



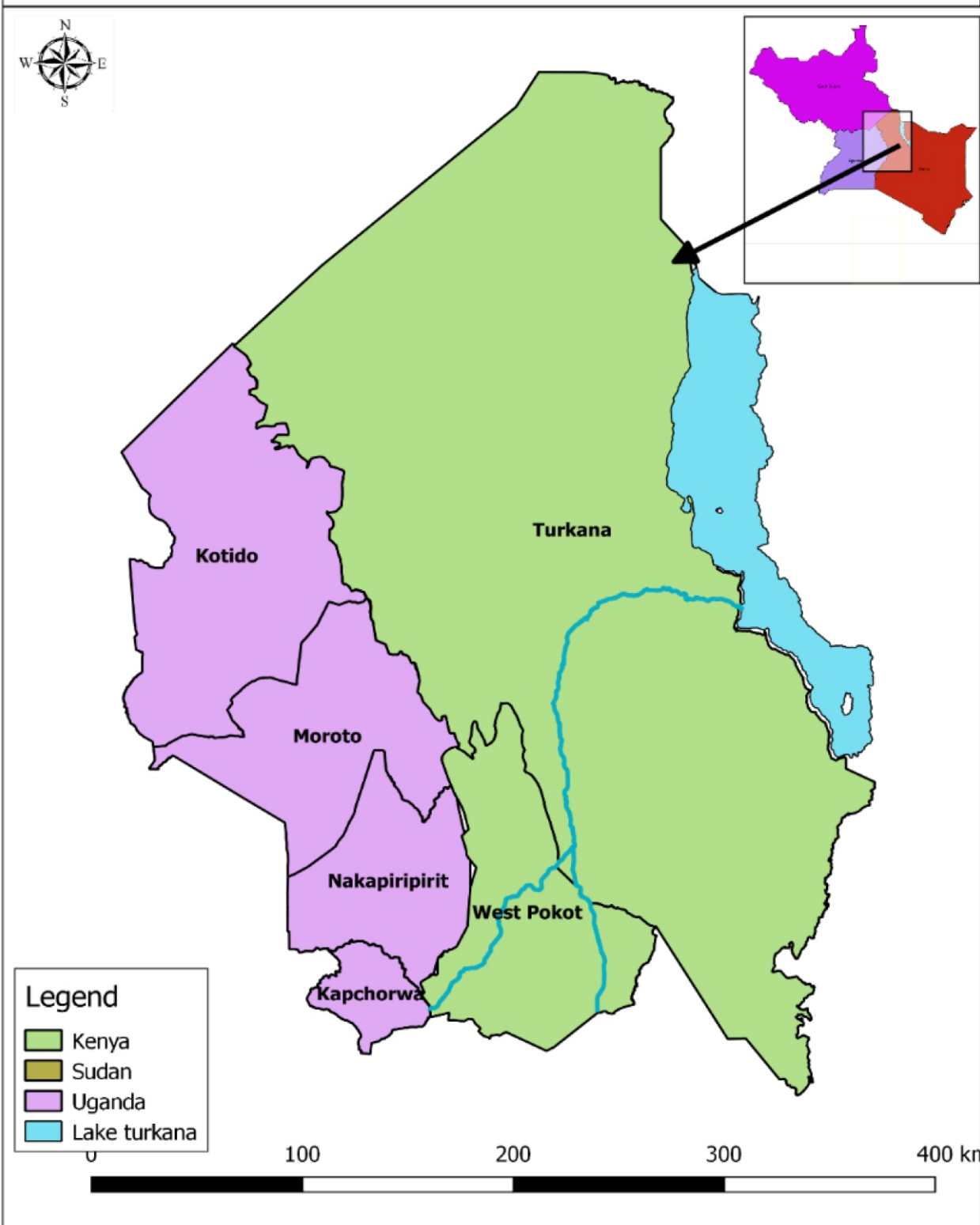
# THE KARAMOJA CLUSTER

RAPID CONFLICT ANALYSIS AND GENDER ASSESSMENT  
(KENYA AND UGANDA)

December 2022

Map of Karamoja Cluster region

# THE KARAMOJA CLUSTER MAP (KENYA AND UGANDA), 2019



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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

ASAL	Arid and Semi-Arid Lands
ASTU	Anti-Stock Theft Unit
CABESI	Camel Bees and Silk
CAHW	Community Animal Health Workers
CBO	Community Based Organization
CDR	Community Disease Reporters
CELEP	Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DDG	Danish Demining Group
DISO	District Internal Security Officer
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FGD	Focused Group Discussion
FMD	Foot and Mouth Disease
FoLT	Friends of Lake Turkana
GARD	Grassroots Alliance for Rural Development
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GISO	Gombolola Internal Security Officer
GoK	Government of Kenya
GoU	Government of Uganda
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority on Development
IPCC	Integrated Food Security Phase Classification
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
IWGIA	International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs
KAPDA	Kaabong Peace and Development Agency
KDF	Kenya Defense Force
KDF	Karamoja Development Forum
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.
KPS	Kenya Prison Services
LAP	Local Administrative Police
LDU	Local Defense force
LOKADO	Lotus Kenya Action for Development
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
KNPS	Kenya National Police Service
NDMA	National Drought Management Authority
NGO	Non-Governmental organization
NPS	National Police Services
NPRs	National Police Reservists
NRA	National Resistant Army
ODA	Operation Dumisha Amani
PC	Peace Committees
PISO	Parish Internal Security Officer
RDU	Rapid Deployment Unit
REINVENT	Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya

RISO	Regional Internal Security Officer
SPLA	Sudan People Liberation Army
TUPADO	Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization
UN	United Nations
UNBS	Uganda National Bureau of Standard
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation.
UP	Uganda Prisons
UPDF	Uganda People Defense force
UPF	Uganda Police Force
UWA	Uganda Wildlife Authority

## FOREWARD

The borderlands of the Karamoja region in Uganda and Turkana and West Pokot counties of Kenya are three geographically contiguous and socio-culturally and economically interconnected regions. The Karamoja region has immense opportunities that can be harnessed for peace, social cohesion, and wealth creation. The communities often share a common language and culture. There is significant potential for cross-border trade and regional economic integration, particularly livestock trade. The region also has a rich cultural heritage and huge potential for tourism.

To better embrace these opportunities, Kenya and Uganda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in support of the Kenya (Turkana/West Pokot)-Uganda (Karamoja) Cross-Border Programme for Sustainable Peace and Development on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2019 in Moroto, Uganda. The objective of the MoU is to accord communities from both sides of the border opportunities for better cooperation, close collaboration, and peaceful coexistence, as well as bridging isolation gaps to improve livelihoods and socio-economic conditions for sustainable peace and development.

UNDP Kenya, UNDP Uganda, and the UNDP Africa Borderlands Centre are supporting the Governments of Kenya and Uganda to develop an implementation plan for the MOU and pipeline of projects to accelerate the implementation and progress of the agreement. With financial support by the Government of Sweden, UNDP has commissioned this independent gender and conflict analysis. The findings from the report provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex cross-border conflict and gender dynamics and offers a nuanced look at the intersection of gender and conflict at a local level. The study makes practical recommendations that can form part of the programmatic intervention in the Karamoja Cluster and explores the tensions and tradeoffs among the pastoral communities. Special appreciation goes to Mr. Ambrose Toolit (independent research consultant) who conducted the study. The study has been informed by an in-depth community and partner engagement and has been discussed with local and national Government partners in Kenya and Uganda.

The findings of this analysis reflect only the views and analysis of the independent consultant, not of UNDP, the Government of Kenya, or the Government of Uganda.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Purpose of the Assessment*

The Rapid Conflict Analysis and Gender Assessment for the Karamoja cluster revolves around informing UNDP cross-border programming through relevant policy and institutional frameworks that can be put in place to support conflict prevention and sustainable mechanisms of resolving existing tensions and conflict as to identify potential interventions to address them.

It aims to understand how issues of gender, governance, inequality, livelihoods, water, and rights relates to various forms of violence and conflict. Additionally, to identify and comprehend the nature of the borderland governance system and its role in informing current program planning, including but not limited to; strengthening the economic capacity of women and youth, the capacity of informal and formal economic governance structures, and civil society organizations to institute conflict-sensitive governance; influencing policies for more effective economic rights governance; and increasing opportunities for collaborative engagements, diverse livelihoods and increased opportunities for collaborative engagement on peace and conflict in the region.

The specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To examine, Identify and analyze the multidimensional key conflict drivers and their correlation with gender norms, inequality, governance, livelihoods, and economic rights encompassing social, political, economic, security, environmental and institutional features.
- ii. This should include how men, women, and youth are differently affected by identifying socio-economic conflict drivers, the impact of raids and counter-raids, and understanding why the violent conflict has persisted in the horn of Africa for decades.
- iii. Understand the rationale and nature of cross-border alliances and how they perpetuate conflict.
- iv. Provide recommendations that can be applied to future policy formulations, including relevant policy and institutional frameworks that can be put in place to reduce conflict.
- v. Identify and assess possible opportunities for UNDP cross-border programming to support conflict prevention and sustainable mechanisms of resolving existing tensions and conflict.
- vi. Identify key livelihood /economic empowerment opportunities for the cross-border communities.
- vii. Undertake analysis of political, economic, social, security, and gender dynamics in Karamoja with a focus on core grievances and resilience: analysis of how main actors organize grievances and resilience to drive or mitigate conflicts.
- viii. Forecast how various dynamics and related trends might evolve in the future and anticipate triggers or turning points.
- ix. Undertake a strategic analysis of existing programming to assess gaps and opportunities with respect to the identified conflict dynamics and make recommendations for response options that support conflict prevention, mitigation, and management

For this purpose, the study adopted an extensive systematic methodology based on qualitative reviews of existing literatures and field research carried in Kenya - West Pokot County: (Kacheliba, Kanyarkwat and Katikomor); and Turkana County: (Loima - Lokirama, Urum, Lorengipi, Loya, Oropoi, Nakitongo, Lokipoto); and Uganda- (Kaabong, Kotido Nabilatuk, Moroto, Amudat and Nakapiripirit districts). Including Kwen and Bukwa district). The study used structured and non-structured individual and group interviews with community representatives (men and women, elders and youth, urban and rural residents), local government officials, and religious and cultural leaders.



### *The overarching Karamoja Cluster issues.*

The 'Karamoja cluster' also known as the 'cattle corridor,' is inhabited by several border pastoralist communities from the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya to the Karamojong of Uganda among others. With a human population estimated to be about 4.5 million and livestock of approximately 9 million cattle, over 11 million sheep, close to 16 million goats, 100,000 donkeys and camels. The cross-border region located at the periphery of each country's capital, is drought-prone and has the lowest social development indicators.

Despite sharing the most fundamental aspects of socio-cultural (dialectic roots), economic, and political organization as well as source of livelihood, predominantly nomadic pastoralism, these groups are under intolerable stress and struggle to survive. Notably, livestock and access to land-based natural resources is a key livelihood factor in defining and shaping individual and community relations- socio-cultural, political, and economic organization, including local security substructure. Consequently, any alteration in these factors certainly triggers conflict as the entire epitome and security configuration is primarily for the protection of livestock and resources around which the livelihood of the community revolves.

As noted by many scholars, the identification of structural and proximate causes of the pastoralists conflict amongst the Karamoja Cluster has been a problematic and complex issue of debate in several ways. Nevertheless, evidence from the field study and existing literature indicate that while there is no easy and obvious distinction between the causative factors and effects of the Karamoja Cluster conflict, an in-depth discussion with elders in the study area, there are three main types of conflict within the Karamoja Cluster and outside the cluster with its neighbors, namely: (i) intra - conflict and insecurity between ethnic groups; (ii) inter- conflict and insecurity within ethnic groups, and (iii) clashes and Confrontational conflict between the state and Karamojong cluster groups.

Within the conservative narrations and confinement of the above conflict typologies, a deep conversation with the elders, active and retired raiders (men and youth) and women from the pastoralist communities noted that the major causes of the Karamoja cluster conflict are:

- i. Cultural and traditional practices of cattle rustling for restocking, wealth distribution/accumulation and marriage purpose.
- ii. Competition over scarce natural resources especially water and pasture.

While there are general acceptance that traditional and resource-based cattle rustling once a traditional practice among nomadic communities has increasingly evolved over time from a cultural practice to a more destructive and less manageable commercialized economic activity captured by highly notorious criminal networks involving a wide range of perpetrators that often span communal and across international borders. Moreover, the advent of the Small Light Weapons (SLW) especially the notorious and lethal AK47 (Amakada/Akokorioit/) was radically a game-changer in the theatre of cattle rustling which tilted the balance of power in favor of those who had access and control of the most powerful weapon which resulting to immeasurable suffering for the people, especially the women and girls.

These dynamics have become both conflict drivers and key triggers that have metamorphosized to both as a causative factor and as well as an effect. Key manifestations are in form of:

- i) Cattle rustling and raiding,
- ii) violent armed conflicts between pastoralists and the state armed forces,
- i) Natural resource-based conflicts in Karamoja:
- ii) Banditry and road ambushes:
- iii) Sexual and Gender-based violence.
- iv) Human-wildlife conflict:
- v) Land based border conflict:

vi) Political rivalry:

In addition, the following were identified as the main actors in the conflict chain in the Karamoja cluster are:

**i. Primary actors**

Male young people and men (Ngoroko, Karacuna and the Nyakan) – 12-35 years:

Men - kraal leaders and cattle warlords (35-60 years):

Traditional elders (60yrs and above)

**ii. Secondary actors:**

Women:

Sorcerers/fortune tellers

Businessmen/women/Brokers and middlemen:

Development partners (NGOs/CBOs)

Craftsman, the Artisan Blacksmith

**iii. Tertiary actors:**

Central and Local Government/County (Community structures & local peace committees):

Local politicians and members of the auxiliary security forces:

Traditional and religious leaders

**Note.** Local politicians and Auxiliary and security forces were identified as actors with no clear side, however, could belong to all the above sides.

The following factors were identified as main triggers and drivers of the Karamojong cluster conflicts, namely:

- i. Persistent socio-economic and political inequalities and marginalization.
- ii. Climate change and environmental stressors.
- iii. Cross border proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Conflict legacies, and disarmament inadequacies.
- iv. Commercialization of cattle rustling.
- v. Emergence of conflict alliances for distribution of cattle.
- vi. Poverty, unemployment, and the influence of illicit alcohol.
- vii. Changing land use, management, and development policies/ intervention in the region
- viii. Mineral exploration, oil discovery, and extractives.
- ix. COVID-19 Pandemic and Foot and Mouth Epidemic induced Conflict & Insecurity.

**Impacts of conflict in the karamoja cluster**

- a) Food insecurity (famine and malnutrition)
- b) Loss of lives and heightened orphan burden, rise in female headed households/widows and human trafficking
- c) Poverty and impoverishment
- d) Changing livelihoods systems and environmental destruction

**Existing efforts to address conflict and opportunities to promote Peace in the Karamoja Cluster**

The emerging role of women and diverse experiences in times of conflict have powerful implications for peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

Positive cultural perceptions of Karamoja cluster identity and oneness in diversity.

Existence of customary resource management regimes.

Presence of positive interdependent and complementary actor roles in Karamoja cluster.

### **Challenges & lessons learnt in promoting peace and security in karamoja cluster**

- i. The state and civil society organization (CSO) actors work methods are conflict insensitive and inconsistent with conflict and peace realities in cross border areas.
- ii. Upholding the irrefutable part culture plays in shaping actors' response to cross border peace and conflict.
- iii. Getting a balance between informal and formal justice systems in addressing cross border conflict and development concerns.
- iv. Persistent human rights concern around disarmament operations.
- v. Maximizing land use for pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods enhancement as a precursor for peace and security.

### **Conclusions and recommendations.**

The study concluded that cross-border conflicts within the Karamoja cluster are caused primarily by culture of cattle rustling and competition for scarce natural resources underpinned by the emergence of patronage and conflict profiteering systems, reinforced by climate change/environmental stressors.

Furthermore, well-founded perceptions of government neglect and socio-economic exclusion constitute powerful conflict grievances in cross border conflict cycle, as they compound conflict drivers'/trigger events of significance such as high poverty levels, high youth unemployment, shrinking space for pastoral livelihood system, substance abuse/alcoholism, and small arms proliferation/disarmament inadequacies. Substantial factors determining the incidence and severity of conflicts in the Karamoja cluster with high level of influence on cross border conflict transformation are the degree of conflict impacts/legacies and resilience capacity of affected cross border communities.

Therefore, this report, recommends the following broad strategies for action by governments and UNDP in a bid to foster peace, security, and development in Karamoja cluster.

