Development

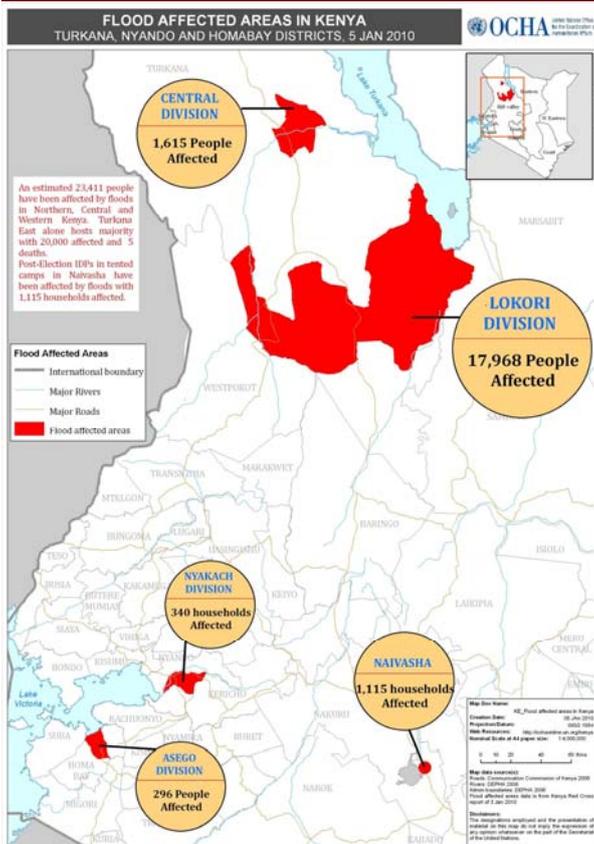
- Governments and donors must continue to build water wells so that pastoralists can sustain their livestock during the dry season. This would also reduce the amount of time women and girls spend fetching water from pumps that are sometimes hours away by foot.
- Establish cooperatives and inter-tribal commerce of local goods and livestock in order to build partnerships and economic development through trade. This would, in the long-term, undermine the illicit commercial practices of livestock traders in the area.
- Plant Napier grass in grazing areas. Napier grass grows very quickly and is tolerant of drought conditions.

Disarmament

- Once proper security provisions have been established, traditional disarmament practices should be reformed. Coordinated voluntary disarmament programs should be implemented that disarm neighbouring tribes simultaneously.
- For those surrendering weapons, some kind of compensation should be offered. In order to avoid solely rewarding those with weapons, “weapons for development” programs should be implemented. Whole villages are rewarded with improved infrastructure and social services after a certain number of weapons have been collected.
- Communities must be sensitized to and informed about disarmament exercises before they commence. Furthermore, community members should play an active role in the dis-

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PASTORALISTS STRANDED IN DISASTERS: DROUGHT AND FLOODS



Map showing flood affected areas in Kenya, Jan 2010

The hazardous floods have killed five people, and more than 6,000 livestock while displacing more than 22, 000 people in Turkana East district, are the worst.

Elim says that the rainfall that struck the region was beyond the pastoralist people's capacity since they were still recovering from other disasters. He says that the affected Turkanas have been grazing their livestock along the riverbanks as a coping strategy during drought period. But the recent floods have disrupted and destroyed their livelihoods.

"Women and children are hit the hardest by the floods as they depend directly on livestock as their main source of income in hard times," says Elim.

He says that with the floods sweeping the region, insecurity has heightened in the affected areas. The displaced people fear relocating to high and safer ground as they are more insecure. Though the affected people are expected to move to the higher grounds, many in Turkana East district choose to live on the lower areas, which are flood-prone, to avoid attacks from their armed rivals, Pokot pastoralists.

According to Riam Riam, Pokot raiders

attacked Nakukulas in Lokori, one of the areas affected by floods, where two people were injured and 300 camels stolen during the flooding period. "We have received early warning information that the Pokot are regrouping to attack since it will be difficult for their rivals to pursue them while responding to the effects of the floods," says Joseph Elim of Riam Riam.

The agro-pastoralists living in Kainuk, Katilu and Nakwamoru, situated along river Turkwel, were never spared by the floods; their crops were washed away when the river burst its banks, displacing hundreds of residents.

"Nearly all roads in Turkana East district are impassable or very hazardous, making it difficult for humanitarian assistance to reach the affected population, especially food. Provision of essential services have been disrupted and the supply chain broken, increasing the suffering of the people," adds Elim. Elim says that the affected population needs immediate assistance, in particular, shelter, food and non-food items. He adds that they also require medical care as some of the water sources are likely to be contaminated thus leading to cholera outbreak. For the future, Elim suggests that the affected pastoralists will need to be restocked to allow them build their assets (livestock) lost to floods.

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armament process to give them ownership over the security of their communities.

- Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration campaigns must be introduced for paramilitary groups in Sudan and Uganda. Particular attention should be given to the reintegration phase that trains ex-combatants for employment, so that they do not return to a life of violence.
- The Kenya/Uganda Joint Security Program that was established in 2005, but has yet to be implemented, should begin operations as outlined in its program of action:

Simultaneous and coordinated disarmament operations

- Mobilization, sensitization, and deployment
- Establishment of law and order in areas of operation
- Branding of livestock
- Provision and reconstruction of social and physical infrastructure
- Rewards and recognition
- Support the development of alternative livelihoods

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<http://ochaonline.un.org/kenya>



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