

# Challenges of Insecurity to Pastoral Sustainability in the Greater Horn of Africa

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## Abstract

Pastoralists live in some of the harshest climatic regions in the world and have faced many challenges to their sustainability. Recent years have seen the influx of small arms into the Greater Horn region, which have diffused from conflict areas. This has become a devastating new challenge for pastoral groups. Small arms exacerbate existing tensions over land and resource and have now become part of the livelihood strategy, it is impossible to keep livestock without having a gun. A new form of cattle raiding has emerged which is commercialized and controlled by outside players, and the community see very little of the profit. Thus societies have been greatly altered and livelihoods strained especially for young men who would have traditionally been occupied with herding. When there is state intervention, the emphasis is mainly on disarmament, which is often coercive and leads to rearmament by communities as the gun is their main livelihood strategy. States are often insensitive to livelihood concerns and resources that should be used for development are largely eaten up by dealing with insecurity. This paper highlights various policy decisions that have exacerbated armed conflict. It goes on to consider some areas of potential intervention to assist communities towards self sustainability including encouraging and assisting with alternative livelihoods and the use of indigenous institutions and their knowledge.

**Key words:** Small arms, Livelihood, Pastoral conflict, Sustainability and policy

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## Introduction

The Greater Horn of Africa (Sudan, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Eritrea and Kenya) contains the largest population of pastoralists in the world (Markakis 1993). They occupy the arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs) and depend entirely upon livestock for their livelihood. They rely on these herds for their subsistence, which hold central value within their social, political and economic institutions. These areas have in general the lowest development indicators and the highest incidence of poverty. There is a long history of political and economical

marginalization, documented from the colonial era and continuing through to the post-colonial times, owing in part to their peripheral location "at the edge of the world" (Kenya National Archives, District Commissioner West Suk, Annual Report 1945). One issue stands out as a major barrier to development in pastoral areas. Widespread, large scale raiding and counter raiding of livestock, and banditry with the use of guns and frequent deaths are a daily headline.

For example in May 2008, over 100 homes and 20 granaries were torched in fighting pitting two rival clans in Tarime District of Tanzania. Tarime District of Tanzania has become notorious for clashes believed to be caused by land disputes and cattle rustling. In the 1980's the Tanzania government was

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forced to deploy armed policemen who camped there for about a month to restore peace. Since 2001 fighting has again intensified and the two clans have been fighting almost every year, reportedly at the instigation of some local warlords (*The Citizen*, 15 May 2008). More recently in August 2008 the following was reported.

The bodies of pastoralists massacred by bandits last week are still lying in the open, strewn over the Suguta Marmar Valley in Turkana. Turkana South MP Josephat Nanok said 44 people were killed by cattle rustlers, but the Government declined to confirm the number of deaths (*East African Standard*, 5 August 2008)

In the last 2 decades over 1000 people have been shot down by bandits on the Nakapiripirit-Moroto-Kaabong road in Karamoja, Northern Uganda. Government, public, private and development vehicles are all targeted. This and the presence of "No-go zones" have severely dissuaded development attempts.

Several economic and peace building interventions have been attempted and, numerous regional bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and faith based organisations are at work in the region, for example in Northern Uganda, the Northern Uganda Reconstruction Programme, Karamoja Development Agency, Northern Uganda Social Action Fund, and the current Peace, Recovery and Development Plan and the Karamoja Integrated Programme II. These have yielded little for the region (Mkutu, 2008a & 2008b) and have often lacked resources, research, planning and monitoring. A large proportion of money made available for development has been diverted towards security concerns. Eaton (2008: 90) notes on Karamoja, Northern Uganda,

... numerous efforts have been made to end the violence. The government and its administrators hold endless *barazas* espousing the benefits of peace. Major international NGOs ... in collaboration

with more local community based organizations (CBOs) .... Faith based organizations (FBOs) send preachers and converted ex-warriors to spread the message of peace to those living in the kraals .... But while many peace workers display great passion and considerable courage in performing their duties, they have yet to achieve any significant breakthroughs'.

There are various issues that fuel the fire of pastoralist conflict. Small arms and light weapons (SALW) would seem the most obvious issue and much has been written about their role. Small arms are defined as revolvers and self-loading pistols, rifles and carbines, sub-machine guns, assault rifles and light machine guns. Light weapons are heavy machine guns, hand held under-barrel and mounted grenade launchers, portable anti-aircraft guns, portable anti-tank guns, recoilless rifles, portable launchers of anti-tank missile and rocket systems, portable launchers of anti-aircraft missile systems, and mortars of calibres of less than 100mm (<http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/sanctions/a52298.pdf>). This paper starts from the premise that they are not the cause of the conflict but instead they exacerbate existing tensions over land and resource and are part of a complex security dynamics in which livelihood is a central issue. However, the main focus of states intervention is usually on disarmament, and is often insensitive to livelihood concerns. Resources that should be used for development are largely eaten up by security concerns. Policies have been written that address the needs of pastoralist areas but there seems to be little application on the ground.