1. Support adoption of gender transformative approaches in peace and development programing.
2. Promote inclusive development and management of shared community resources along the borderlines.
3. Promote pastoralism livelihood systems growth through adoption of conflict sensitive and inclusive development policies.
4. Support capacity strengthening of existing and emerging local peace and development mechanisms in cross border areas.
5. Investment in rural infrastructure development like roads and telecommunication for peace and security in cross border hot spot areas.
6. Strengthening the local governance, peace, and security systems for pursuance of human rights principles in peace and development initiatives.
7. Stimulate regional collaboration in arms inflow/outflow control in cross border contexts
8. Governments should extend the gender responsive effective service delivery to borderline communities.
9. Develop well-designed, contextualized, and focused youth and women empowerment programs for cross border communities.



## **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND.**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build a better life. Globally, UNDP work is concentrated on three focus areas:

- i) Sustainable development.
- ii) Democratic governance and peacebuilding; and
- iii) Climate and disaster resilience. In all activities, UNDP advocates for gender equality and the protection of human rights.

In Uganda and Kenya, UNDP in partnership with the private sector, development partners, civil society, and the academia, is supporting the Governments in identifying their solutions to achieve sustainable development outcomes, create opportunities for empowerment, protect the environment, minimize natural and man-made disasters, build strategic partnerships, and improve the quality of life for all citizens, as set out in the Country Programme Documents. Over the years, UNDP has also laid the groundwork for cross-border interventions between Kenya and Uganda at the borderlands of the Karamoja region in Uganda and Turkana and West Pokot counties of Kenya; by supporting Karamoja in five interrelated priority areas focused on cross-border and regional cooperation; governance, peace, and security (prevention and sustaining peace); inclusive growth, environmental sustainability, climate change, and resilience; women and youth empowerment to enhance resilience, economic opportunities, and integration in the borderland areas of the Karamoja Cluster comprised of Karamojong of Uganda and Turkana/West Pokot of Kenya.

### ***1.2. Purpose of the Assessment***

The Rapid Conflict Analysis and Gender Assessment for the Karamoja cluster revolved around informing UNDP cross-border programming through relevant policy and institutional frameworks that can be put in place to support conflict prevention and sustainable mechanisms of resolving existing tensions and conflict as identify potential interventions to address them.

Specifically, it aims to understand how issues of gender, governance, inequality, livelihoods, water, and rights relating to various forms of violence and conflict. Additionally, to identify and comprehend the nature of the borderland governance system and its role in informing current program planning, including but not limited to; strengthening the economic capacity of women and youth, the capacity of informal and formal economic governance structures, and civil society organizations to institute conflict-sensitive governance; influencing policies for more effective economic rights governance; and increasing opportunities for collaborative engagements, diverse livelihoods and increased opportunities for collaborative engagement on peace and conflict in the region.

### ***1.3. Methodology and process.***

The study adopted a combination of an extensive systematic cross-sectional, and correlational methods of analysis using qualitative research methodology in primary and secondary data collection and analysis. Including reviews of existing literatures and field research reports carried in Kenya and Uganda.

The rationale for the selection of this methodology is reinforced by its significance and popularity in detailed comprehension of policy formulation and implementation, value systems, populace's behavior, community concerns, cultural values, and aspirations etc., through descriptions and interpretation of interview excerpts. As noted by Merriam (2009), the product of qualitative inquiry is

richly descriptive given the evolving nature of the subject of study, the likelihood of descriptive analysis of the context, the participants involved and the activities of interests. Moreover, data in the form of quotes from documents, field notes and participants' interviews, excerpts from videos, electronic communication, or a combination of these are always included in support of the findings of the study.

To effectively generate the data and narrations, structured and non-structured individual, and focus group discussion with key stakeholders from the affected communities, community representatives (men and women, elders and youth, urban and rural residents), local government officials, and religious and cultural leaders, CSOs at different levels was used to directly elicit perspectives. Key findings were triangulated to ensure their validity.

The study was conducted between May – August 2022 to understand how issues of gender, governance, inequality, livelihoods, water, and rights relates to various forms of violence and conflict in the region. The field study areas were strategically and purposively selected in three communities of Karamoja cluster region:

**1. Uganda – Karamoja/Pokot**

- i. **Kaabong** – (Kamion, Kalapata, Tultul, Nalapatui, Kachikol, Kopoth, Loyoro and Lopedo)
- ii. **Kotido** – (Nakapelimoru, Kaileng, Panyangara, Losilang and
- iii. **Moroto** (Rupa, Kobebe, Nakabaat, Nakiloro, Tapac and Kosiroi);
- iv. **Amudat** (Loroo, Karita and Loborokocha).

**2. Kenya- West Pokot County:** (Kacheliba, Kanyarkwat, Abonga, Alale, Mosol, Turkwel and Katikomor).

**3. Kenya - Turkana County:** (Loima, Lokiriama, Urum, Lorugum, Lorengipi, Loya, Oropoi, Nawountos, Nakitongo, Lokipoto and Kainuk).

## 2. FINDINGS

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### *2.1. Conflict and security context in the Karamoja Cluster*

Based on literature reviews and focus group discussions with elders, active/retired raiders (men and youth) and women from the pastoralist communities in Kenya and Uganda, conflict was literally described as the different forms of ‘disagreements or clashes between individuals over something (can be aggressively or politely). In pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, access to land-based natural resources is a key factor in individual (women and men) and group (family and community) relations, that defines and shapes social, cultural, political, and economic organization. Competition for access to land, water, pasture, and other natural resources is inevitable, and managing and resolving such conflicts is an essential part of governance<sup>1</sup>.

According to key informants’ classification and identification of the conflict within the Karamoja Cluster is complex and difficult under a specific typology. Nonetheless, even though Karamoja cluster has suffered various types of conflict over the years, the most predominant ones are classified under:

- a) Intra - conflict and insecurity between ethnic groups.
- b) Inter- conflict and insecurity within ethnic groups; and
- c) Confrontational conflict between the state and Karamojong society.

These conflicts are manifested in different forms within the Karamoja Cluster and outsider the cluster with neighbors.

- i) ***Cattle rustling and raiding:*** This is one of the main types of conflict across the Karamoja Cluster region with livestock being the main center. According to Markakis (1993), cattle rustling, and raiding is defined as the forceful acquisition of livestock such as cattle, donkeys, camels, goats, and sheep from one community by any person from another community using guns and other weapons such as spears, sticks, bows and arrows. It takes the form of inter-ethnic raids (within the respective ethnic groups) and intra-ethnic raids (between the various ethnic groups) spearheaded by the youthful male warriors.
- ii) ***Violent armed confrontational between pastoralists and the state armed forces*** This conflict is associated with disarmament and violent clashes between the Kenya and Uganda armed forces to recover stolen livestock as well as forcefully remove illegal arms and ammunition in the hands of Karamojong cluster warriors. Much of the violent conflict is associated with the resistance to the voluntary surrender of firearms by some Karamojong cluster warriors, which usually results in gunfights.
- iii) ***Natural resource-based conflicts in Karamoja:*** conflicts over natural and non-physical resources are mainly over land boundary, pastures, and water. The conflict hotspot are border areas between the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya; the Karamoja Uganda – Kenya boarder line known as ‘no-man’s land’ or the death triangle’ that separate these rival ethnic groups spanning (Dodoth, Jie, Matheniko, Pokot and Tepeth) and Kenya (Turkana and Pokot) are rich grazing zones with plentiful of pastures and water. During the dry season when there is inadequate pasture and water, natural resource-based conflict is common in this stretch which sometimes spillover to the

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<sup>1</sup> See Turkana County Government Turkana County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP II) for 2018-2022

neighboring communities like Kween, Buikwe and other regions in Uganda affecting women and men differently.

- iv) ***Banditry and road ambushes:*** According to the FGD, the rapid socio-economic changes since the last disarmament have seen the rise of a powerful gang local youth/men referred to as 'Lonetia' or "bandits" known for criminality along highways, gardens, and homes heavily armed with clubs, machetes, toy guns and guns terrorizing rural homes and motorists. Human Rights Watch (2007) notes that within these wider challenges of serious insecurity and cattle raiding, banditry, and road ambushes<sup>2</sup>, exacerbated by pervasive use of illegal weapons, presents a significant law and order problem in Karamoja. These disputes generally do not cause large-scale violence but still generate a sense of insecurity and uncertainty about the future for men, women, boys and girls. The pervasive banditry and its associated threats in most cases have caused death and maimed many people (female and male), including raping of women before dispossessing them off their properties which in turn continue to drive conflicts within households. According to most respondents, this form of conflict has enveloped and flourished due to the absence of alternative livelihoods. Majority of the disarmed youth coupled with the prolonged exposure to violent armed conflicts have been forced to criminality to sustain their individual and family survival within their communities. Though the armed forces have established army detachments, roadblocks and road patrols, it appears that its personnel are being overstretched by the responsibility of securing the porous border.
- v) ***Sexual and Gender-based violence (GBV).*** Karamoja is a patriarchal society where most men marry several wives, even when they cannot look after them well. Amongst the Karamoja cluster, sexual and physical abuse of women and girls remains culturally acceptable. FGDs with women and men revealed that marriage and payment of bride price serves as a key factor exposing women and girls to GBV. Once bride-price has been paid for a Karamojong bride, even when they are beaten and tortured, women are not easily allowed to return to their parents'. When a husband dies, his relatives take all his family property irrespective of whether the woman has children. Widow inheritance is widespread among all Karamojong ethnic groups without exception (Muhereza, Ossiya & Ovonji-Odida, 2008). Due to the state of insecurity, women suffer abuse when they go to the wells to fetch water or to the bushes to collect firewood (Muhereza, Ossiya & Ovonji-Odida, 2008). Some gender-based forms of violence have also been associated with disarmament. Women are beaten and sometimes tortured to compel them to reveal where their husbands are hiding, or where they have kept their guns. The shifting dynamics in socio-economic circumstances have specific gendered impacts as gender norms are challenged. Men often find they are unable to fulfil their traditional role as providers for their family and community, and these frustrations result in an increase in GBV as they seek to exert control in the private sphere<sup>3</sup>. Children (girls and boys) also suffer different forms of violence, including abuse. They suffer neglect and abandonment by their fathers and are not only subjected to hard physical labor, especially in herding small livestock, but they also lack adequate food, shelter, clothing, and nutrition with high infant mortalities. According to (UNDP, 2010; Muhereza, Ossiya & Ovonji-Odida, 2008) most of the children are traumatized due to exposure to domestic violence in the communities, either as victims of livestock raiding activities or as active players.

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<sup>2</sup> See Human Rights Watch (2007) "Get the Gun! "Human Rights Violations by Uganda's National Army in Law Enforcement Operations in Karamoja Region

<sup>3</sup> Saferworld; Peace, security and justice in Karamoja Amplifying the voices of women and girls, Briefing, December 2020



- vi) **Human-wildlife conflict:** Conflicts between large carnivores and human communities have become common (Mudumba, 2011) around the Kidepo animal corridor, an area that span beyond Uganda into part of north-western Turkana, Kenya. Human-wildlife conflicts result when the actions of humans or wildlife have an adverse impact upon the other. Some of the drivers behind the escalation of Human Wildlife conflict is linked to populations growth from both the wildlife and human<sup>4</sup>, resulting to increased competition for space for urbanization, agricultural land by human and some wildlife to stray outside formally protected areas. An indicator of the severity of this conflict is amplified during dry seasons when pasture and water is limited. Reports from woemna and men community FGD in Oropoi-Kenya and Loyoro-Uganda indicated that during dry season, large carnivores regularly raid crop fields and livestock. In retaliation, they are killed through trapping or shooting. During the period of this study in Nawountos, a group of young Turkana herders were reported to have killed three buffalo's that had drunk all the water in the water pan meant for livestock.
- vii) **Land based border conflict:** Within the natural resources-based conflict, land-based conflicts in the forms of border dispute remain a trigger factor for many cross-border conflicts usually influenced by elite and powerful private sector who lease and enclose large chunks of land for their private interest. According to male FGD respondents in Kainuk and Turkwel, colonial land boundaries/borders have always been contentious in the region to the extent that some local politicians have capitalized on it to create disunity and animosity for their selfish interests. However, the recent Oil discovery in Turkana has ignited considerable new-found interest in this neglected region.
- viii) **Political rivalry:** Also, respondents identified other non-physical forms of conflict always prominent amongst male and female technocrats and politicians through sentimental utterances which have sucked into the ethnic pastoralists conflict.

## 2.2. Actors in conflict and peace building

Unlike in the past, where cattle rustling was purely from a pastoralist social norms and culture of survival and wealth distribution, in recent years, conflict pattern in the Karamoja cluster which have evolved significantly in a complex way. Notable, the roles of conflict or peace building actors have also significantly evolved due to varying competing interests and roles which has a profound impact in shaping the conflict and peacebuilding efforts.

Based on FGD and interviews from male and female respondents from the entire region during the field visits, the following were identified as the main actors in the conflict chain in the Karamoja cluster:

### i. Primary actors:

**Male young people and men (Ngoroko, Karacuna and the Nyakan) – 12-35 years:** According to respondents, unlike men between the age of 25 years and above who are expected to marry with a lot of cows, the recent hard economic crisis, despondency, and vulnerabilities have forced majority of young people (boys) as early as 12-19 years to engage in raids and foment violence. Majority of respondents (female and male) agree that these groups of raiders who constitute 60% of the total population of the warriors are currently key and have become disobedient to their elders' authority. Majority are the product of conflict as orphans or escapees from previous violent disarmament with vengeance attitude. They wield and exercise absolute power in society

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<sup>4</sup> West Pokot County Government Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022.

with no remorse to cultural authority or family influence. These group feel that some of the actions of the elders (women and men) are outdated and they only heed to violence.

**Men - kraal leaders and cattle warlords (35-60 years):** traditionally, this age group has been the most actively involved in the issues of insecurity in the region. They wield significant power to the extent that they are role models in the cattle raids. They also form part of the history of conflict elements within the cross-border communities dating far back to pre-disarmament times<sup>5</sup>.

**Traditional elders (60yrs and above):** these groups are the silent instigators to both the conflict and the peace process. Amongst the Karamoja cluster, the traditional leadership system is fused in the institution of elders or council of senior elders (male and female)<sup>6</sup>, and they are traditionally key in managing and influencing conflict situations as they occur. The male elders wield significant power to the extent that in case of cattle raids, they bless the raids, plan them, take the youth through rituals as preparations for the raids, a role share between male and female elders (particularly the non-sexually active female elders) and finally share the proceeds of the raids. However, recent dynamics because of the acquisition of small arms have changed the way raids are planned and executed. Unlike before where raids were sanctioned by elders, today older generations have entirely been deprived of all authority. According to an elder in Nakapelimoru, Uganda, the recent sanctioning of smaller and spontaneous raids point to a direction of overthrow of elder powers and authority. The region has seen recent increase in youth's influence and unilateral powers through their own leadership who no longer respect elders to sanction raids. While the authority of elders has been weakened especially in Karamoja, amongst the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya, their influence and authority are still significant in peace building.

ii. **Secondary actors:**

**Women:** Much as women carry the heavier burden of a combined conflict and insecurity as primary victims than men; they assume varying positions, either as perpetrators, victims, witnesses or even all three. Given that, women are customarily 'married with cows', whereby the husband's family gives many cattle as a bride price, women by default contribute to cattle rustling in several ways including the hard and softer aspects. Women play a significant role traditionally as passive supporters and instigators of cattle rustling through oral narratives (Savery & Jeremy, 1999) composing songs and dance and naming war heroes pet names. They provide non-military support for raiders (Rehn & Johnson, 2002) such as intelligence information and prepare food for raiders, performing rituals designed to bless men before raids and to ensure their safe return home to enhance family status. Yet, despite being party to the conflict, women remained excluded from the various bodies seeking a solution and decision-making powers to prevent conflict. Their experiences, views, and skills are often under-valued and under-utilized in the resolution and prevention of conflict. Despite women being structurally excluded from conflict resolution and having no direct role in formal peace processes, the analysis showed that women still engage in peacebuilding at an inter-communal level, because they are seen as less threatening than men. Women also encourage their sons to inter-marry with another community to help cement peace agreements.

**Native/traditional doctors//fortune tellers etc.:** Amongst the pastoralists, native doctors//fortune tellers both men and women hold significant influence because of the divine and supernatural powers they hold. At this stage, the fortune teller/prophet is the only actor that that can stop a

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<sup>5</sup> GOU, Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP), 2007-2010

<sup>6</sup> FRANK MUHEREZA, et al, *A Study on Options for Enhancing Access to Justice and Improving Administration of Law and Order in Karamoja*, DANIDA, Revised Draft Report, November 2008, p. 12

planned or pending raid. Most often they are consulted and if scenarios for the planned raid simulate negatively or look too difficult, most times the men discard their plans to raid. Given the widespread established network and convening point that planned raids run, fortune teller, native/traditional doctors, priests both male and female are potential source of information about impending raids.