The relationship between livelihood and conflict has several angles, but a simple explanation would first consider the pre-existing problems of environmental scarcity which are likely to increase in the long term with the expected climate change. In addition to this, states have not managed to bring any long term strategy for sustainability. Violent

raiding has diminished cattle numbers, especially when cattle are sold out of the region, and pastoral land is gazetted for other purposes and raiding leads to "no go" zones. Competition for natural resources is high and this is exacerbated by the population increase. Thus the young pastoralists are in a predicament, with little available work in the pastoralist economy which traditionally occupied all members of the family. The result is employment by richer cattle owners who may also be racketeers involved in raiding, or use of the gun in road banditry. This also further depletes available resources. Lastly, another option for them is migration to urban areas where they work as guards.

This paper uses several research methods (participant observation, in-depth interviews and secondary data) to consider in detail the relationship between livelihood needs and insecurity in pastoral areas. It aims to demonstrate that a holistic perspective to conflict resolution is vital and that livelihood strategies are central in peace building and sustainable development in pastoral areas. It is further argued that the promotion of alternative sources of livelihood that are locally feasible could be the best sustainable strategy for reducing inter and intra-ethnic raiding and other armed crime and that such development interventions must reach percolate to all categories of local communities.

### **Background**

*Conflict in the Greater Horn of Africa:* The Horn of Africa refers to Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia and sometimes Kenya. This paper uses the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA) to include in addition to all the above, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. There are reasons why a study of pastoralism should consider this region as a whole. Firstly, the geopolitics of these states are inter-related and crisis in one state directly or indirectly affects others. Secondly, the communities straddling the international borders belong to more than one state. To name a few, there are the Pokot, Kuria, Samia, Somali, Afar, Oromo

and Borana. Economic and environmental interdependence leads to regional integration and pastoralist movements are often independent of state boundaries. The peoples of the Greater Horn face the same environmental predicaments, (drought, floods, and epidemics) dependence upon major water resources (the Nile Basin) and economic and political marginalisation. They are both united and divided by these issues.

The GHA states are marred by simmering and in some cases manifestly violent conflicts at local, national and regional levels. These include Somalia (from 1991 to date), Eritrea (1962-1991) and recently the Eritrean-Ethiopia conflict. Ethiopia currently has conflicts in the south with the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and also with Somalia (1978-1988 and the recent Ethiopia invasion of Somalia 2006 to date). Uganda has also had several wars and faces ongoing peace negotiations with the LRA in the North. The entire region is characterised by shifting national and human security relations and is often designated as an 'integrated insecurity system'. The intractable nature of conflicts in border areas demonstrates the necessity of regional security relations and cooperation.

*Pastoral Livelihoods:* Pastoralism describes an economic subsistence system in which the herding of domestic animals on open bush land predominates. This kind of livelihood is mainly carried in the arid and semi arid lands (ASALs) of the world which make up over 40% of the earth's surface and feed over one billion people. ASALs are home to the world's poorest and most marginalized people. These areas have the lowest development indicators and the highest incidence of poverty. Over 60% of ASAL inhabitants live below the poverty line (subsisting on one dollar per day). Livestock keeping in these areas is the main economical production system able to sustain daily lives. Cattle are the foundation of economic and social stability in these areas. Characteristically, pastoralists get half of their food and

income wholly from livestock (Swift, 1988). Knighton (2005: 210) notes in the case of Karimajong pastoralist:

Cattle are ... wealth in its fullest possible sense .... The milk, blood, meat, fat and marrow of cattle are vital [*to subsistence*]. Hides are used as sleeping mats, working surfaces, capes, skirts, bell collars, sandals, armlets and anklets. Hooves are carved into snuff boxes (*ngigilita*), .... Urine is the washing-up liquid for all food and water utensils, and it also curdles milk. Faeces make fertilizers, parget and floor surfaces. The scrotum is used to store seeds for the next growing seasons.

This means of using the land is not intensive, and certain larger tracts of land may be habitually used as climatic variability limits the access to water or pasture in a particular area. Mobility is a well established coping mechanism along with alliances and agreements with other groups, distribution of wealth, particularly bridewealth, trade, handcrafts, friendship, and smuggling. Another established practice is reciprocal livestock raiding between neighbouring communities.

Pastoralists have always faced challenges over land, resources, power and marginalization. For example, from 1999 to now, most pastoralists in the GHA have been experiencing drought with little sign of remission. Scarcity of pasture and water causes ferocious competition between ethnic groups and also tensions between states as pastoralists move into neighbouring districts or across international borders. This has been exacerbated by state policies which originated in the colonial administration, such as the creation of arbitrary borders and the alienation of pastoral lands by colonial and post-colonial states for private ranches and game parks. The majority of pastoral land resources are held under a controlled access system, which is communal in form. ('Communal' land tenure relates to that system of tenure in which an ethnic group or clan or a group has access to land.) There is competition be-

tween the community, the state and private investors for the exploitation or conservation of natural resources. In the struggle, pastoralists are often the losers due to a lack of awareness on national policies and a lack of participation in any national decision making process. There has been continuous marginalization since the colonial era and after independence. Additionally the states have not been able to come up with a way to caution pastoralists about expected droughts despite having available meteorological technology. The governments of regional states and development agencies have continued to promote agriculture as an alternative to agropastoralism, but pressure on land ensures that very little pasture is available. The restriction of pastoralists into lessening areas of land has caused them to graze on the crop fields, arming themselves in order to access these areas and often clashing with their neighbours.