***Businessmen/women/Brokers and middlemen:*** Beyond the raider's other passive member, the external force comprised of businessmen/women. Considered new players and external force with criminal and commercial motives in cattle raiding, they invest, loan/hire their guns, and ammunition or facilitate raiders to ensure the success of the raid <sup>7</sup>. They also purchase the spoils of raids and have then loaded onto trucks and transported to faraway markets from the conflict scene. According to an interview with a prominent raider in Kotido, most times business communities from outside Karamoja loan or provide guns and ammunition for a raid in return for a few animals. These groups are well coordinated with the help of communication technology, they operate from remote areas or neighboring regions of Lango, Teso, Acholi, Sebei, Bugisu, including government institutions.

***Craftsman, the Artisan Blacksmith:*** The trajectory of blacksmithing as a creative practical group is composed of local artisan traditional industry which has thrived over years in pre-colonial and contemporary history of the Karamoja cluster. The art of blacksmith has dated back many centuries ago before the advent of the white man weapons where local craftsmen- the blacksmith manufacture local guns known as *Amatida*<sup>8</sup>, and other traditional weapons such as spears, axes, arrows, and bows. Including farming tools like knives, hoes using iron ore from Mt. Toror (Kotido) and Nyakawae in Abim districts.

***Development partners (NGOs/CBOs):*** There are several NGOs, both local and international, operating in different areas of the region and involved in different sectors of development, predominantly in peace building in a collaborative manner. Most often peace actors and human rights defenders become victims of conflict. For example, one of the catholic priests was ambushed and killed enroute to Uganda from Oropoi on a peace mission with LOKADO.

iii. ***Tertiary actors:***

***Central and Local Government (Community structures & local peace committees):*** Government's role in the resolution of the conflict has been significant in terms of disarmament, controlling the violence, introducing sanctions for raiders, regulating livestock cross border movements, formation and strengthening local peace structures such as peace committees (PC).

***Local politicians and members of the auxiliary security forces:*** local politicians and security agencies also contribute to escalation of the conflict due to their ways of work and corruption among some in their ranks especially in the follow-up and recovery of stolen livestock. Local politicians (female and male) play a bigger role in defining the scale of conflict through sentimental and utterances that trigger conflict. They also broker peace by facilitating cross border peace dialogues and caravans.

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<sup>7</sup> According to interviews in Karamoja, a gun loan during a successful raid may cost up to 20- 60 heads of cattle depending on the success of the raid.

<sup>8</sup> See David Mafabi (September 7, 2018). Locally made gun escalating cattle raids in Karamoja accessed from <https://www.pmldaily.com/news/2018/09/locally-made-gun-escalating-cattle-raids-in-karamoja.html>

**Traditional and religious leaders:** Consciously, traditional, and religious leaders (male and female) are crucial actors in conflict stabilization and peace efforts, they provide moral and practical support. Historically, the male religious leaders (priests) have led strategic engagement with the youth male warriors/raiders and kraal leaders to stop violence, offer psychosocial support to support mind transformation and linkages to government re-integration/amnesty services.

### 2.3. Security and protection in Karamoja

#### 2.3.1. Disarmament and protection mechanisms in the Karamojong cluster region

Although small arms have been in existence since the early twentieth century (Leff, 2009), the rate in which small arms has proliferated among the Karamoja Cluster region in recent years is very high. The availability and misuse of small arms and light weapons presents a serious threat to safety, security, and development prospects within the Karamoja cluster cross-border region. Increasingly, 96.9 percent of cattle raids occurrences as noted by (Leff, 2009) in the cross-border regions use small arms compared to traditional weapons.

In response to these threats, several efforts put in place by both governments of Kenya and Uganda to provide security and protection of the Karamoja cluster communities. Apart from the Uganda People Defense force (UPDF) and the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF), both countries have established paramilitary special units inform of the Anti-Stock Theft Unit. The ASTU was established among others to support Anti-stock theft operations and recoveries.

According to the security agencies, besides the army, police and prisons services, the following are other auxiliary and paramilitary units actively providing security and protection services in the region:

Country	Designated security agency	Auxiliary and paramilitary
<b>Uganda</b>	Uganda People’s Defense Force (UDFF) Uganda Police Force (UPF) Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) Uganda Prisons (UP) Internal Security Organization	Local Defense force (LDU) Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) Paramilitary (Home Guard)
<b>Kenya</b>	Kenya Defense Force (KDF) National Police services (NPS) Kenya Prison Services	Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU) Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU) National Police Reservists (NPRs) Border Patrol Unit (BPU)

**Table 1.** Security formations in Kenya and Uganda

Additionally, in 2005, the Kenya and Uganda planned to carry out a joint disarmament exercise through the KIDDP in Uganda and Operation Dumisha Amani (ODA) in Kenya. However, this plan never materialized as each country ended up carrying out the exercises independently hence failing to realize expected results, instead resulted in immediate rearmament of the disarmed communities owing to increased attacks by neighbors (Kimaiyo, 2009).

Country	Timeline and key events
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## Uganda

### **July 1986 – Dec 1987: Liberation and demilitarization**

- Ugandan army (National Resistance Army - NRA) attempted to implement a forced disarmament in Karamoja during post-liberation period after the fall of the Uganda National Liberation (UNLA).
- Known for gross human rights violation where victims were tied ‘Three pieces and *Kandoya* styles’ maiming majority.
- Met a lot of resistance from the region that led to the death of many *Kadogo* soldier in Kotido and Morukajore in Namalu.

### **December 2001 - February 2002: First phase of voluntary disarmament.**

- The voluntary phase involved various measures such as amnesty and compensation to those who surrender their small arms. Incentives such as an ox-plough, iron sheets and food were offered.
- Approximately 10,000 small arms were recovered (KIDDP, 2007).
- Protected kraals were opened in most sub counties
- Government attempted to deploy along the porous borders with Kenya and South Sudan, but this was not effective.

### **2003- September 2004: Second phase of stick and carrot.**

- The period saw the incursion of the LRA into Lango and Teso forcing the UPDF soldiers in Karamoja region to be withdrawn creating a vacuum for rearmament.
- A meagre 854 guns were recovered from this exercise.

### **February 2006 – December 2010: Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP)**

- Another phase of disarmament was re-launched with human security and development dimension incorporated with support from UNDP and other development partners.
- UPDF initiated a forceful disarmament that attracted resistance leading to the death of many soldiers, and warriors.
- Over 40,000 guns were recovered (KIDDP 2007, Sabala, 2007).
- Incidences of violence, extreme brutality, and allegations of corruption among the Ugandan security forces led to gross violation of human rights (loss of human life, livestock, and destruction of property)
- The process strained the state-citizen relationships in Karamoja leading to mistrust and counter accusation.

### **May 2022: ‘Usalama Kwa Wote’ disarmament**

- Moderate intelligence led voluntary disarmament program.
- Use of cordon and search operations across the region.
- Most people support the principle of arms control (reduction in or removal of the weapons) among civilians but decry the asymmetrical removal of arms between different communities<sup>9</sup>.

### **1980s: forceful and sporadic disarmament of pastoralists.**

- Voluntary disarmament with an ultimatum was launched to pacify

<sup>9</sup> Saferworld, Karamoja conflict and security assessment, September 2010, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja conflict and security assessment.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja%20conflict%20and%20security%20assessment.pdf)

**Kenya**

pastoralists residing in West Pokot, Marakwet and Baringo to surrender their arms in exchange for amnesty (Sabala, 2007).

- Recovered few arms.

**1984 Operation Nyundo**

- Joint Kenya-Uganda targeted operation along borderland communities of Karamojong and the Pokot.

**2005 Operation Dumisha Amani I (Operation maintain peace).**

- The communities in Northern and Northeastern Kenya were given amnesty to surrender all illegal guns.
- Not successful because most pastoralists feared being vulnerable to their neighbors within Kenya and Uganda which led to forceful disarmament.

**April 2006 and August 2009 Operation Okota (Operation Collect)**

- Large scale military-led forceful and brutal operation to disarm communities in North Rift and Northeastern Kenya
- Heavy criticism from local leaders, civil society organizations and members of parliament (Sabala, 2007).

**2010 - to date, Operation Dumisha Amani II.**

- The operation combined socio-economic interventions with calls for voluntary disarmament.
- The operation was relatively successful leading to recovery of a good number of firearms
- Construction of three schools, sinking of boreholes for the communities, infrastructural facilities and offering medical assistance (Kimaiyo, 2009).
- Reduced cases of cattle rustling incidences reported

*Table 2. Disarmament timelines in Kenya and Uganda since 1980-2022.*

Uganda and Kenya are signatories to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the Beijing Platform of Action, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), among others. Whereas Uganda and Kenya have strong domesticated policy frameworks for protecting women and girl's rights and promoting gender equality, like the constitutions that lay foundations for the national gender and development policies, and the ensuing promotion of women peace and security agenda, there is a broad recognition that these legal reforms have not yet been effectively translated into gender-responsive actions that would otherwise improve protection and access to justice for women and girls and their well-being compared to their male counterparts in cross border areas. The FGDs with community women and men affirmed that the protection needs of vulnerable groups (women, girls, boys, elderly), in the cross-border region are not affectively addressed to achieve sustainable peace through inclusion, justice and security. According to the Global Women, Peace and Security Index 2020/21, Uganda and Kenya were ranked 109 and 90 respectively out of 170 countries for the well-being of women, with particularly poor performance observed in relation to discriminatory norms, intimate partner violence, and community safety indicators.

Overall, the study observed that women, girls and boys in the cross-border areas continue to face overwhelming gender-based barriers in terms of their ability to influence peace and security processes including disarmament, and protection from injustice for violence/human rights abuses perpetrated against them by conflict actors. These barriers deprive them of the opportunity to live in dignity and participate in peace and protection the same way men do.

### 2.3.2. Key drivers of conflict and insecurity in the Karamoja Cluster

The identification of structural and proximate causes of the pastoralists conflict amongst the Karamoja Cluster has been a long and contentious issue of debate by social and political scientists, as well as peacebuilding practitioners. As noted by Mkutu (2009), Saferworld (2012), and Gumba D. et al (2019) that any discussion on the patterns of conflict and insecurity in the Karamoja cluster regions is problematic and complex in several ways. First there is no easy distinction between cause - effect and effect-cause as it is ordinarily understood by many; and secondly the conflict has a long history synonymous with traditional pastoralist livelihood system which is dependent on the environment and any alteration in these factors inevitably triggers conflict.

While noting that such traditional and resource-based conflicts have increasingly become destructive and less manageable, the study revealed that the distinction between conflict causative factors and effects as noted by Ochieng (2003) is not so obvious<sup>10</sup> as factors shaping it have tended to be both a cause and a consequence. However, a deep conversation with the elders (men and women), active and retired raiders (men and youth) and women including female youth from the pastoralist communities noted that the major causes of the Karamoja cluster conflict are:

Culture and traditional practices of cattle rustling for restocking, wealth distribution/accumulation and marriage purpose.

Competition over scarce natural resources especially water and pasture.

**Culture and traditional practices of cattle rustling:** (*restocking, wealth distribution/accumulation and marriage*).

From a cultural perspective, cattle rustling/raiding denotes a widely accepted traditional practice among nomadic communities in the arid and semi-arid land regions as a rationale of balancing community wealth and power<sup>11</sup>. This widely accepted stereotype of cattle rustling as a preserve of pastoral nomads' communities that inhabit arid and semi-arid areas across the borders of countries<sup>12</sup> is problematic given that cattle rustling has been a critical dimension of the prevailing security and insecurity concerns amongst the Karamoja cluster.

As observed by Ocan (1992), cattle raiding is motivated by socio-cultural and economic demands. For the Karimojong cluster, as noted by the FGD and interviews of prominent Turkana elders and ex-raiders from Kainuk in Turkana South, unlike today, cattle rustling and counter-raiding in general amongst the Ateker-Karimojong cluster culturally acceptable to symbolizes the highest level of survival instinct and prime coping strategies in an ecologically margin lands. Traditionally, cattle raids were endorsed by the community and targeted livestock from outside the community as a means of survival and distribution of wealth. In fact, pastoralists believe that without livestock especially cattle, sheep, goats, donkeys, and camel there is no life. Moreover, livestock ownership as an expression of wealth, prestige and societal status symbol is more dependent on herd size possessed<sup>13</sup>. Also, among the Karimojong cluster, livestock especially cows and goats are used traditionally as a means of exchange for paying bride price. Structurally, women and girls are seen as subordinate to the male counterparts and are viewed as a resources or men's property/possessions and beasts of burden<sup>14</sup>, which is partly informed by and reinforced through the bride price system. Men's value and reputation are linked to how many resources (cattle) they possess and based on their ability to pay a good dowry, which in Karamoja cluster is directly denotes to cattle ownership. Therefore, most often

<sup>10</sup>Ochieng O. M (2003), *The Karamoja Conflict: ORIGINS, IMPACT AND SOLUTIONS*. (First Edition) Fountain Publishers Ltd, Kampala.

<sup>11</sup> *Vanishing herds Cattle rustling in East Africa and the Horn Deo Gumba, Nelson Alusala and Andrew Kimani © 2019, ENACT Issue 10 | December 2019*

<sup>12</sup> Gumba D et al (December 2019) *Vanishing herds: Cattle rustling in East Africa and the Horn. ENACT, Volume (Issue 10)*

<sup>13</sup><http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/C-Special-reports/SAS-SR17-Karamoja.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Saferworld (2020); *Peace, security and justice in Karamoja Amplifying the voices of women and girls, Briefing, December*

youth who intend to marry are required to obtain over 100 herds of livestock for marriage through raids.

Additionally, an account by raiders – (the *Ngoroko*, *Karacuna* and the *Nyakan*<sup>15</sup>) explained that “raiding was always a special and complex event which took weeks of careful preparation both tactfully and psychologically, involving the most powerful, ferocious, and bravest male warriors. They share a common view that although raiding was always a journey of no return as they wage far into the enemy territory to capture as many livestock as possible, usually every young male dreamt to emulate prominent warlords<sup>16</sup> to prove their manhood, strength, and capacity to attack, defend and secure the grazing territories.

The persistent and deeply entrenched patriarchal and gender norms in cross border communities enforced, legitimized, and enabled by formal and informal legal, governance, security and justice systems combine with a history of violence to normalize violence as a means to resolve individual, family and communal conflicts. Gender norms in Karamoja define communal and political decision-making spaces as being predominantly or exclusively male dominated. Despite governments’ and civil society actors’ efforts to promote gender equality over the years, the study revealed that in the Karamoja cluster, traditional norms around masculinity and femininity undermine efforts towards inclusive peace and the fulfilment of rights, as these exclude the experiences of and impede the participation of women and girls. As such women’s participation in structures like clans linked to peace processes (dialoguing on domestic/family disputes and intra- and inter-communal violence) remains very limited and, where it exists, is less prominent or meaningful. Women who courageously get involved in conflict resolution activities are viewed as absconding their traditional family roles and are often called names or even beaten by other community members mainly men. GBV does not only affect women’s safety and security, but also fuel general cross border insecurity and violence, as the violence breeds serious consequences for family and community well-being and social cohesion. Whilst awareness of the illegality of GBV is slowly increasing in cross border communities, there is backlash as some community members (men and women) regard this shift as a threat to their traditions, culture and norms.

For women and girls, the fear of reporting violence and human rights abuses greatly speaks to the gendered consequences of reporting that are enforced by men at home, in the community and in justice institutions. Often women and girls must weigh up the risk of seclusion and reporting against the potential sentence and or exclusion, in terms of social stigma and potential physical violence from their families and social networks. Notions of masculinity also prevent boys and men from reporting any violence committed against them to formal and informal authorities, because of the perception that it may make them appear weak to other men and women, hence undermining their masculinity. As a result, women and men report cases at a very late stage or, in extreme cases, when the harm and impact of violence or abuse outweighs the risks.

#### **a) Competition over scarce natural resources**

Environmental degradation and stressors are identified as a significant conflict driver, in terms of their impact on food scarcity, livelihoods, competition for dwindling natural resources and changing climatic conditions. The Karamoja cluster has witnessed changing weather patterns with severe flooding and frequent severe droughts causing crop and pasture failure, a factor blamed for the breakdown of infrastructure (valley dams) and growing food insecurity which has turned life into a struggle. The human instincts for survival then take over regardless of the costs/consequences resulting into increased ‘climate migration in search of water and pasture across the national borders.

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<sup>15</sup> Young warriors among the Turkan, Karamojong and Pokot are notoriously referred to as the *Ngoroko*, *Karacuna* and the *Nyakan*

<sup>16</sup> War heroes among pastoralist are given demigods status, pet - bull marks/names, praises and victory songs and associated with successful carrier raider,





comparatively fewer options for participating in land governance and natural resource management. Women thus are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change than men due to various factors including poverty, heavy dependence on natural resources for their livelihoods, exposed to social, economic, and political barriers that limit their coping capacity to climate risks and stressors. Further, when coupled with unequal access to resources, to decision-making processes and limited mobility due to their reproductive roles, women remain in positions where they are disproportionately affected by climate change and particularly vulnerable to insecurity and violent conflict<sup>27</sup>. Despite their legal right to access and use land, women have no decision-making powers regarding land sales and do not control income from the produce obtained from the land. Many women are therefore left highly vulnerable to economic shocks, which impacts their ability to make a living and feed their families<sup>28</sup>. One of the coping strategies available to women and children in Karamoja cluster, is to migrate to growing towns thus exposing them further to new forms of crime and violence, such as sexual harassment and trafficking<sup>29</sup>.