*Small Arms:* The inevitable competition and conflict over natural resources has been further complicated and heightened by the infusion of the new technology of small arms and light weapons. These are now easily acquired and possessed by most pastoralists in the North Rift, both for aggressive and defensive purposes. They have allowed the sort of violent large scale raids with frequent deaths discussed in the introduction to become commonplace, and are further used for other types of criminal activity such as road banditry.

Since the 1960s weapons have proliferated in the region. Several events are responsible, including struggles for independence in Congo, Rwanda, Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda and Somalia and the Cold War in which the Horn of Africa was the battleground for the superpowers. Pastoralists share borders with remote territories that have witnessed violent political turmoil and internal civil strife since the 1970s. These include the collapse of the Said Barre regime in Somalia, the Ethiopia-Somalia Ogaden conflict which spilled into Kenya, the North-

South Sudan War in 1983 (peace agreement signed recently) and the collapse of Mengistu's regime in Ethiopia in 1991. In such conflicts, and in more localised aggression, pastoralists have often been the most armed. Activities of various rebel groups and militia groups in the region has continued to sustain the supply of arms to various pastoralist groups. This is especially true of SPLA, LRA and many militia groups but also the lack of governance in Somalia.

Other sources of arms to pastoral warriors have included buying from arm traffickers through barter for animals, and from undisciplined soldiers and the members of Local Defence Units that are deserting (SNV/Pax Christi 2004; Mkutu 2003, 2005) stealing of guns after killing enemies and more recently, the target of the security personnel by warriors to replenish their stock of arms and ammunition.

Several factors facilitate the movement of arms. The North Rift as described is a difficult area to patrol, being mountainous, arid and under-developed. The borders are long and lack border controls, and there is very little security on the ground in the nearby areas, which has in turn further dissuaded development.

Where security forces are present they are often corrupt and involve themselves in cattle raids. They are also frequently under-resourced, with poor communication networks, and command and control structures are often unclear, particularly in respect of homeguards or Local Defence Units. Getting the necessary police deployment has to go through numerous bureaucratic procedures. They are therefore slow to respond with raid reports reaching security in 2-3 days. As expected by that time animals have crossed national and international borders and been shared out among the raiders and their relatives.

### **Insecurity and Livelihood**

Pre-existing problems of environmental scarcity combined with an economy which is

almost dependent on livestock have been discussed. These problems have been exacerbated by the handling of pastoralists by states. The security response to pastoral conflict is discussed later.

*Small Arms and Wealth:* Small arms have now proliferated in the entire pastoral corridor. As one elder put it "They are as commonplace as bottles of Cola" (Interview, Samburu elder, Samburu, August 2002). Currently, a gun is essential to herding both for the security and also for acquisition of wealth through raiding. It has now become part of the livelihood strategy and is also "a convertible currency in itself. With a gun one can get cash: from cash cows, from cows guns; from guns, other general merchandise" (Interview Hon Peter Lokeris, former minister for Karamoja, Government of Uganda, Kampala, 22 February 2003) In the last 5 years the Karimojong have customised the AK47 as their personal fighting weapon, making it more in demand.

Knowing some prices makes this analysis more meaningful. In Karamoja, Uganda, the price of a gun has come down enormously since the late 1970s, due to increased supply and less demand. This has decreased from 70-150 cows around 30 years ago to the current 1-6 cows or 140,000 to 400,000 Uganda shillings (75-100 pounds) depending on the location. Cost also depends on proximity to the borders with Sudan and Somalia where they are cheaper. On the Sudan border, the cost is around 1-2 cows, in Matheniko, Pian and Bokora this increases to 2 cows. The figure is higher travelling further south at 3-4 cows in Upe and 3-6 in West Pokot in Kenya (Mkutu, 2003, 2005a, 2006b, 2007). Arms costs in the Ethiopia/ Moyale/Marsabit borders vary. Revolvers on the Ethiopia side cost between 2-3000 Kenya shillings while an AK47 goes for 8-9000. On the Moyale Kenyan side a revolver goes for 5-6000 Kenya shillings while an AK 47 is 10,000. In Marsabit Kenya, an AK47 goes for 15,000 Kenya shillings (\$205) (Mkutu, 2003, 2005a, 2006b, 2007).