### ***2.3.3. Dynamics and key triggers of conflict in the Karamoja Cluster.***

In analyzing the recent conflict phenomenon within the Karamoja Cluster region, the FGD with men and women from the three regions underscored the fact that cattle rustling, once a traditional practice among nomadic communities<sup>30</sup> has evolved over time from a cultural practice to a more commercialized economy captured by notorious criminal networks involving a wide range of perpetrators (mainly male) that often span communal and international borders. Whereas there is a general acceptance that the cause of conflicts among the pastoralist (men and women) is directly linked to traditional livelihood system and competition over access to natural and non-physical resources, they have also argued that the changing dynamic socio-economic, political, and environmental that have a direct bearing on human survival in the margin lands certainly triggers conflict. The following were identified as having a direct and indirect link both as causative and effect trigger factors in shaping the conflict.

#### ***2.3.3.1. Persistent socio-economic and political inequalities and marginalization***

Although the cluster has undergone some transformation from extremely backward and neglected, evidence shows that the region remains at the bottom of the social-economic ladder in both countries. Since colonial times, Karamoja cluster has experienced state-induced and historical injustices caused by deliberate neglect resulting to continued impoverishment, social and political exploitation, and marginalization of Karamoja cluster peoples evidenced by inadequate or lack of access to basic services in cross border areas. Evidently, the cluster especially in Uganda is deeply divided along ethnic lines, reflecting the perpetuation of colonial ‘divide and rule’ strategies now maintained and exploited by successive post-independence governments and being reinforced by a decentralization process in Uganda is perceived as largely ‘ethnicized’. Ethnic loyalty remains a predominant basis for alliance building in the case of cross border conflict and peace efforts particularly by both men.

It was evident from the respondents that the perceived sense of deliberate marginalization and neglect coupled with asymmetrical power relations evidenced by unequal level of development within Karamoja cluster compared to other regions in Uganda and Kenya remains a key conflict driver<sup>31</sup>. According to local leaders in Loima, the ineffective service delivery and infrastructure deficiency in

<sup>27</sup> Trocaire, *Technical Paper on The nexus between climate Change and land conflict in Turkana County, September 2020*

<sup>28</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (2018), ‘Resilience Analysis in Karamoja’, p 1 (<http://www.fao.org/3/i8365EN/i8365en.pdf>)

<sup>29</sup> USAID East Africa Resilience Learning Project (2016), ‘Resilience and risk in pastoralist areas: Recent trends in diversified and alternative livelihoods’, February, pp 11–31 ([https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pa00m1pz.pdf](https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pa00m1pz.pdf))

<sup>30</sup> Eliza M. Johannes, Leo C. Zulu & Ezekiel Kalipeni (2014): Oil discovery in Turkana County, Kenya: a source of conflict or development? *African Geographical Review*, DOI: [10.1080/19376812.2014.884466](https://doi.org/10.1080/19376812.2014.884466)

<sup>31</sup> *Advisory Consortium on Conflict sensitivity, Northern Uganda Conflict Analysis, September 2013*

the cross borderline is perceived to be a key factor aggravating conflict and eroding the relationships between state institutions and the people. They noted that *how can two independent states fail to develop a framework that bring government closer to the people than focusing on ever emerging conflicts over natural resources, land, and boundary, yet you hear Kenya and Uganda active in other countries*<sup>32</sup>. Perceptions of government favoritism” towards other regions/counties and inequality is an important reality that cannot be dispelled in terms of driving conflict as people (female and male) argue that others within these countries are becoming wealthier at their plight<sup>33</sup>. This dynamic is often dangerously manipulated by the male political and economic elites to strengthen their support base thus maintaining conflict.

### **2.3.3.2. Climate change and environmental stressors**

Karamoja cluster’s climate is arid/ semi-arid with a desert-like vegetation and scattered grasslands which supports mainly pastoralism and marginal crop production. The Karamoja cluster’s livelihoods is traditionally dependent on pastoralism practiced in a resilient and an ecologically adaptive system in their rangelands. While pastoralists have traditionally adapted and managed this variability through various strategies to optimize livestock production and productivity while protecting the rangelands. Climate change and its variability in form of frequent and severe droughts, floods and other extreme weather events has increased over the past decades, and rainfall has become ever more erratic and unpredictable forcing pastoralists to compete for ever-shrinking pastures and water sources, triggering violent clashes. Climate change has exacerbated existing challenges of fragile communities and has been identified as a serious aggravating factor to violent conflicts<sup>34</sup>.

According to FGD with women and men in Lorugum, Kenya, drought and famine have been two powerful factors in shaping the general community and gender relations in the Karamoja Cluster. It has also worsened intercommunal conflicts and disputes over natural resources, straining the pastoralists’ ability to move their herds beyond their communities’ own lands (FAO, 2019)<sup>35</sup>. One Turkana herder in Nakitongo noted that *“if the Turkana had their own water dam the size of Kobebe in Matheniko, Uganda, perhaps cross-border mobility during dry season would have reduced conflict over water and pasture in Karamoja”*. He too argues that unlike before, *there is growing scarcity of natural resources for livestock and food for humans subsequently leading to local competition* which becomes unmanageable in the absence of strong institutions for conflict resolution (Schaar, 2017)<sup>36</sup>. Another male elder (fortuneteller) noted that even their work has become difficult as weather pattern which was easy to predict using traditional early warning signs by elders (Ngimu’rok) has become extremely difficult to predict with prolonged droughts which undermine pasture for livestock in the region<sup>37</sup>.

Given the versatile nature of the cross-borders in the Karamoja cluster and increased influx of illicit modern weapons from war-torn neighbor countries and a series of severe droughts in recent years, climate change and variability have exacerbated and shaped the nature of conflicts in the Karamoja Cluster primarily on account of its impact on the ability of the rangelands to provide pasture, water

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32 Interview with County government leader in Loima

33 Knutzen, A. and Smith, A., ‘UNICEF Peacebuilding, Education and Advocacy Programme: Uganda Conflict Analysis’, October 2012

34 Julia, B. 2018. *Climate Change & Environment Nexus Brief: Fragility and Conflict*.

35 FAO (2019) Cross-border coordination of livestock movements and sharing of natural resources among pastoralist communities in the Greater Karamoja Cluster accessed from [<https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/cross-border-coordination-livestock-movements-and-sharing-natural-resources-among>]

36 Schaar, J. (2017). *The relationship between climate change and violent conflict*.

37 FGD in Nakitongo

and other resources that support pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods<sup>38</sup>. In all these, livestock survival and protection are usually at the center of local security substructure and subject of threats, defense, and offense<sup>39</sup> because the livelihood of the community revolves around nature<sup>40</sup>. Thus, the Turkana and Pokot of Kenya; and the Dodoth, Jie, and several Karimojong groups of Uganda among others have frequently engaged in either violent conflicts or alliances due to environmental conditions.

### *2.3.3.3. Conflict legacies, and disarmament inadequacies.*

Kenya and Uganda have had a long history of grappling with insecurity of cattle rustling challenges among pastoral communities due to proliferation of illicit and illegal Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). Consequently, as noted by Mutinda (2016), the two countries have pursued various strategies such as the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (2001-2011) in Uganda and Operation Dumisha Amani (2005) in Kenya to rid the region of illegal arms.

While the Ugandan KIDDP campaign dubbed stick and carrot has been praised for bringing relative peace and development in the region for a decade, including ridding the region of an estimated 30,000 – 40,000 guns, however, regardless of these outcomes, the exercise that was carried out largely through forceful means had other unintended consequences. Whereas actors expressed that “efforts to disarm the Karimojong yielded some results, the lack of concerted regional approach and the heavy-handed approach employed resulted to widespread human rights abuses<sup>41</sup>. A study on the impacts of disarmament on livelihood in Karamoja by Stites and Akabwai (2009) shows that the exercise had many unintended and unpredicted negative consequences for individuals (women, girls, male youth and men) and communities, including increased insecurity for communities, stripping off essential and productive assets, weakening and eroding traditional mechanisms to cope with vulnerability and food insecurity as well as for civil-military relations. It also contributed greatly to shifting gender relations, labor roles, responsibilities, and identities and eventually the total collapse of the dual settlement and migratory systems central to the success of pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods. The disarmament process is perceived by some cross border men as a process that grossly affects their masculine identity, by taking away men’s weaponry powers and forcing them to take on other unfamiliar livelihoods<sup>42</sup>.

Across Karamoja, Uganda, it emerged during the FGD with women and male youth that the relative failure of government to engage communities adequately after the first disarmament undoubtedly perpetuated widespread perceptions of neglect and a corresponding skepticism about any centrally driven attempts to improve governance that guarantees protection of communities from conflict prone neighboring countries<sup>43</sup>. Also, the inadequacy in addressing legacies of long-term history of violent conflict and their impacts is identified as a key trigger of conflict in Karamoja cluster as it has left pastoral communities in borderlines with the deep-seated grievances against one another that continue to drive conflicts today. More so, the heartbreaking experiences of those who volunteered their guns continues to torment majority (women and men). Across all the cross borders, majority of the Karamoja cluster ex- warriors, victims (women and men), and their communities are continuing to battle with physical and psychosocial scars and stigma endured because of collective attribution and label - ‘cattle raider’ even though they have moved beyond it which they feel hampers their

<sup>38</sup> See Climate Diplomacy, 2021. Communal Conflicts in the Karamoja Cluster (Uganda), <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/communal-conflicts-karamoja-cluster-uganda>, accessed 31st March 2022; Herrero, J. Addison, C. Bedelian, E. Carabine, P. Havlik, B. Henderson, J. van de Steeg, and PK. Thornton (2016). Climate change and pastoralism: impacts, consequences and adaptation. *Rev. Sci. Tech. Off. Int. Epiz.*, 2016, 35 (2), 417–

<sup>39</sup> Sana, O. And Oloo, A. (2019) Between the Borders and Internal Control: The Evolving Character of the Nation State in a Transnationalist Pastoralist Zone: A Case Study of the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda. *Open access Library Journal*, 6: e5506. <https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1105506>

<sup>40</sup> <https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/communal-conflicts-across-kenyan-ugandan-border>

<sup>41</sup> Saferworld, ‘Tracking key conflict and security dynamics in Karamoja – an update’, May 2012, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda\\_PPP\\_report.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda_PPP_report.pdf)

<sup>42</sup> Saferworld (2020); *Peace, security and justice in Karamoja Amplifying the voices of women and girls*, Briefing, December

<sup>43</sup> Advisory Consortium on Conflict sensitivity, *Northern Uganda Conflict Analysis*, September 2013

participation in the recovery process<sup>44</sup>. This according to one of the reformed warriors pushes communities in the borderlines towards an inevitable return to crime and conflict<sup>45</sup>. According to one elder respondent from in Kaabong, atrocities committed by the army and some ethnic groups during the disarmament period left stigma, many women and men with destroyed livelihoods, physical and psychosocial wounds, broken social fabric, or displacement.

The lack of a comprehensive transitional justice to address cases of human rights violation and process for reparation for lost cattle that were placed under UPDF protection since after disarmament, remains contentious government commitment<sup>46</sup>. Many have noted that post disarmament had seen a rise in cases such as land grabbing, corruption, and lack of competition over natural resources. In early 2012 Karimojong male elders met the president and handed over documentation for the lost cattle. However, no progress in resolving the outstanding claims has been seen by the communities, leading to resentment<sup>47</sup> and long-standing grievances (such as historic marginalization) keeping many pastoral communities in a state of latent conflict where any trigger events lead to a rapid escalation of violence. Whereas as government has again recommitted to address this matter, it is perceived that corruption might hinder the realization of intended outcomes.

Community leaders (men and women) consulted shared their constituents' disgruntlement cited the prevalence of corruption in high public offices including army, police and judiciary which are key actors in conflict prevention, with some warning of the potential for violent confrontations as a result. For instance, in Uganda, whereas government is promoting community intelligence –led investigations and recovery of stolen animals, it is perceived that some government officers often connive with criminal agents in exchange for animals. Many times, they are aware of impending raids/attacks but remain sluggish in response and most times issue movement permits because of the potential gain from the loot sharing. This jeopardizes relationships and creates doubt of government willingness to prevent conflict and protect communities, a factor that triggers conflict<sup>48</sup>. Although most people (women and men) support the principle of arms control (reduction in or removal of the weapons) among pastoralist, however, views from the women and men FGD in Karamoja cluster decry the asymmetrical removal of arms between different communities and the highhanded cordon and search operations, is cited to create more fear and increases grievances with potential to lead to further violence and negative gendered effects on pastoralists human rights<sup>49</sup>. Although, there has been an increasing trend in communities to prioritize peace over violence after seeing greater benefits of peaceful coexistence,<sup>50</sup> an account by a male Dodoth elder in Loyoro during the FGD demonstrates the contrary. He noted that the army's approach of indiscriminate impoundment of livestock even for the innocent, including arrests of innocent relatives of the suspects have forced majority especially men and male youth to grieve and seek revenge.

Consequently, amongst most Karamojong men of Uganda, it emerged that between the period 2017 and 2020, there were considerations about having or not having a gun completely outside the economic sphere across the region, however, majority women and men expressed skepticism over government capacity to provide adequate security to their livestock resulting to re-armament. It is perceived that a growing culture of gun violence that prevails in communities, was due to failure by the army to adequately provide protection and security. Additionally, the inadequacy of previous disarmament and legacy of past violence pushed disgruntled and frustrated male youth and men to acquire weapons to not only protect themselves but as an incentive for revenge attacks, which

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<sup>44</sup> Advisory Consortium on Conflict sensitivity, *Northern Uganda Conflict Analysis*, September 2013

<sup>45</sup> Alier David M, *Rapid assessments situation report on Karamoja*, Mercy Corps, 10 October 2014

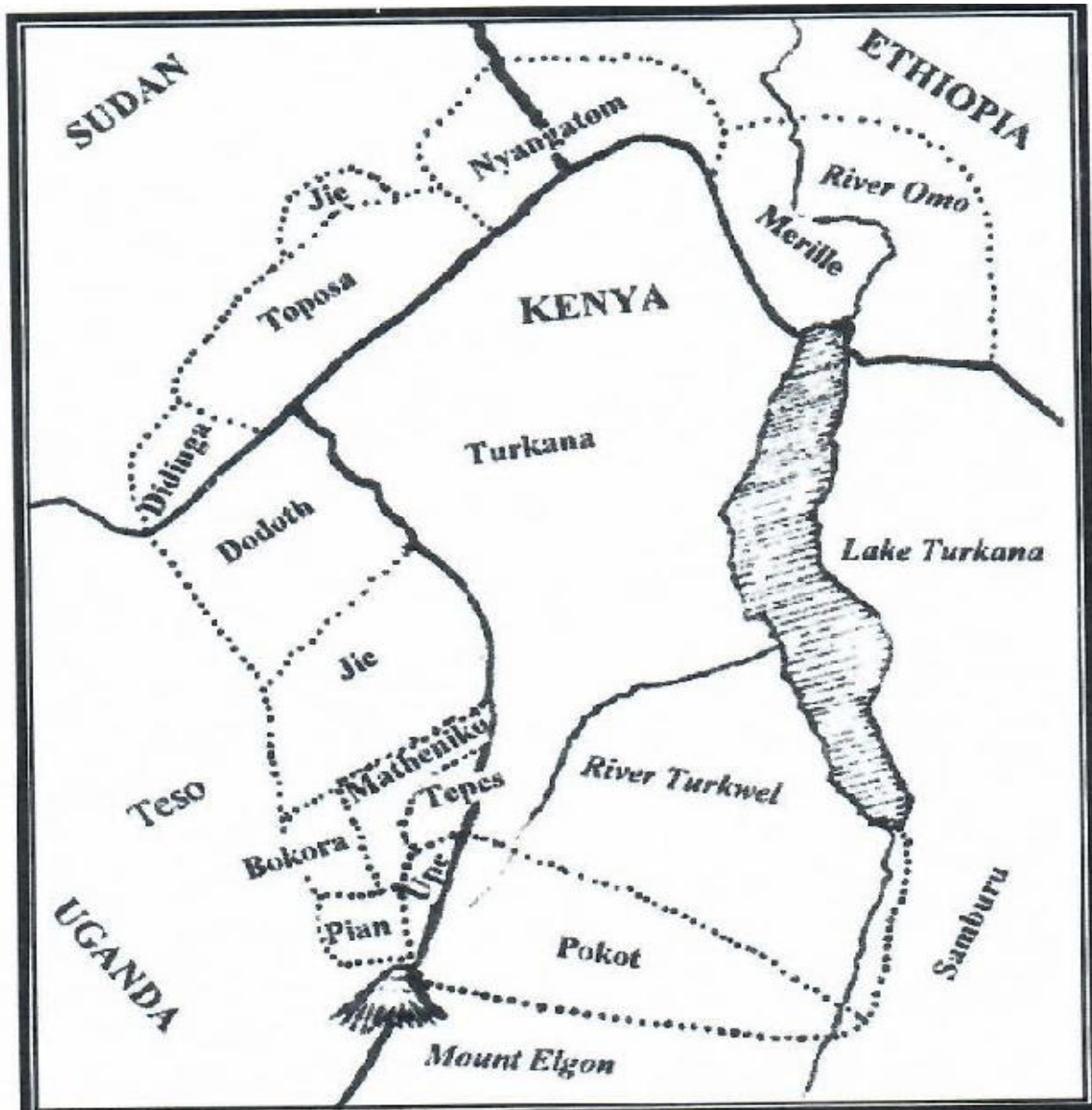
<sup>46</sup> FGD with Karamoja leaders.