By contrast, the cost of bullets has risen drastically. In 1991 for one bullet the cost was 3 Ugandan shillings. However, by 2001 the price had shot up to 50 Uganda shilling Mkutu, 2003, 2005a, 2006b, 2007). The price of ammunitions has increased due to high demand and scarcity and also due to the ongoing disarmament. The increase has been from 100 Uganda shillings in 2000 to 1,200 Uganda shillings, in Upe Pokot in 2006. Currently a general estimate is that ammunition is selling for 500-1000 Uganda shillings per bullet, though soldiers sell their ammunition at 100 Uganda shillings for one bullet, for their short term needs. In terms of typical barter prices from wholesalers, interviews in Jie (near the source and therefore cheaper than elsewhere) indicated that the cost of 100-200 bullets was one cow (Interview Romano Longole, Kotido, Uganda, 2nd February 2003; also Interview Akore John Bosco, Kotido, Uganda, 2-3 February 2003). Before disarmament, bullets were used as currency. "If you went to a shop and you had a balance left, you could top the money using bullets." (Interview, Romano Longole, Kotido, February, 2003).

A Catholic father noted the surprising fact: Once or twice we have had bullets in the church collection, but also as a down payment for using the mission car to bring a patient to the hospital. But we would make an agreement to either exchange them with shops in the area or we would ask them to come back with cash and we would give them their bullets the next day. (Interview with Catholic Father, 6th October 2004)

A growing profitable alternative livelihood by women is increasingly brewing of local alcohol (SNV, 2005; Mkutu 2006b, 2005a, 2007). The customers for the local brew are mostly men, the majority being warriors and sometimes even security officers. Though lucrative and beneficial in allowing women to provide for their families, this is problematic for a number of reasons, particularly

due to its link with the ammunition trade. Women confirmed this,

Sometimes people need ammunition and they tell me, if someone offers you bullets take them and keep for me. Interested warriors contact me in advance. If I get 10 or 20 I sell to the customer who has booked. (Interview with brewer/seller who withheld her name, Jie, 6 October 2004).

In the villages, one can find women with as many as 20-30 bullets. Sometimes, the women accumulate ammunition and barter for a goat or cow. Such a system assists the distribution and availability of ammunition, and deserves further research to ascertain how much it is facilitating pastoral conflict. It demonstrates how women in this case have adapted and become beneficiaries of the insecurity situation.

***Insecurity and Bride Price:*** Bride price continues to be an important driving factor behind armed raids and often involves large numbers of cattle. For example in Karamoja area, a Jie elder in Kawanata noted that bride price may be 60-160 cows. In Karamoja pure (Pian, Bokora and Matheniko) bride price was lower at 30-60 cows (Mkutu, 2003, 2005). In Alale Pokot, Kenya, in the 1970s bride price was 60-100, but due to the diminishing cattle in the region the range is from 25 to 40 except in 1980 when people were married on credit, and they are still paying the debt. Increasingly, youths who cannot raise cattle for brides will hire guns, go raiding and accumulate animals, to marry and to pay back the gun. Father Romerio of Roman Catholic Church in Alale noted that:

The only route to get a bride if your father is poor is raiding. If you need another wife, you again have to raid. The normal number of wives in Alale is between 3 and 4 (Mkutu 2005).

The pressure to pay bride wealth is due to the risk of losing your entire family to wealthier pastoralists. In this arrangement of "half marriage" or *ekicul* as it is called in Ka-

ramoja (come we stay) a 69 year old elder noted that "A man can take your wife and children if you do not marry in full". Some warriors concurred "If you are not even able to provide the three animals, which is required when you get the first baby, the father of the girl will give your wife to another man. But they will still follow you to pay cows" (Interview, karachunas, Nakapeli-moru, 6<sup>th</sup> October 2004). In Kotido a chief was interviewed who had just taken a poor man's wife. "In half marriage you loose your wife, especially if you have produced many girls. This fact alone forces the man to go raiding to pay the bride price" (Interview, victim who lost his entire family to a wealthy man, 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2004).

**Commercialisation of Raiding:** Insurgencies, inter-ethnic rivalries and cattle rustling act to make already marginalized areas more inaccessible, providing opportunities for black markets to thrive. Small arms has allowed a situation to emerge whereby raiding is no longer simply communal raiding for survival, redistribution of stock and bride wealth, but has become commercialised, with certain individuals gaining control cattle wealth through building up networks of violence. There is evidence that racketeers employ youths to raid on a massive scale and sell cattle on black markets (Heald 1999, 2006). It must be acknowledged however that this is one of the least researched and most contentious areas in the entire pastoral conflict. An elder interviewed in Jie, Karamoja noted,

Today there are many types of raids, where groups go between 5, 10 and 30 but also the *ajore* (big raid) community sanctioned raid where you have 100 people going. These days it's self-raids and commercialised. This is where the 2 or 3 or 30 can discuss and go raid without consulting the *Emuron*" (Interview, elder, Panyangara airstrip, 7 October 2004).

Though Eaton (2008a:101) does not accept that arms proliferation is now a problem, he

says "most raiders are not poor" and he gives a classification of the different raiders. He notes one of the wealthy raiders going for an operation and 'paying US \$14,000 in capital'.

Through links with influential businessmen in major urban cities, cattle are then sold out of the region, (see figure 1). This has ultimately served to impoverish the region as many cattle are diverted into the hands of a rich few who then employ those who were once cattle owners to raid on their behalf. The depletion of cattle wealth assists to increase competition, creating a vicious cycle of violence and making the pastoral livelihood untenable for many. Some herders/warriors however, have also managed to independently accumulate wealth through raiding. Banditry is another occupation of these young men, Interviews especially in Karamoja also noted that often banditry on roads was related to the need for school fees and that there was a rise in incidents at the corresponding time of year. The result has been motorists travelling in convoys. A local councillor commented on the problem of banditry saying, "The issue of alternative means of wealth accumulation is paramount (Interview, Moroto, 21<sup>st</sup> November, 2003).

In an interview with the later Father Bruno Novelli he gave the example of Karamoja where one needs 5 to 6 cows to satisfy his or her basic necessities. The current distribution of cattle in pastoral areas is so sparse, that in practice, only few can live off their cattle. This impacts on the family. There is no milk for the children, which is the main nutritional diet (Mkutu, 2005a).

**Unemployment:** Increasing population in pastoral areas has put further pressure on available resources. For example, in 1931 the population of Karamoja was 65,000. In 1959 a census gave a figure of 172,000. This had increased further by 1969 to 275,000, and in 1991 the figure was 362,000 (UBOS, Housing and Census, 1991). The most recent estimate of the current population is 955,300 (UBS, 2003), a phenomenal increase of over

double in 12 years, though these figures are questionable.

With diminishing cattle numbers, an increase in population and a reduction in available land due to no-go zones, a situation has emerged whereby the pastoral economy is unable to provide stable jobs for whole families as it has previously done. Interviews confirmed that young men are involved in violent cattle rustling and banditry because their livelihood is under threat due a general scarcity of livestock (Interview, Paramount Chief Joseph Narenga, Samburu, 21 August 2002). A large pool of youths are now unemployed, of whom the majority are warriors. 'Employment' as a term is alien to pastoral modes of livelihood, as traditionally, everyone from the ages of 5-80 years was actively engaged in production (Odegi, 1990). Gulliver (1955) discusses the structure of the Turkana and Jie families as centers of production and distribution of domestic stock. The youths or warriors provided the labor and "security" for the community, and were fit to travel the traditional migration routes. Even small boys took care of cattle closer to home. However, as discussed, a new form of exploitation is emerging where the youth are seeking employment working for rich cattle owners/racketeers who now control much of the region's cattle stocks. Many are now also involved in banditry on roads (Interview, Dr. Richard Hogg, Nairobi, 19 September 2002). The high unemployment rate in pastoral areas especially amongst youths is therefore a cause for demand for arms.

A situation has been described in the recent past (Communication, Gulliver, 2003) when pastoralism was a full time occupation for all. Division of labour was by age and sex, and there were no known idlers. Males were most economically productive when they were youthful, energetic and agile and could move fast and far over the difficult terrain as herders, scouts and warriors. Now, as Hogg informed me:

Employment in pastoral areas is complicated because you are not talking about formal employment. For young men, increasingly there is the issue of having gone through some minimal schooling and not being able to be absorbed in the pastoral sectors. Where do they go? Many of them have gone to look for employment in major urban areas as watchmen (Interview, Dr. Richard Hogg, Nairobi, 19<sup>th</sup> September 2002).

In Dar es Salaam, Arusha and even Nairobi, the sight of Masai in *shukas* is now normal. They work as watchmen and send money back to their homes to buy cattle which keeps the local economy going to some extent. (Interviews Maasai with morans, Kawe, Dar es Salaam, 4<sup>th</sup> August 2008). Youth is a period of great emotional, physical and psychological stress through which, in pastoral areas, there is no safe passage. The lives of most youths have been dominated by war and elders have been unable to adapt to assist the next generation in dealing with this. Furthermore young men in pastoral settings were obliged to be violent to protect cattle and people, and for offensive purposes. Such violence had customary constraints, which have been partially eroded due to the pace of change and the gun; this is discussed in the section on customary governance institutions.

**Family Disruption:** The insecurity situation and problems with pastoral livelihood has a gendered dimension which has been hidden but which has important implications on sustainability. Men are absent for long periods, seeking pasture and water, or are sometimes killed, and women are managing and providing for families, including orphans of the conflict and elders. There are many testimonies of enemy aggression being targeted at women, and rapes and shootings are frequent (SNV, 2005, Mkutu, 2008bc). Women also travel long distances to urban centres to trade and find other means of making money, including prostitution, which is putting their lives and health at risk.



As described, a common livelihood strategy in Karamoja is alcohol brewing which has good returns, and allows women to support their children and perhaps buy the necessary commodities for school attendance. It has also allowed women to gain some independence. However it is closely bound up with the ammunition trade in that women also accept bullets as a currency for payment and sell these on. Such activities may make women and their children vulnerable and expose them to a world where guns and ammunition, combined with alcohol are the norm. Reports are available of gunshot injuries in a domestic context, when people have been drinking.