<sup>47</sup> Saferworld, 'Karamoja Conflict and Security Assessment', September 2010. [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja\\_conflict\\_and\\_security\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja_conflict_and_security_assessment.pdf).

<sup>48</sup> Saferworld, 'Tracking key conflict and security dynamics in Karamoja – an update', May 2012, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda\\_PPP\\_report.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda_PPP_report.pdf).

<sup>49</sup> Saferworld, *Karamoja conflict and security assessment*, September 2010, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja\\_conflict\\_and\\_security\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja_conflict_and_security_assessment.pdf).

<sup>50</sup> [http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/TUFTS\\_1571\\_Conflict\\_Dynamics\\_Karamoja\\_V2.pdf](http://fic.tufts.edu/assets/TUFTS_1571_Conflict_Dynamics_Karamoja_V2.pdf)



constitute part of a glaring and significant conflict driver in the cross-border areas in Karamoja cluster<sup>51</sup>.

A shared view by the pastoralist (women, youth and men) across the region is that whether respective governments carryout a successful disarmament or not, if their neighbors still possess guns and the pastoralist (especially men) perceive existence of threats of insecurity to their livelihoods, they will re-arm no matter the cost or time. This assertion resonates with FAO (2022) findings that “disarming the Karamojong groups in Uganda without disarming the Turkana and the Toposa is not only an exercise in futility, but counterproductive as it exposes each cluster group to attacks from their neighbors.

*Map 1. Armed Karamojong cluster ethnic groups. (Source IGAD, 1999)*

Although the guns are being physically removed from communities in both countries by the ongoing disarmament processes done by governments, psychologically, perceptions of insecurity are endured by majority women and men, who have expresses fear of insecurity and threats to livelihoods. In

<sup>51</sup> Saferworld, 'Tracking key conflict and security dynamics in Karamoja – an update', May 2012, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda%20PPP%20report.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda%20PPP%20report.pdf).

Kaabong, one warrior in Lokolia noted that *“in 2000, when I handed my guns to the soldiers (UPDF), I expected protection of my animals and family. As of today, most people (women and men) as you can see have become more vulnerable to even ordinary cattle thieves (commonly known as lonetia). We are scared and ashamed!”*<sup>52</sup>. This perception resonates among the Jie and other ethnic groups in Karamoja Uganda. Lokoriteba (not real name), an ex-warrior from Jie who claimed to have survived the torturous army detention chamber recounted that *“in 2006, we were duped and forced to surrender our guns and ammunitions to the UPDF soldiers, in anticipation for protection of our livestock and lives, instead I lost everything to the Dodoth and Turkana raiders, including my manhood”*.

Moreover, various sources have decried the way justice is dispensed. When perpetrators are apprehended and handed over to the security forces, most times these criminals find their way out through bribes back to the community. Also, when stolen animals are recovered, most often many big cows and bulls are reported to have disappeared mysteriously while in the army barracks without trace. In Kobebe Kraal during FGD, many locals (men and youth) expressed loss of confidence in the government forces’ ability to provide security (territorial and personal/property). One warrior noted that *each time there is a raid, soldiers take their time to respond yet they are swift to impound innocent animals, as a result the perpetual reluctance and reduced security deployments in strategic areas (conflict hotspot) and the deliberate failure to protect people and their livestock have majority to resort to their own security system leading to the resumption of insecurity of cattle raiding, road ambushes and banditry*. Consequently, fear and suspicion of armed violence between ethnic groups despite reduction of arms/weapons became common amongst communities<sup>53</sup>

Yet, the common perception among the local Karamojong women and men is that the recent violence and armed cattle rustling would have been avoided had the security agencies and local leaders considered the early warnings seriously which had started slowly between 2017-2019 in form of common theft of livestock -involves less than 10 animals carried out by a few (two to five) young men referred to as “lonetia” (thugs). According to FGD with women and youth in Karamoja, this nostalgia responses by local authorities reignited the desire by the Karamojong youth (Dodoth, Jie, Bokor, Matheniko) to rearm with weapons from the Turkana people in Kenya and the Toposa people of South Sudan to protect their families, property, and cattle<sup>54</sup>. By November 2019, hard-core cattle rustlers who were not disarmed retrieved the hidden guns, while some have re-armed by buying guns and took full advantage of the situation to escalate the cattle rustling into a full-scale regional Karamoja cluster conflict involving the Jie/Bokora alliance verses the Dodoth, Matheniko (Uganda)/Turkana (Kenya) alliance destabilizing the relative peace in the region, cCaused high levels of violence including sexual gender based predominantly perpetrated against women during inter-ethnic attacks<sup>55</sup> including general disruption of socio-economic activities and livelihoods.

#### ***2.3.3.4. Cross border proliferation and Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW)***

Meanwhile, in all the FGD in Kenya and Uganda, there is harmony between the Karamojong cluster members (women and men) that the advent of the gun was radically a game-changer in the theatre of cattle rustling which tilted the balance of power in favor of those who had access and control of the most powerful weapons. The following types of small light weapons were named as most used in raids: the AK47 (Amakada/Akokorioit/), Yugoslavia, G3 and Mark4.

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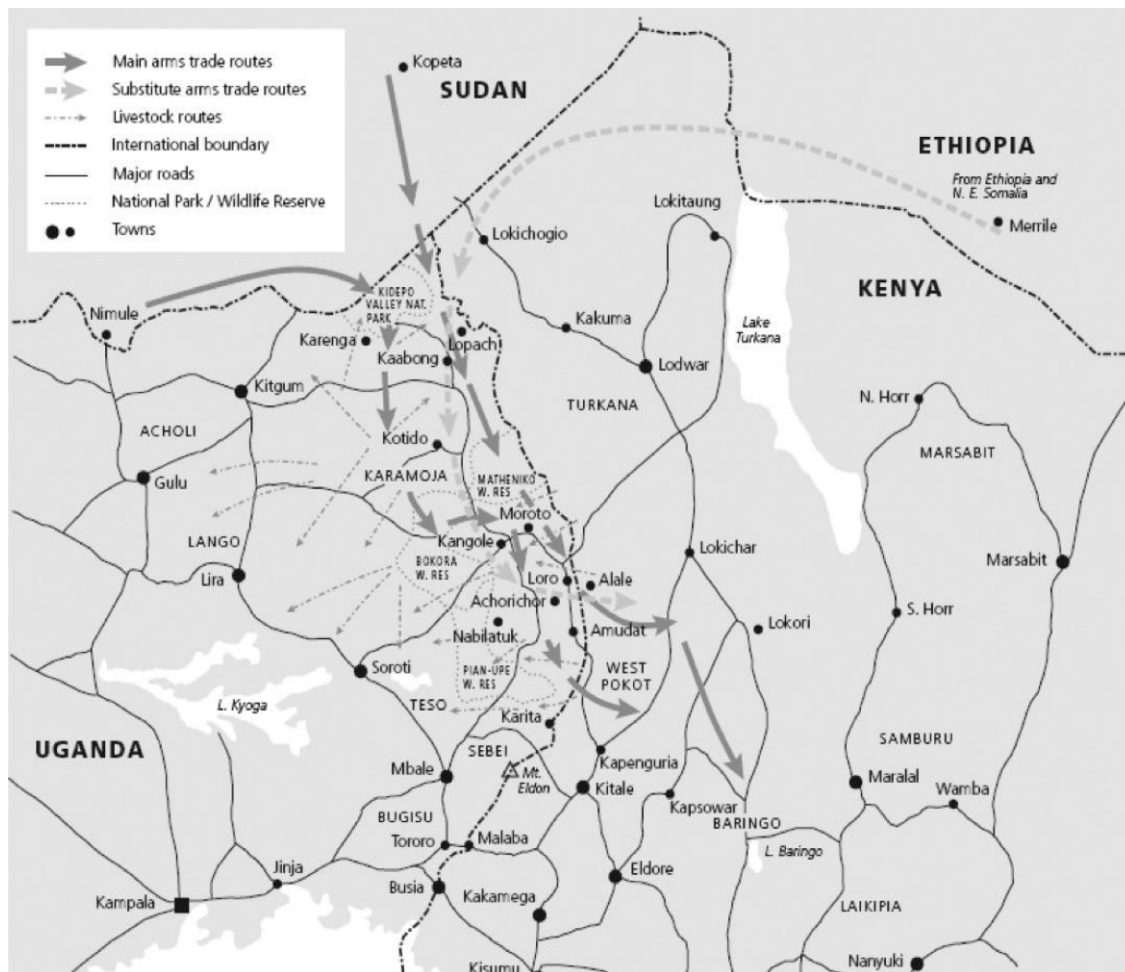
<sup>52</sup> FGD in Kaabong

<sup>53</sup> Saferworld, Karamoja conflict and security assessment, September 2010, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja conflict and security assessment.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja%20conflict%20and%20security%20assessment.pdf).

<sup>54</sup> Advisory Consortium on Conflict sensitivity, Northern Uganda Conflict Analysis, September 2013

<sup>55</sup> Saferworld, Karamoja conflict and security assessment, September 2010

Although it's difficult to trace and understand the phenomenon of arming and rustling in Turkana and Karamoja as noted by Mburu (2000). However, a brief history of guns in Karamoja and Turkana from colonial records indicate that firearms first made their appearance in the region in the late nineteenth century through ivory hunters and traders. Majority of whom were from Ethiopia, Arab and Swahili slave traders, from the East African coast. Also, after the fall of former president Idi Amin in 1979, guns were looted from Moroto barracks and it was then that many Karimojong, including the Turkana got arms<sup>56</sup>. Since then, a combination of events such as the Lord Resistant Army (LRA) war of northern Uganda, Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) in South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia-Oromo wars and conflicts, compounded by the inadequate policing and state security (Mkutu, 2001) have facilitated the proliferation of small arms to the Karamojong cluster region.



**Map 2.** Cross border Arms flows within the IGAD region (Source: Mkutu, 2003)

Evidently, overtime a gun became cherished and held a symbolic cultural significance among the pastoralist society whereby during traditional ceremonies, warriors demonstrated war dances imitating the gun symbol than the usual traditional demonstration of a spear and shield symbol. Guns were given pet names with war victory songs based on their capacity and powder power during harden battles<sup>57</sup>. In Loima, Turkana elders interviewed noted that, ever since they acquired guns, it replaced the traditional weapons; and that pastoralist of the rigitone became accustomed to the independence and

<sup>56</sup> Mburu N (2000), *The Proliferation of Guns and Rustling in Karamoja and Turkana Districts: The Case for Appropriate Disarmament Strategies*. (unpublished)  
57 *ibid*



freedom of openly carrying their firearms, thus intensifying cattle rustling, and a localized arms race and proliferation facilitated by 'transnational criminal networks'<sup>58</sup>. According to Mkutu (2010) guns trade operates in a discreet but widespread kinship networks across the regions. A FGD with respondents observed that in northern Turkana and Dodoth (parts of Uganda and Kenya bordering South Sudan), businessmen adopted a strategy of buying guns cheaply from the Toposa (part of the Ateker-Karamojong cluster in South Sudan), then exchanging these guns for livestock (8-10 oxen) in Uganda and Kenya. The oxen are later cashed-in, in the nearest open livestock market, then the money returns are used to buy new guns in a cyclical form. While in Kapedo (Pokot-Turkana border) and Tapac-Loroo-Alale-Lorengkipi (Uganda-Kenya borders), local warriors explained that though guns were extraordinarily expensive, many household heads decided to buy guns because it's was perceived as a long-term investment which pays off even if one losses livestock to a raid, "*once a gun is acquire, one usually compensates for their previous loss and earn handsome profits in subsequent retaliatory raids*"<sup>59</sup>.

Based on the FGD and interviews carried out with warriors and prominent elders from Alale - Pokot, Lorugum-Turkana (Kenya), Panyangara and Loyoro (Uganda)<sup>60</sup>, they explained that governments must take note that most Karamoja cluster pastoralists groups live in ASAL region, characterized by harsh, risky, and insecure natural habitat, the acquisition of a gun to provide security for livestock, properties, territories, and lives is inevitable. In fact, one elder noted that "*unless safety and security of borders are guaranteed, it will be pointless for any government to disarm while knowing that other pastoralists from the Karamoja cluster region are still armed cattle rustlers*".

A view shared by both the Turkana, Pokot and the Karamojong, shows that the primary objective for acquiring a gun was to provide the most needed security of animals and lives, besides prestige and honor. In fact, one Turkana warrior in Lorengippi noted that *he cannot hardly imagine the courageous and ferocious ideal warrior the Ngoroko without a gun because in most cases gun owners lost less cattle than those without*<sup>61</sup>. A FGD with women in Kalapata (Kaabong district, Uganda) noted that, '*a good gun in the homestead brought about security and some insecurity in equal measure*'<sup>62</sup>. While the Jie women in Nakapelimoru expressed that *a gun in a homestead was a source of insecurity and fear*<sup>63</sup>. In general, women expressed that the advent of the gun in the cattle rustling was the most evil and ferocious thing ever happened, they have lost their husbands and sons to false confidence a gun brings. Nasike in Alale noted that a gun has made her a triple widow. "*When my first original husband acquired a gun from Uganda through Loroo two decades ago, he became crazy, he could raid Turkana repeatedly until he was killed. As culture requires, as a very young woman, his other brother inherited me and the gun, he too became deadly until he was also killed. Again, his younger brother re-inherited me, he too was killed by a gun, I am now helpless with four children but different fathers, I have never re-married again, I have remained a bitter woman caused by a gun*"<sup>64</sup>.

Interviews with civil Society organization operating the region noted that the influence of small arms proliferation and its challenges to young people (mainly male) remains a glaring concern in the cross-border communities. They noted that although their contribution in humanitarian development and peace building is noticeable, in most cases their efforts are not recognized by respective government. They also noted that the human rights and right to justice should be respected by the security agencies. Additionally, the decried the fact that some of human rights abused are not reported because most of

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58 FGD with former warriors

59 FGD and interview in Tapac-Loroo-Alale-Lorengkipi, an intersect points that connect the Tepeth, Pokot and Turkana together, along the triangle and corridor of death

60 FGD in Nawoontos, Urum, Lokiriama, Alale, Masol, Kainuk, Rupa, Katikikile, Loroo, Nakapelimoru, Kalapata & Loyoro

61 FGD in Lorengkipi (south-west Turkana) and Saramach (north-west -Pokot

62 FGD Kalapata

63 FGD Nakapelimoru

64 An interview in Alale

pastoralist are illiterate and most security agencies are taking advantage to violate their rights. Human Rights Defenders particularly need adequate support and facilitation to work adequately to contribute to peace and development<sup>65</sup>.

#### 2.3.3.5. Commercialization of cattle rustling

Within the Karamoja Cluster circles as noted by Novelli (1999), there are basically two occasions in which pastoralist raid livestock (i) to secure, maintain and reconstitute depleted livestock herd in the face of external threats, and (ii) when it is necessary especially during payment of high bride prices and for prestige. However, an analysis of this in relation to the recent scenarios and dynamics of cattle rustling shows evidently to the emergence of two competing paradigms – the traditional practice amongst pastoralists verses the criminal and commercialized practice commandeered by a wide range of transnational organized criminal networks<sup>66</sup>.