The long distance travel, contact with urban centres and alcohol, the problem of displacement, and a culture of polygamy are also making the pastoralists more vulnerable to HIV. It is a huge threat to sustainability, and an area of research that deserves attention. Sustainable development will depend upon the stability of families which is currently threatened.

**Mitigation Attempts**

**States:** The history of relations between states and pastoralists is one of confrontation. From the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present, pastoralists have drawn attention when invaded or under invasion. The response by the modern public administration in the Greater Horn of Africa has had an influence on conflict. Force is often applied, even to civilians who are not part of the conflict and this has exacerbated strained relationships (Gomes and Mkutu, 2003; SNV/Pax Christi 2004; Mkutu, 2001, 2003, 2008ab).

The state has taken several approaches to addressing issues of pastoral livelihood and security. Roadblocks, barriers and patrols along main roads are commonplace, however, this only deters the open movement of arms, and with the poor wages received by security personnel it is open to bribery. The tiers of security in pastoral areas illustrated

below:

<i>Tier</i>	<i>Comment</i>
Army	Loyal to states
Police	Few or none in most areas
State armed militia forces and Home guards	Locally recruited. Answerable to state but also having local loyalties
Warriors	Sanctioned by elders, and/or local community

The states have armed local groups in the form of militias to assist communities in self protection. Some of these militia groups have played a significant role in ensuring law and order in pastoral areas. This is an inexpensive way of bolstering inadequate police forces in pastoral areas, since communities do not need to be paid much to protect themselves, and it demonstrates some understanding of the security-livelihood relationship. However, unfortunately they bring their own problems. They are poorly paid and thus poorly controlled, leading to some to desert with their guns and others to misuse their authority. Their arms may be frequently found to be used in raids or traded Mkutu, 2005, 2003; SNV/Pax Christi 2004). In the case of the North Rift, the same arms have been used for retaliation, leading to a local arms race amongst pastoral communities under the guise of 'defending themselves'. Some communities have been provided earlier or with more sophisticated weapons than the others. Writing on the case of Kenya, Khadiagala (2002: 27) notes the unfairness in the way in which the KPR were equipped, "The quality of armaments differs significantly from community to community. Providing some districts with lethal weapons and others with inferior ones magnifies the perception of double standards, impedes consistent national policies, and generates more conflicts (Khadiagala, 2002). It also promotes the idea that communities need to provide their own security and reduces confidence in the official security. The forma-

tion of militias thus contributes to the weakening of the foundations of public security and undermines the legitimate security structures.

Arms amnesties have also been tried, but the response to this has been meager. An approach which has been attempted many times is that of disarmament. Its success has been very limited, but the approach remains essentially unchanged. In 2001 in Karamoja a voluntary surrender was attempted (with a threat of force at later date) which managed to collect more than 10,000 weapons, although this still remained only about 25% of what was estimated to be in the community. During the disarmament some livelihood based incentives were offered, such as ox-ploughs and iron sheets, which was a noble plan. However, this was inadequately thought out, since some pastoralists would never think of forcing cattle to plough, and also incentives were diverted and not distributed fairly (OPM, 2005; Mkutu, 2005a, 2006b; SNV, 2005; SNV/Pax Christi; *Daily Monitor*, 25 October 2006).

Following this several forceful operations took place but by 2005 only 1,100 small arms were repossessed. In an intensified operation in which the army started to use the coercive "cordon, search and disarm" from 2006 only 3,936 arms were reposed (Mkutu 2008a). In 2007, the army only recovered 2,949, and so far this year to date 1,051 (*The East African Magazine*, July 7-13, pp 1-IV and V). Regarding Kenya, a Kapenguria based medical doctor said 'Over 21 military disarmament operations have been attempted on the Pokot (Interview, Dr. Krop Muroto, Kapenguria, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2002).

The states approach to managing pastoral SALW seems to be reactive and politicized, but lacks a comprehensive policy for pastoral security, particularly paying inadequate attention to the role of livelihood in insecurity. Disarmament operations often leave communities vulnerable to their neighbours, and improved official security is a vital prerequisite to getting people to hand over their wea-

pons. Forceful disarmament attempts in fact increase demand for arms and strengthen supply chains. They also increase mistrust of the states by communities. The result of this is now a new type of conflict, the community versus security conflict, where by the warriors supported by the community fight the state security as situation which has depressing prospects for development.