Notably, trade in livestock is big business across East Africa<sup>67</sup> with a high urban meat demand and export-oriented markets supply chain across the borders (Okoli, 2020). This has led to the emergence of a well-armed mercenary for hire, remotely controlled by businesspeople and the well-connected politically and militarily establishment from both side of the divide<sup>68</sup> who have invested and are reaping the economic value of rustling. These gangs have taken advantage and control of the porous territorial borders to metamorphosis of cross-border cattle rustling in recent times<sup>69</sup>. Given that cattle are not illegal commodities like contraband goods that may raise an alert when transported as noted by (Gumba D et al, 2019), however, stolen cattle are usually transported in small numbers or already slaughtered disguised in form of meat to conceal evidence of livestock in contrast to traditional methods of driving living animals. Additionally, according to local leaders interviewed in (Jie) Uganda and Pokot (Kenya), in this instances, cattle movement documents though looking genuine are falsified by a network of organized syndicates within governments (local government and security agencies) to indicate that the cattle have followed a genuine transaction process necessary for cross-border movement aided by the abundant mobile telecommunication and social media feeds to evade roadblocks and cattle recoveries.

Across most border points connecting conflicting communities and highways in Kenya and Uganda, one can observe the growing number of small butchers made of timber or iron sheets in many peri-urban centers. These together with formal livestock markets in Karamoja (Kotido - Kanawat; Amudat -Loroo; and Moroto- Naitakwae) and Turkana (Lodwar, Lokichoggio, Lokichar, Kakuma, and Nakurio) and Pokot (Kamila) in part have influenced livestock marketing dynamics from sale of live animals to sale of livestock products especially meat which are transported to urban areas as well as export markets. Overtime, the dynamics have changed whereby there are multi-stakeholder interests and beneficiaries whose work is to ensure the success of raiding as a return for their investment from the loot. It is recognized that even when economic conditions have generally ameliorated, or harsh measures are taken by the governments against inter-ethnic cattle raiding, there are still strong incentives for many individuals/groups across the borders to accept the risks and carry the burden of

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<sup>65</sup> FGD and interviews with local NGOs such as Lotus Kenya Action for Development (LOKADO) Turkana Pastoralist Development Organization). (TUPADO), Friends of Lake Turkana (FoLT) in Turkana/Lodwar), CABESI (West Pokot), Grassroots Alliance for Rural Development (GARD), Kaabong Peace and Development Agency (KAPDA), Karamoja Development Forum (KDF) and the Kotido Catholic Diocesan Peace and Justice in Karamoja, Uganda,  
<sup>66</sup> ENACT 2019

<sup>67</sup> See IRIN (2014) *Cattle-rustling and the politics of business in Kenya*, accessed from [https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2014/03/27/cattle-rustling-and-politics-business-kenya]

<sup>68</sup> Okoli (2020), *Cows and Cash, and Terror: How Cattle Rustling Proceeds fuel Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria*

<sup>69</sup> Erasmus Twaruhukwa, Senior Legal Advisor, Mifugo Programme, ISS Nairobi 2008: *Cattle Rustling is a Crime* https://issafrica.org/iss-today/cattle-rustling-is-a-crime

cattle rustling. The crucial point in a raid is the economics of sharing of the loot henceforth raiding is a way to enrich oneself<sup>70</sup>. Consultative meetings with leaders revealed that, cattle rustling in Karamoja cluster is now commercial business and no longer traditional<sup>71</sup> but coordinated theft by off-takers, local, national, and cross border male traders often covered by criminal elements within security agencies and political leaders. An interview with one of the peace activists in Kotido noted that beyond the ordinary raiders, other passive member, the external force (not necessarily pastoralists) that regularly span territorial and international borders comprised of business people (mainly men), local politicians, cattle warlords/brokers/middlemen and some members of the auxiliary security forces who invest in raids by loaning/hiring their gun and ammunition or prepare foods and alcohol drinks to the raiders to ensure the success of the raid.

Notably, even by Karamoja cluster standards, many local pastoralists (men and women) are surprised by the recent rise in post disarmament militia-led styles of violent raids, indicating a dramatic shift. With several prevailing push and pull factors, compounded by other factors such as poverty, illiterate and youth unemployment, respondents (female and men), have decried the neo-liberal interference in the pastoralist's affairs fueled by money factors. With recent COVID-19 increasing the feeling of hopelessness and poverty due to limited opportunities, and socialization which tempted majority of male young people between the age of 12-21 years who get into the vice<sup>72</sup>. A male youth leader said *"the raids are to get money for survival or a phone and radio that the middlemen/traders are providing. No wonder there are high failure rate for recoveries of raided animals henceforth a drastic reduction of livestock population in pastoral communities since majority are exported of the region"*<sup>73</sup>. Given the above, it should be noted that, the male youth represent a risk because they offer vulnerabilities or perverse opportunities to be manipulated into socio-economic violence and crime by unscrupulous politicians, warlords, and criminal elements<sup>74</sup>. Moreover, the rapid socio-economic changes that the cluster has undergone since the last disarmament have impacted upon gender relations, as shifting roles have contributed to high levels of domestic violence, which in turn continue to drive conflicts within households<sup>75</sup>. Also, an account by boda-boda<sup>76</sup> riders randomly interviewed in various border points (Masol, Alale, Amudat, Sarmach, Kalapata, Panyangara and Rupa), intimated that most times businesspeople and brokers from outside or within the regions use bikes locally known Boda-boda means to transport guns and ammunition and sometimes stolen animals to and from raider. A gun loan during a successful raid may cost up to 20- 50 heads of cattle depending on the success of the raid<sup>77</sup>. These profound socio-economic factors have in effects negated the traditional values as well has heightened the frequency of cattle rustling attacks within and along the Kenya-Uganda border.

#### **2.3.3.6. Emergence of conflict alliances for distribution of cattle**

Despite state borders which supposedly take note of foreign mobility within the Karamoja Cluster region, most pastoralists (women and men) believe that borders restrictions do not apply to them. As traditionally, despite ethnic rivalries, they allied, collaborated, and shared knowledge, natural

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70 Michael Bollig, *Ethnic conflicts in North-West Kenya: Pokot-Turkana Raiding 1969-1984*, Dietrich Reimer Verlag GmbH

71 Bill Oketch, "Cattle rustling in northern Uganda is now business says His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda during a security meeting in Otuke District" *Daily Monitor*, 11 June 2022.

72 FGD in Kotido

73 Karamoja Key informants' consultations on conflict trends and dynamics, Moroto District, June 2022

74 SHALOM-SCCRR; Briefing paper No 4: *An analysis of Turkana-Pokot Conflict; multi-stakeholder approach in the management of natural resource-based inter-communal conflict along Turkana-West Pokot borderline: the missing link*, October 2020

75 Advisory Consortium on Conflict sensitivity, *Northern Uganda Conflict Analysis*, September 2013

76 Boda boda is a bike means of transporters commonly used across borders

77 FGD Rupa

resources with people and livestock moving across territorial boundaries freely without restrictions<sup>78</sup>. An elder (male) in Kaabong noted that, *how can you separate the Dodoth of Uganda and the Toposa of South Sudan, or the Matheniko of Uganda and the Turkana of Kenya whose relationship is built on Lokirima peace accord of 1973*. According to the Turkana elder in Loima and Lokirima one of the cardinal tenets of these strong alliances is sacred with no aggression and raiding of each irrespective of the provocation and free movement<sup>79</sup>. One of the peace actors working previously with Kotido Peace Initiative (KOPEIN) noted that similar long-term alliance between the Turkana and Jie existed before through Moru-anayece- Amurwuo-atata lineage but this alliance was thwarted by the notorious criminal elements in Jie who allied with the Dodoth to raid Turkana leading to mistrust and suspicion<sup>80</sup>.

While some of these alliances are built on sacred foundations, according to Toolit (2015) most conflict related alliances especially those involving the between the Karamojong of Uganda (Bokor, Jie, Dodoth and Matheniko) are temporal and strategic based on proximity, interests, and presumed strength of primary actors. Most times temporal alliances involving one or more pastoral ethnic group against another ethnic group have been witnessed majorly for security and impending attack to raid livestock then disintegrate again. A Catholic priest in Nawountos noted that except for the Matheniko and the Turkana, the alliance between the Turkana -Dodoth and Turkana - Jie has been an on and off affairs always initiated by the Turkana for strategic reasons related to sharing of natural resources during dry periods or to attack the perceived powerful group. However, recent episodes have seen the conflict patterns follow ethnic based alliances which is a key factor in shaping the conflict dynamics across the borders. A joint FGD with women and men from Oropoi Kenya revealed that the Jie - Turkana alliances is most often for either to raid the Dodoth, Pokot (North Kenya) or Didinga of South Sudan. Similarly, the Ugandan Pokot ally with the Kenyan Pokot and jointly carry out raids on Karamojong (mostly Pian) or the Turkana. According to the UPDF officers in Uganda, such alliances are one key factor in the recent re-armament. They noted that during the last disarmament in 2010, some Karamojong warriors fled with their guns across to South Sudan and Kenya. With the commercialization of cattle raids, these alliances have provided haven and passage for racketeers to more frequently hide or selling stolen livestock, including criminal <sup>81</sup> from both sides of the cross border. According to the commander of Kenya Rapid Deployment Unit, they were able to disarm and recover 4 guns from some notorious criminal gangs from Uganda hiding in Turkana and posing as National Police Reserve (NPR) to provide security to communities <sup>82</sup>.

The question of cross border arms proliferation has been an issue of contention. For example, during dialogue meetings in November 2020 in Kotido and Moroto Districts between the Jie, Matheniko and Turkana of Kenya, the Karamojong pastoralists especially women and youth raised issues of cross border regional arms control program to address supply of weapons and cross border engagement between Uganda and Kenya as a potential trigger for conflict in the region<sup>83</sup>. Therefore, in absence of harmonized regional policies and frameworks of the Karamoja cluster cross border disarmament and development, these perceptions serve to increase suspicion and hence nurture a culture of violence among ethnic groups<sup>84</sup>.

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78 FAO (2019) *Cross-border coordination of livestock movements and sharing of natural resources among pastoralist communities in the Greater Karamoja Cluster*

79 FGD

80 Interview

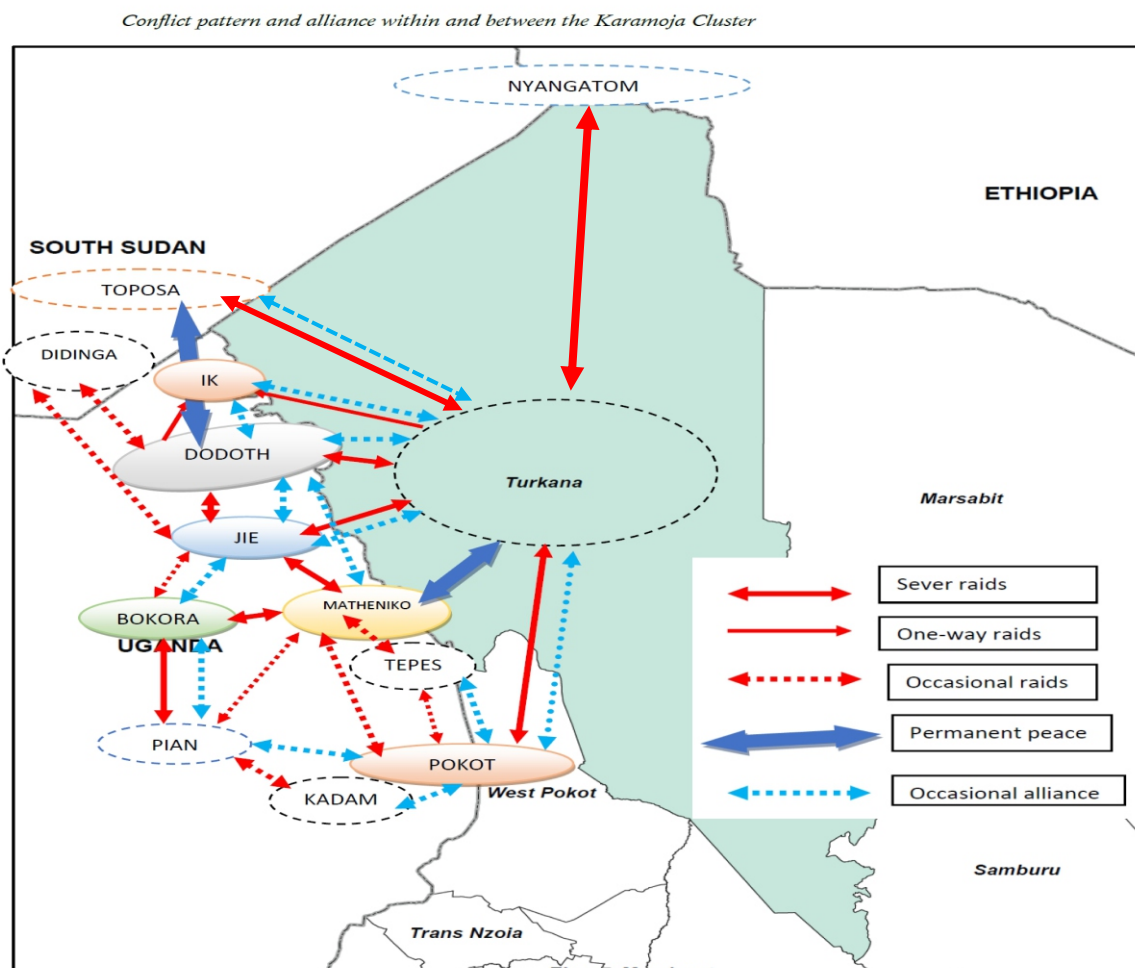
81 *The Observer*, 'Mining investors flee Karamoja as insecurity intensifies', 7 June 2022

82 Interviews

83 *International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2021); 35th edition of The Indigenous World, a yearly overview produced by IWGIA that serves to document and report on the developments Indigenous Peoples have experienced. Article downloaded on 10th June 2022. www.iwgia.org*

84 Alier David M, *Rapid assessments situation report on Karamoja, Mercy Corps, 10 October 2014*

Map 3. General conflict pattern and alliance within and between the Karamoja Cluster (source. Toolit, 2015)



**Note:** Given the dynamic and complex nature of these conflicts, these alliances as demonstrated in the figure above may change in time and space.

### 2.3.3.7. Influence of illicit alcohol abuse and conflict

In Uganda, Karamoja region ranks gloomily first in high alcohol consumption with a 48% compared to the national average of 14.6%<sup>85</sup>. While Turkana, is at 28.7% and Pokot 16.7% compared to the

<sup>85</sup> UBOS (2021), Uganda National Household Survey Report 2019/2020

national level estimate of 13.3%<sup>86</sup>. Unlike before, Alcohol consumed amongst pastoralist (women and men) have changed from the local brew, called 'kweete'/ebutiya/epurot produced from cereals with a low alcoholic percentage to the widespread consumption of highly concentrated alcohol of 40% (locally called 'etulé' or 'waragi'), unregulated, alcohol cheaply sold at USD 0.18 packed in 100ml plastic sachet and 20 liters plastic containers ('jerrycans') produced outside Karamoja. While in Turkana, five sachets of alcohol can be exchange for a goat.

Crucial fact to be considered in understanding the problem of disenfranchised youth, alcohol, abuse, and conflict in Karamoja is that it has led to a dramatic increase in cases of cattle rustling and domestic and gender-based violence in Karamoja. According to security agencies crude alcohol have influenced warriors to stage raids. According to the Moroto regional police spokesperson, most of the raiders arrested during operations are either drunk or have pocketed bottles of crude waragi indicating that it's the driving factor for cattle theft<sup>87</sup>. This resonates with views of many women and men interviewed in the region who related the recent escalation of conflict to the amount of readily and easily available alcohol ('sachet waragi') as far as villages and cattle kraals. Sachets of crude alcohol has been recovered on pockets of ambushed or dead bodies of warriors. Also, Turkana warriors in Nakitongo, explained that they have lost many lives and livestock during the time of intercommunity raiding whereby the youth ('Ngoroko') who are needed to be vigilant to ward off attacks or safeguard their livestock, instead experience decrease in vigilance capability when they drink waragi and they no longer respect age-related authority.

Whereas there have been successful attempts to curb the sale of crude alcohol, information relating to the trends in sale, consumption, and effects of hard liquor, have remained sparse as the law enforcement agencies have also been implicated in receiving bribes to allowing trucks with alcohol<sup>88</sup>. Among the Karamojong cluster, the burden of the family survival is borne by women and children. However, based on observation and analysis, the evolving excessive alcohol consumption in the region seems to have compound the situation further at both household and community level noticeably in the rise in interpersonal relationship, unnecessary sale of family properties, gender-based and domestic violence. In Tapac Sub-County, just like elsewhere alcohol abuse is accelerating negative traditional practices like forceful and early marriages of children to get ready cash to enjoy alcohol<sup>89</sup>.