**Peace Work:** Peace building is a common business in the North Rift (Eaton, 2008a & 2008b), but one which seems to yield little long term benefit. There are some notable deficits in the practice of peace building which may be responsible. First is the issue of involvement. Peace meetings and peace committees fail to target customary authorities who have legitimate authority in communities to produce and enforce peace agreements (senior elders). Initiatives also fail to involve direct perpetrators, in this case the warriors, because proper engagement is difficult. They are many and even if a few are rehabilitated, they will be pressured again by their peers to raid (Interview, Romano Longole, Kotido, 2nd February 2003). Secondly is appropriateness. Peace meetings organized when conflicts have already escalated into wars. Or initiatives are low key interventions that contribute in restoring dialogue but do not reduce tensions (i.e. women peace crusades). Thirdly, where peace interventions have taken place they have been insufficiently co-coordinated and communication between the civil society, local government, interfaith and the community has been very poor. Lastly, peace meetings often do not address the central issue of livelihood in the resource conflicts leading one to ask, what good is capacity building without food? Practical activities such as digging of wells may be more valuable than more idealistic ventures.

**Indigenous Approaches:** Most pastoralists have a distinctive clan-based governance system derived from a progressive age-set system (Masinde, 2004; Mkutu 2001, Gomes and Mkutu, 2003:SNV/Pax Christi, 2004).

The elders managed conflict, marriage, property distribution, social commitments, grazing, defence matters and disputes over local resources. They also functioned as courts with broad and flexible powers to interpret evidence; impose judgments and punishments and manage the process of reconciliation and compensation. They have access to networks beyond ethnic identity, commanding respect from elders in other ethnic groups and can speak to different generations. In Ethiopia among the Boran, the village council and *Gadaa* have far reaching political, social and economic functions (Tache and Irwin, 2003: 15; Boku, 2000: 112). Among the Masai, Nandi, Turkana, Marakwet and Pokot of Kenya, traditional institutions were and are still very important. Indigenous African institutions have generally been democratic with strong in-built systems of accountability and popular participation. (Quam, 1996; Hadley, 1997; Stenning, 1959; Spencer, 1975, 1973; Awogbade, 1979; Shoup, 1993; Mkutu, 2001 op cit.; Niamir-Fuller, 1999; Mkangi, 1997; Masinde et al, 2004; Lamphear, 1998; Ogot and Keiran, 1969).

For many pastoral societies now, two parallel governance systems operate and rarely integrate. The customary system of governance still wields its power in some places, (Knighton, 2006) and there is little activity on the ground by the modern public administration. The customary governance has no faith in the modern public administration system SNV/Pax Christi, 2004: 21; Gomes and Mkutu, 2003), which is slow to meter out justice, and locally unresponsive. In turn the modern administrators view the traditional governance system as having illegal elements. In Karamoja, the work of enforcing law and order has been taken over by the army. However, a number of incidents have happened in the past where warriors commanded by elders have challenged the army.

While governments have exerted control over some aspects of life, they have remained weak in pastoral areas (Lesorogol,

1998; Mkutu, 2001, 2003; Mkangi, 1997; Knighton, 2003; ASARECA, 2003; Masinde et al 2004). In the past the presence of customary traditional governance institutions has compensated for weak state governance by regulating behaviour, adjusting disputes and generally keeping people organized among all pastoral communities. However, as a result of modernisation and conflict there is a weakening of social organization across pastoral areas and power struggles between the seniors and juniors. In some places eldership can now be attained by wealth, and armed youth are adding new pressures, which the elders have not confronted before. A local chief in West Pokot said,

Elders sit and talk to the youth and mitigate peace. In the past the *morans* (warriors) would herd cows until they were between 25 and 30 years and they would be given a wife, but now the 15 and 16 year olds want wives and if they are not given, they use their guns to go and raid or torture the elders (Interview with local chief, Kongolai, 31<sup>st</sup>, May, 2001).

The erosion of the traditional governance institutions among pastoralist communities has to some extent potentiated conflict further. As with other kinds of social breakdown, it is both a cause and effect of conflict. There is still time to understand these structures and translate understanding into constructive action in peace building. In places where they are still powerful, local practices like *lapayi* and *muma* which are reconciliation and compensation still remain strong. If communities are given the tools for sustainability and assistance with peace building in locally effective ways there may be hope for the situation.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this paper has examined insecurity it relates to pastoralists in the GHA states and demonstrated a complex interplay between livelihood challenges and conflict dynamics. It notes the pre-existing pressures

on pastoralist livelihoods, such as environmental scarcity, which leads to competition as pastoralists move long distances to find pasture and water. This is exacerbated by state policies which are insensitive to the value and requirements of pastoralism. It has described how SALW have proliferated in the last 3 decades as a result of regional inter and intra-state conflicts, and how they have been a change agent magnifying local resource based conflicts. SALW are now considered vital for survival as a pastoralist, and are also a convertible currency in themselves. But frequent armed raiding is now diminishing available cattle and the cattle keeping livelihood. Young men are increasingly finding their only option is to be employed by racketeers. A conflict economy involving the whole family has now emerged.

Armed conflict is now severely challenging the stability of pastoral families and pastoral society, including traditional governance institutions which could have potentially limited the conflict.