#### *2.3.3.8. Changing land use, management, and development policies/ intervention in the region*

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<sup>86</sup> See Takahashi, R., Wilunda, C., Magutah, K. et al. Correlates of alcohol consumption in rural western Kenya: A cross-sectional study. *BMC Psychiatry* 17, 175 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12888-017-1344-9>

<sup>87</sup> See Police launches crackdown on crude alcohol in Karamoja [<https://www.independent.co.ug/police-enhances-operations-against-crude-alcohol-in-karamoja/>]

<sup>88</sup> Cau, G., Lochiam M.R., Merlo, M., Rossanigo, P.L., Steffan, M. (2018) 'Local Development and Alcohol Abuse: the Case of Karamoja', *Peace Human Rights Governance*, 2(3), 349-367.

<sup>89</sup> FGD with women and men

The rangelands of Karamoja cluster historically have been managed under traditional systems where grazers had open access with mobility as a main coping strategy to drought (Byenkya, et al, 2014)<sup>90</sup>. Current processes of land-use have changed from communal land ownership regimes to a more privatized land ownership by private individuals and institutions which has compromised pastoral mobility in search of water and pasture during scarcity (Kisamba-Mugerwa, 1995). Land use practices are changing due to the growing human population, droughts, urbanization, and dispossession of grazing areas through state and donor-supported interventions<sup>91</sup>. These changes have been reinforced by government policies on pastoralism, increased expansion, and conversion of rangeland to other uses such as arable farming national parks and other protected areas, tourism, and extraction of mineral resources such as oil, affecting pastoral livelihood management practices<sup>92</sup>.

The spatial pattern of land use change over the past two decades has been characterized by increasingly intensive expansion in cropping systems into grazing areas, particularly to the sub-humid and greener belt resulting to a reduction in size of many woodlands and forests on land that is not protected (Olson, 2006). As noted by Nakalembe, et al (2017), since the 1960's, underlying forces (e.g., cropland expansion programs, controlled grazing) originating from land use policy and development programs, have increasingly devoted much of the land in the region for mining, forestry, wildlife conservation and mineral exploration (Rugadya & Kamusiime, 2013). Although the legal land systems in Uganda and Kenya provides for the traditional customary mutual right, most development policies in the region systematically do not consider grazing rights of pastoralists (Coldham, 2000; Mwebaza, 2015).

Evidence from satellite images between 2010 and 2011 from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) of Uganda shows extensive expansion in croplands in the last two decades by 300% in Karamoja region, with Moroto district having the highest percentage change of 3,204% (Nakalembe, et al, 2017) as shown in table below.

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***Karamojaregion (UG) has an area of 27,528km<sup>2</sup> is 20% of Ugandd's land, 40.8% of land area is under wildlife conservation, 12% is under Central Forest Reserves, 25% under mining concessions. While the remaining 22.2% of land is mainly arid and semi-arid, shared by 1.2 million people, local government, religious institutions, and elites. (Rugadyaand Kamusiime, 2013).***

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Year (Spatial Resolution)	Uganda Land Cover Scheme II 2000 (30m)	New Croplands 2011 /12 (~2m)	Percent change
<b>Amudat</b>	4,494.10	2,293.50	-49
<b>Kaabong</b>	29,966.60	68,911.30	130
<b>Kotido</b>	20,014.10	86,974.70	335
<b>Moroto</b>	706.1	23,328.70	3,204
<b>Nakapiripirit</b>	7,915.40	66,272.30	737

90 G.S. BYENKYA, S. MUGERWA, S. BARASA and E. ZZIWA (2014) Land use and cover change in pastoral systems of Uganda: implications on livestock management under drought induced pasture. *African Crop Science Journal*, Vol. 22, Issue Supplement s4, pp. 1013 – 1025.

91 See Akall (2021) Effects of development interventions on pastoral livelihoods in Turkana County, Kenya. *Pastoralism*. 2021; 11(1): 23. Published online 2021 Nov 24. doi: 10.1186/s13570-021-00197-2 accessed from [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8610612/]

92 CELEP Policy brief: Sustainable pastoralism and land-use change in the East African drylands, 2018

**Table 3: Karamoja cropland area in hectares and percent change estimates between 2000 and 2011/12**

These changes compounded by other existing land use and management policies such as Wildlife Conservation in Karamoja which accounts for 40.8% (as below) and introduction of regional borders limiting movement to formally communal land and access alternative grazing lands during drought years (Stites & Akabwai, 2009; Gelsdorf et al., 2012). These changes in the reductions of grazing areas have increased conflicts over resource use among different livelihood groups (Mamdani, 1982). Unlike other parks in the country where controlled grazing is permitted in conservation areas such as national parks, in Kidepo Valley National Park, located in Karamoja, there is strictly no grazing and once a person is found grazing, they are arrested or killed (Rugadya, et al., 20110). This has amplified human-wildlife conflict and animosity toward conservation. An elder in Kaabong decried the fact that even during period of extreme weather, local people are not allowed to graze their animal in some of the Wildlife Conservation areas, yet wild animals encroach on their rangeland without restrictions except destruction<sup>93</sup>.

**Table 4: Status of Wildlife Conservation Areas in Karamoja**

Category		Before 2002 (Kms2)	%	Area Degazetted in 2002 (Kms2)	Area Gazetted as at 2010 (Kms2)	%
<b>1. National Park</b>	Kidepo Valley	1,436	5.2%	0	1,436	5.2%
<b>Total</b>		1,436		0	1,436	
<b>2. Wildlife Reserves</b>	(a) Pian Upe	2,152		109	2,043	
	(b) Bokora	2,245		312	1,833	
	(c) Matheniko	1,573		180	1,393	
<b>Total</b>		<b>5,870</b>	<b>21.2%</b>	<b>601</b>	<b>5,269</b>	<b>19.0%</b>
<b>3. Controlled Hunting Areas</b>	(a) North Karamoja	10,820		10,820	0	
	(b) South Karamoja	7,882		7,882	0	
	(c) Napak	196		196	0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>18,898</b>	<b>68.2%</b>	<b>18,898</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>4. Community Wildlife Area</b>	(a) Irimi CWA	0		1,030	1,030	
	(b) Karenga CWA	0		1,540	1,540	
	(c) Amudat CWA	0		2,025	2,025	
<b>Total</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0.0%</b>	<b>4,595</b>	<b>4,595</b>	<b>16.0%</b>
	GRAND TOTAL	26,204		14,904	11,300	
	<b>(%) of 27,700 Kms2 Karamoja</b>	<b>94.6%</b>	<b>53.8%</b>		<b>40.8%</b>	

Source: Uganda Wildlife Authority, 2010

As noted by CELEP (2018), since colonial times perceptions and assumption by various government policies is that pastoralism is an inefficient form of land use and that rangelands are wastelands with most governments in East Africa focusing on trying to modernize pastoral systems to sedentarize pastoral populations to change to crop farming (Waiswa, et al, 2019). Yet these changes in the livelihood strategies have a direct bearing on gender roles, family, and social structures especially women because pastoralist consider agriculture practice is traditionally the domain of women who grew crops in domestic gardens and managed food security in the home.

93 FGD in Kalapata, Kaabong



Moreover, as pastoralists communities are encouraged to embrace agriculture as a more sustainable way of life, there seems to be conflicts between those who want to protect traditional Karimojong cluster culture and those who would like to modernize the sub-regional economy with both targeting the 'green belt' where water and grazing land is found. Competition over fertile land for grazing and agriculture has led to violent clashes between these communities, and with the authorities.

The Karamoja Parliamentary Group have noted before that even when pastoralists were encouraged to embrace 'agriculturalism' as a more sustainable way of life, unfortunately, most of the greenbelt areas falls within the government gazetted areas for various purposes. Negotiations to de-gazette parts of the Karamoja 'green belt' has not been successful.<sup>94</sup> Hence community members perceive this as a hostile act by the authorities to deprive them of their livelihoods. Moreover, despite the push towards agricultural livelihoods, cattle remain a symbol of social status and an important pillar of Karimojong cluster society<sup>95</sup>. The ecology and society of Karamoja cluster suggests that pastoralist livelihoods are likely to remain at the center of life and prosperity for the foreseeable future. Reduced net availability of rangeland resources due to expansion of competing land uses and deliberate non recognition of socio-ecological attributes of Karamoja cluster rangeland is a conflict driver.

According to Turkana County leaders in Kenya, it's obvious to note that elements such as cattle raiding is intimately linked with pastoralist practices, consequently, elements of cross border management of pastoralist system particularly cattle theft and recovery should be central besides others as part of the foundation for peace and development in Karamoja cluster rather than promoting sedentarism<sup>96</sup>. In addition, the Karamoja cluster's pastoral areas have lacked specific land use and administration policies, yet inadequate land tenure system remains an important factor shaping the conflict dynamics in Karamoja cluster. The absence of inclusive and effective national and regional pastoralism policies that includes much more positive support for pastoralist livelihoods is a major concern. More specifically, in Kenya, there is lack of appropriate and effective land tenure policies and laws for pastoral areas creating a gap in terms of respecting and protecting pastoralists' land rights<sup>97</sup>. With the emerging privatization and sedentarization of rangelands, more illiterate pastoralists (women and men) will experience increased exposure to the vagaries of extreme natural events, thereby increasing pastoralists displacement and vulnerability to incremental risks, such as livestock mortality, poverty, and recurrent food insecurity as well as decline in rangeland productivity which triggers conflicts.

#### ***2.3.3.9. Mineral exploration, oil discovery, and extractives***

The expanse of land that form the Karamoja cluster region in Kenya and Uganda is endowed with significant natural resources and a vast array of metallic and industrial minerals that have the potential to be developed commercially such as gold, limestone, marble, gemstones among others and has the potential to become the "next frontier of mineral exploitation"<sup>98</sup>. Also, the recent discoveries of oil in the Turkana Lokichar basin, Kenya and Kadam basin, Uganda has ignited considerable new-found interest in this neglected region by foreign actors<sup>99</sup>. Consequently, around 61.7% of Karamoja cluster land is earmarked for mineral exploration and mining concessions are being awarded to individual

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<sup>94</sup> *Tenure in Mystery: Status of Land under Wildlife, Forestry and Mining Concessions in Karamoja Region*, Associates Research Uganda with support from Trocaire Uganda and Oxfam GB, quoted in 'Uganda: Conflict Over Grazing Land in Karamoja', Daily Monitor, 9 February 2011

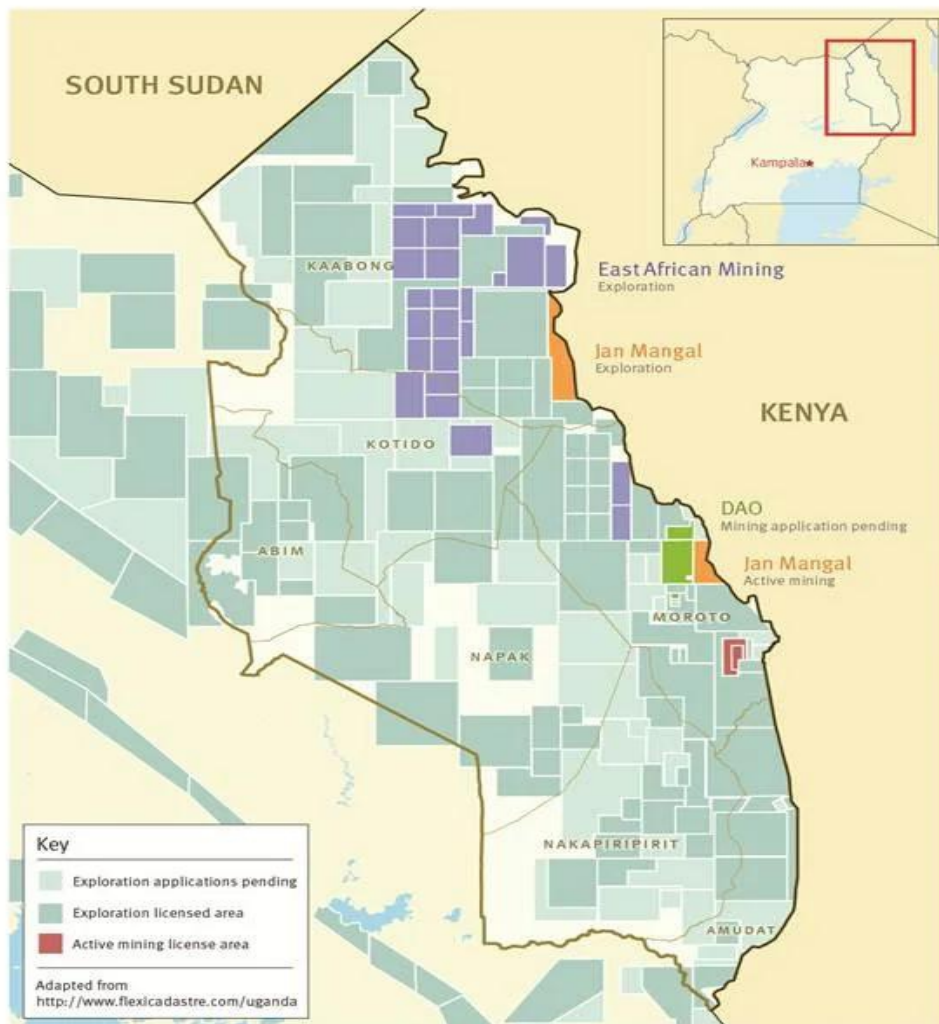
<sup>95</sup> Saferworld, 'Tracking key conflict and security dynamics in Karamoja – an update', May 2012, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda\\_PPP\\_report.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Uganda_PPP_report.pdf).

<sup>96</sup> Saferworld, *Karamoja conflict and security assessment*, September 2010, [www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja\\_conflict\\_and\\_security\\_assessment.pdf](http://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloads/pubdocs/Karamoja_conflict_and_security_assessment.pdf).

<sup>97</sup> SHALOM-SCCRR; Briefing paper No 4: An analysis of Turkana-Pokot Conflict; multi-stakeholder approach in the management of natural resource-based inter-communal conflict along Turkana-West Pokot borderline: the missing link, October 2020

<sup>98</sup> Mutaizibwa, Emma, 'Secret gold mining sparks conflict fears in Karamoja', *The Observer*, 27 May 2012, [observer.ug](http://observer.ug), accessed 7 October 2012

<sup>99</sup> Eliza M. Johannes, Leo C. Zulu & Ezekiel Kalipeni (2015) Oil discovery in Turkana County, Kenya: a source of conflict or development?, *African Geographical Review*, 34:2, 142-164, DOI: 10.1080/19376812.2014.884466



elites and private companies while communities are denied reaching and access rights to vital sources of livelihoods thus exacerbating pre-existing tensions traditional grazing lands<sup>100</sup>.

Arguably, on top of pre-existing interethnic cross-border conflicts primarily driven by competition over scarce pasture and water resources, the recent

discovery of oil has exacerbated these tensions into a full-blown violent conflict among the already marginalized pastoralist against local and foreign investors

<sup>100</sup> Mutaizibwa Emmanuel, 'Is there a link between insecurity and mineral wealth in Karamoja?', *Daily Monitor*, 18 April 2022

#### **Map 4: Mining Licensing in Karamoja**

Community leaders during FGD and interviews reported that private companies are taking advantage of insecurity, poverty, and illiteracy to stealthily acquire land with mineral potential in the region.<sup>101</sup> In some cases, traditional leaders have sold or loaned customary land to government or private investors without adequate consultation and/or due compensation to those affected, thus increasingly fueling conflicts amongst community members and between communities and government officials/investors especially in mineral rich borderline areas<sup>102</sup>. Increasingly, domestic conflicts are being observed between (mostly) elderly men and young men about how or whether to engage with investors (accept jobs or allow men to mine if community land access is protected). Disputes between men and women arise when men decide to sell land without consulting their wives or children, despite both boys and girls working and depending on the land<sup>103</sup>. For Turkana, the oil exploration is more ambivalent for pastoral communities in terms of conflict. A study by Johannes et al. (2014) concluded that oil is part of “a tinderbox of risk and opportunism for violent conflict, lawlessness, and potential armed rebellion”<sup>104</sup>. In Kainuk and Alale trans-border corridor, ethnic conflict between the Pokot North and Turkana South, is among the oldest conflicts over grazing land and water in northern Kenya (McCabe, 2004), have turned more and more openly into a boundary dispute than before. Despite Government of Kenya (GoK) imposing curfew in early 2022, the conflict border areas at Chesegon along the Elgeyo Marakwet-West Pokot Counties border and Kainuk at the border between Turkana and West Pokot Counties remained a hotspot affecting market operations at the affected areas<sup>105</sup>.