**State Policy and Action:** Pastoralist conflict presents a great challenge requiring a holistic approach to counterbalance over 100 years of marginalisation, adequate and sustained investment and long term consistent strategies. Policies do exist but have often not been implemented. Those implemented have often been top down, and discriminative, lacking community involvement, limiting their success. Communities have expressed a desire to disarm, as demonstrated by a significant response to the initial voluntary disarmament in Karamoja in 2001. However, the ultimate failure of operations, particularly as they took on a forceful approach is telling. Security is the foremost need in order to rebuild trust and also to allow for development. More security personnel are needed in pastoral areas, and these should be adequately remunerated and trained to promote professionalism and public service. Security and public administrators in key decision making positions need to

undergo mandatory training in peace building, conflict management and transformation.

The security in these regions is characterized by less formal security arrangements such as militias, police reservists and Local Defence Units. These groups have also been identified as contributing to the arms demand, trade and transit and such issues need to be addressed, and security considered the responsibility of the state. The SALW dynamics are influenced by regional instabilities. There is a need for national and regional governments to work out collective security arrangements that include extending economic development to peripheral areas where bandits and arms traders currently operate. However this is complicated by differing levels of governance in the different GHA states.

Most of the weapons in communities are recovered weapons from state custody which reach the community due to state weakness and corruption. Another strategy may be to convince governments not to import any more AK47 but instead import a cheaper weapon such as the FN, for which the ammunition is much harder to get.

Drought is a major factor in pastoral insecurity, and is a regional problem. It should be the subject of more anticipation and action. If current climate predictions are correct then the problem of drought in pastoral areas is set to increase. The experience of frequent droughts highlights the importance of better information gathering about pastoralists hence the need to work with the indigenous knowledge, including indicators of stresses which could be collected and reported as part of an early warning system. The Geographical Information System (or GIS) is a tool which is growing in its usage in recognizing environmental problems early and visualizing potential solutions. It would require computers in each district linked to a central computer which is inexpensive and therefore cost effective.



Climate change will ultimately impact upon power as most is Hydro-electric power. There is already an issue of rights to use the Nile's water. With scarcity of oil now becoming a worldwide concern, solar energy is a potential area for development in such areas. Much more could also be done as regards eco-tourism.

**Alternative Livelihoods:** The problem of racketeering needs to be acknowledged because it currently provides livelihood and other benefits to young raiders. Research and development into alternative livelihoods available to pastoralists would be very valuable, to reduce their vulnerability to drought, and thus their propensity for conflict. However, any policy developed should ensure revenue such as from mining, marble harvesting, sand harvesting and tourism remains in the region (*Daily Nation*, 27 October 2005).

Apart from diversification, policy makers should pursue development policies aimed at penetrating rural areas where the majority of nomads live. Development has concentrated efforts in a few selected urban centers but rural areas need to be opened up and services taken to the localities. This would benefit the economy of the entire region indirectly, by reducing dependency, and could be a strategy for poverty reduction and security. Integration of pastoralists into the mainstream of national development could include ways for improving skill formation and occupation diversity. More employment opportunities should be encouraged for pastoralists 'down country', especially in towns, not just as watchmen but as skilled labourers which would allow them to improve development in their own lands.

Lack of adequate market facilities is a major constraint hindering livestock sales by pastoral societies. Cattle should be bought from pastoralists at reasonable prices as an incentive for pastoralists to build up this aspect of the economy. National policies could be established aimed at putting the resources in arid and semi arid lands into more pro-

ductive use. Currently there is anecdotal agricultural research investment in ASAL. More significant research into dry land farming systems and appropriate (applied) technology, including food processing and storage, to bolster regional food security systems will have to be given priority.

**Traditional Practices:** If pastoral land management system is the best way to manage land in semi arid areas, why not strengthen these traditional practices? Most governments in the GHA treat pastoralists as a problem. Governments need to change their policy attitude and see pastoralists as assets. They should be understood, economically developed, provided security, supported and assisted in marketing cattle. Protein rich foods are nutritionally necessary and many GHAs states have populations who lack sufficient protein. Pastoralists are experts in cattle production, and are able to amply provide for the need and for export.

The local knowledge of elders represents a useful link between these communities and modern public administration. Benson (1993) says that customary legal institutions evolve to facilitate voluntary interaction, while enforcement of authoritarian laws requires relatively more force. Hayek (1973: 81), notes,

Rules that emerge from customary law will possess certain attributes that authoritarian law ...may not possess, and are likely to possess only if they are modelled after the kind of rules which spring from the articulation of previously existing practices. The attributes of customary legal systems include an emphasis on individual rights because recognition of legal duty requires voluntary cooperation of individuals through reciprocal arrangements. Such laws and their accompanying enforcement facilitate cooperative interaction by creating strong incentives to avoid violent forms of dispute resolution. Thus the law provides for restitution to victims arrived at through clearly designed participatory

adjudication procedures, in order to both provide incentives to pursue prosecution and to quell victims' desires for revenge.

Indigenous approaches to conflict resolution are likely to work hand in hand with indigenous knowledge providing workable strategies for alternative livelihoods and maximize the chances of cattle wealth remaining in the hands of pastoralists. This is worth considering where state institutions are weak on the ground.

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