During the FGD, local elders noted that despite these conflicts, they have learned to live side by side with each other. One respondent noted that the recent discovery of oil and ongoing 2022 general elections in Kenya has seen a new wave of conflict resulting to killings and large-scale displacements on an almost daily basis (Andae and Bii, 2012). Both Kenya and Uganda’s government has promoted private investment in mining in the Karamoja cluster region as a way of developing the region since violent incidents of cattle rustling between communities have decreased in recent years. Pastoralists

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<sup>101</sup> *Tenure in Mystery: Status of Land under Wildlife, Forestry and Mining Concessions in Karamoja Region*, Associates Research Uganda with support from Trocaire Uganda and Oxfam GB, quoted in ‘Uganda: Conflict Over Grazing Land in Karamoja’, *Daily Monitor*, 9 February 2011

<sup>102</sup> see *Investors flee Karamoja as mining sites targeted*, accessed from <https://www.independent.co.ug/investors-flee-karamoja-as-mining-sites-targeted/>

<sup>103</sup> Saferworld (2017), ‘Mining in Uganda: A conflict-sensitive analysis’, August, p 7 (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1135-mining-in-uganda-a-conflict-sensitive-analysis/>); Saferworld and Uganda Land Alliance, *op. cit.*, pp 6–7

<sup>104</sup> Trocaire, *Technical Paper on The nexus between climate Change and land conflict in Turkana County*, September 2020

<sup>105</sup> See National Drought Management Authority West Pokot County Drought early warning bulletin for July 2022, accessed from [<http://www.ndma.go.ke/index.php/component/jdownloads/send/22-west-pokot/6597-west-pokot-july-2022>]

from both countries particularly express fears of the loss of traditional grazing lands to changes associated with the mineral and oil discovery as a post-colonial scramble to buy or lease land had ensued yet land buying, or leasing is alien to the Karamoja pastoral groups. Research has shown that some men are now willing to take up arms to protect or reclaim community land – particularly as government soldiers are perceived to protect investors and there is a sense that resource access is prioritized by the national government for individuals and private firms over community rights<sup>106</sup>. The impacts of mineral and oil development activities on other natural resources like water are also highly gendered. For instance, community members assert that when water sources are polluted by mining companies, women and girls must travel longer distances to get clean water, thus exposing them to sexual violence on the way and increases their domestic burden of care for family members who get sick from using polluted water<sup>107</sup>.

#### **2.3.3.10. COVID-19 Pandemic and Foot and Mouth Epidemic Induced Conflict & Insecurity**

In 2020 at the height of COVID-19 pandemic, Security reports in both countries recorded a rise in violent cattle rustling and raids during COVID-19 lockdowns as the security apparatus were shifted to managing the enforcement of COVID-19 control measures like curfew guidelines which left some sensitive border areas like the Pokot-Turkana, Uganda-Kenya and South Sudan borders unmanned hence criminal elements took advantage to advance their retaliatory attacks and cattle theft agenda<sup>108</sup>. Additionally, the prolonged livestock quarantines by the Uganda Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries over Foot and Mouth Disease outbreak which restricted movement of livestock and livestock products within and cross border, broke the coping strategies of the pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities and increased animosity<sup>109</sup>. The gendered effects of this have been limited access to nutritional diets and increased malnutrition among the extremely vulnerable individuals (children – girls and boys, women, and the elderly) in communities who have become more involved in environmentally risky ventures to augment household incomes hence creating a cycle of vulnerability to disaster and insecurity. The rise in incidence of domestic and gender-based violence including teenage pregnancies and child marriages in Karamoja cluster which in turn heightened pressure for child trafficking is reportedly attributed to diminished household incomes and deteriorating health outcomes caused by COVID-19 outbreak and induced insecurity.

It is reported that some areas considered conflict ‘hot spots’ were left without adequate security surveillance, allowing inter-community conflicts to continue unabated. It is alleged that male youth from Pokot and Turkana communities started regrouping and recruiting their counterparts from other areas including those considered to be peaceful to take part in conflict within the volatile areas<sup>110</sup>. With the economic hardships, this trend worries and could spill over to other areas that have been considered peaceful in the recent past. Security reports in both countries recorded rise in violent cattle rustling and raids during COVID-19 lockdowns<sup>111</sup>. For instance, as of 5 October 2020, a total of 216 cases were reported in Turkana County<sup>112</sup>. On 2 May 2020, over, 1,000 head of cattle and goats were

<sup>106</sup> Saferworld (2017), ‘Mining in Uganda: A conflict-sensitive analysis’, August, p 7 (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1135-mining-in-uganda-a-conflict-sensitive-analysis>); Saferworld and Uganda Land Alliance, op. cit., pp 6–7

<sup>107</sup> 4 Saferworld and Uganda Land Alliance (2016), ‘Gender, land and conflict in Moroto’, July, p 6 (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1077-gender-land-and-conflict-in-moroto>)

<sup>108</sup> Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT)/ Tetra Tech International Development; Rapid Conflict Analysis in The Context of Covid-19 Turkana and Pokot Counties; 2021

<sup>109</sup> International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2021); 35th edition of The Indigenous World, a yearly overview produced by IWGIA that serves to document and report on the developments Indigenous Peoples have experienced. Article downloaded on 10th June 2022. [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org)

<sup>110</sup> Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT)/ Tetra Tech International Development; Rapid Conflict Analysis in The Context of Covid-19 Turkana and Pokot Counties; 2021

<sup>111</sup> The Independent. “Kaabong to use diplomatic approach to recover stolen cattle in Kenya.” 16 June 2020. <https://www.independent.co.uk/kaabong-to-use-diplomatic-approach-to-recover-stolen-cattle-in-kenya/>

<sup>112</sup> Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT)/ Tetra Tech International Development; Rapid Conflict Analysis in The Context of Covid-19 Turkana and Pokot Counties; 2021

raided in Kololo Kraal in Kaabong Town Council by suspected Karamojong Jie. These left scores of animals, armed warriors, and security officers dead due to aerial bombing/bullets used in the process to quell them. Women's livelihoods were greatly affected as the only oxen to support them in cultivating and marketing their crops was lost<sup>113</sup>. It is perceived that the mutual trust and cooperation built between cross-border communities and security apparatus over the years were compromised during this period of COVID-19<sup>114</sup>. Police/ Local Defense Unit soldiers' brutality during the implementation of presidential directives further increased tensions between the community and security agencies thus complicating their already fragile relationship.

From the economic perspective, these restrictions which led to the closure of cross border livestock markets<sup>115</sup>, disrupted local economies, affected livelihood, and reportedly fueled insecurity related to livestock theft and raids across the region as communities resorted to undercover livestock business using violence to fend off any economic stresses and obstacles to now business-oriented cattle rustling. For example, in Uganda, the cutting-off of the livestock trade markets led to reduced access to income and an increase in cattle raids, theft, loss of property and lives – actions carried out by bandits from across the borders and internally within ethnic groups<sup>116</sup>. In Kenya, it is alleged that Pokot community traders (mainly men) buy stolen animals from Turkana community rustlers and sell them through the border to Loroo and Moroto districts in Uganda<sup>117</sup>. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 restrictions in Kenya and Uganda, tracking and recovery of the stolen livestock was particularly problematic. The mutual sharing agreements on scarce resources along the border lines have also been disrupted and are a recipe for conflict and tensions in the period of the pandemic and after<sup>118</sup>.

### **3. IMPACTS OF CONFLICT IN THE KARAMOJA CLUSTER**

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#### ***i) Food insecurity (famine and malnutrition) and migrations.***

Livestock production complemented by subsistence food crop farming is the principal source of household nutrition and incomes in Karamoja cluster. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2017) economic Survey, majority of households and communities in Turkana suffer from low availability of and access to food resources, resulting in high levels of chronic and acute food insecurity and malnutrition. The region continues to have the highest food insecurity and malnutrition levels (IPCC, 2022) due to factors related to structural and food poverty of about 75% (having increased from 70% in 2017)<sup>119</sup> low value livelihood options, and conflict. Also, over the years, conflicts have displaced more than 1 million people, a significant share of whom are agro pastoralists (women and men). With recurrent conflicts, the food production systems are grossly affected thus

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<sup>113</sup> Northernnews Wire. "Pictorial: Protest in Kaabong as 1,000 Heads of Cattle and 2 Lives are Lost in Nasty Raid." 7 May 2020. <https://northernnewswire.com/2020/05/07/pictorial-protest-in-kaabong-as-1000-heads-of-cattle-and-2-lives-are-lost-in-nasty-raid/>

<sup>114</sup> Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT)/ Tetra Tech International Development; Rapid Conflict Analysis in The Context of Covid-19 Turkana and Pokot Counties; 2021

<sup>115</sup> This is because majority of the people at the border points access food from across the border in Moroto, Kotido and Napak districts of Uganda.

<sup>116</sup> International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (2021); 35th edition of The Indigenous World, a yearly overview produced by IWGIA that serves to document and report on the developments Indigenous Peoples have experienced. Article downloaded on 10th June 2022. [www.iwgia.org](http://www.iwgia.org)

<sup>117</sup> Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT)/ Tetra Tech International Development; Rapid Conflict Analysis in The Context of Covid-19 Turkana and Pokot Counties; 2021

<sup>118</sup> Reducing Insecurity and Violent Extremism in Northern and Coastal Regions of Kenya (REINVENT)/ Tetra Tech International Development; Rapid Conflict Analysis in The Context of Covid-19 Turkana and Pokot Counties; 2021

<sup>119</sup> UBOS: UNHS 2019/20

making the risks for pastoralists and agro pastoralists (women and men) who have to move/work through insecure areas more apparent.

The compounding forced new migrations authorized by men (affecting mainly women and girls), tremendous loss of livestock and crop harvest explains the widespread food insecurity which has now resulted into hunger crisis necessitating humanitarian emergency food aid to save lives of especially the elderly (male and female), infirm and children (girls and boys). The cluster presently records a total high global acute malnutrition rate which threatens the cognitive abilities and well-being of the young generations which may in future undermine economic and social stability as their resilience capacities are utterly shattered. Therefore, widespread losses in livestock due to conflicts are a crisis for regional food security characterized by high levels of starvation and increasing dependency on relief food. Besides, displacement of people (women, men, boys and girls) is reported to contribute to the rise in land grabbing as economic elites take advantage of the plight of conflict affected people.

**ii) *Loss of lives and heightened orphan burden, rise in female headed households/widows, human trafficking, and disabilities***

Pervasive cross border conflicts have led to deaths and injuries of civilians (women, men, girls and boys) and armed men (youthful warriors and security officers). Records obtained across the cluster over the last 12 months indicate that over 3,000 people have been killed, and about 300,000 livestock lost<sup>120</sup>. There is an emerging reality in which gendered power relations have been redefined by conflict. The study revealed that rural women of Karamoja cluster have been rendered even more powerless and helpless in fulfilling their care roles. During FGD in Loima and Alale, several women narrated their experience of the “*triple-widow tragedy after losing three husbands to raids*”. One woman in Alale, West Pokot narrated that she has suffered psychological trauma from conflict. She narrated that

*Her first husband married her when she still young and it took 2 years for her to conceive her first child. A year later her husband acquired a gun which made him crazy and a renown warrior every woman and men alike wanted. A year later he was killed in a raid in Turkana, but his gun was recovered which was passed on to his young brother who also later inherited her. Because of the anger to revenge the death of his brother, he too was killed in Loima, but the gun was again recovered and handed to the last son in that family. Because I was still beautiful with only 2 children, the clan decided that he inherits her. Although he promised not to raid, the Turkana and Matheniko raiders killed him from home while defending the family wealth<sup>121</sup>.*

Moreover, over the years by extension, just like other women, the persistence of negative stereotypes serves to propagate the intensity of conflict impacts on women and girls which is currently translated into changed nature of domestic violence whereby widows (some of them young girls) are accused of bad luck when their husbands are arrested and/or killed while others become destitute and/or perceived worthless. In Nakapelimoru, Kotido, during the FGD organized by the woman councilor, out of the 15 women that attended the discussion, 6 women were widows, with 3 being widowed at the age of 16 years<sup>122</sup>. Whereas women are now less involved in cattle raids, they together with girls suffer double jeopardy by being victims of sexual violence cases (rape, sexual assault, and exploitation), physical and psychosocial torture without capacity to defend themselves during revenge conflict attacks. FGDs revealed that breakdown in security situation triggered a rapid rise of human

<sup>120</sup> Karamoja Parliamentary Group Press Statement 30th May 2022

<sup>121</sup> An account by one woman on the effect of conflict on women during FGD in Loima and Alale.

<sup>122</sup> FGD in Nakapelimoru

trafficking (“the modern-day slavery”) of especially young women, boys, and girls in total disregard of sanctity of life and social fabric as parents were being incapacitated to fend for their families. Today, the media is awash with stories of Karamoja cluster street children who have earned a reputation of being a burden to urban development and transformation.

Additionally, although cases of severe injuries and permanent disability because of conflict is in the increase in the Karamoja cluster region, there is lack of disability data and information. However, through observation and FGD, majority who were physically disable attributed their disabilities or severe injuries to conflict and torture while in security detention. According to one of the PWD in Kaabong, the permanent disabilities caused by conflict has had a serious implication for his ability to pursue livelihood activities, he cannot work but survive on begging<sup>123</sup>. On the other hand, women with disabilities expressed that they have suffered double tragedy of conflict and GBV inflicted injuries and permanent disabilities. This has affected the well-being of their children, and families. With some of them abandoned by men.

Overall, the study established that victims (women and men) of both types of disabilities have limited options for assistance and support or even representation in local Peace Committees. Most often they are left at the mercy of families and well-wishers.

### ***iii) Gender roles, gender-based violence – a consequences, and a driver of conflict***

The study finding and further analysis found that deeply patriarchal norms persist amongst all the pastoralists communities in Karamoja, Turkana and the Pokot. Culturally, women and men have a differential access to social, physical goods and resources which is key dimensions of gender inequality. Something as noted by Saferworld (2020) keep women and girls at a disadvantage and normalize violence both physical and psychological against them. Like any other conflicts, women, children, and vulnerable groups are most often disproportionately affected by burden of conflicts and their experiences are distinct from men.

Although majority of women support the idea of disarming all men, most of the men especially among the Jie, Dodoth and Matheniko regard the disarmament process as ‘turning them into spineless as women. Overall, the change in Karamoja socio-economic, environmental and security context has meant undeniable change in the gender roles of women, girls, men and boys specifically in relation to their economic opportunities although their social standing and responsibilities at household and community level appear to remain the same. The stagnation of patriarchal gender norms also translates into heavy workloads that leave women in exploitative conditions. According to the Woman Councilor in Nakapelimoru, “*women and children now bear the brunt of additional role in their communities by being involved in more economic activities like working in people’s gardens or homes to raise money, while at the same time expected to work in their gardens and household work*”. The analysis of women FGDs in Uganda revealed that though women and girls have taken on the bulk of livelihood work like farming, rearing small domestic animals and artisanal mining, increased economic activity is not accompanied by a greater voice and influence in family or community affairs like their male counterparts. On the other hand, it was observed that social norms around masculinity make men unwilling to engage in farming or family responsibility, even when the family has lost a major livelihood domain (Cattle rearing). This confirms what other studies have called ‘male exploitation’ – with women working on average 18 hours per day, while men work only five to ten

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<sup>123</sup> FGD with PWD in Biafra, Kaabong

hours. This situation has been perceived by both women and men as burdensome and exploitative<sup>124</sup> hence leading to suicidal tendencies among women and men.

Among the pastoralists in general a girl child was found more likely to be excluded from educational opportunities than boys. Most have lost cattle and now find themselves idle and into alcoholism, Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV), domestic violence that undermine the social position of women in society. On the other hand, some men have adapted and opted to find other income-generating opportunities such as manual labor in urban centers.

In Turkana, women just like any typical traditional women especially those in poor localities are expected to assume primary responsibility for their households' subsistence. Even during the recent election campaigns, the study found out that Turkana and Pokots women were frequently excluded from political rallies by various candidates, which has a bearing on the decision on whom to cast their votes for except directives from their husbands. The implication according to the study is that social positioning of women influences and restrict women thinking around their homes and local community as caregivers instead of participation in the public sphere that affect them.

#### *iv) Poverty, impoverishment*

According to UBOS (2021) National Household Survey Report 2019/2020, Karamoja poverty increased from 60% to 66%. While Turkana's, the poorest county in Kenya has 79.4% of the population living below poverty line, compared to a national average of 31.6%.<sup>125</sup> The study revealed that households already struggling with structural poverty have been pushed further into unsurmountable suffering and socio-economic vulnerability due to recurrent conflicts. It is perceived that the cross-border raids have always wreaked havoc in communities leaving many extremely very poor women and men. The study noted that rural households affected by conflict generally experienced disruption of socio-economic activities and increased economic hardship. Consequently, the impact of conflict within a decade can be deciphered in terms of gross loss of asset base and the formal rural economic growth. Consultations with business oriented agro pastoralists men and women, revealed that a market's proximity to violent conflict correlated with a dramatic decrease in the local price of cattle as households preferred to dispose livestock at a giveaway price rather than lose to potential raids. For example, cows which costed KSH 25,000/UGX 783,933 (USD 206) now are being sold as low as KSH: 15,000 (USD: 123). Conflict has a direct impact on legal trade, production, and economic growth throughout the Karamoja cluster.

Although trade can create opportunities for strengthening regional economic integration, closure of cross border pastoral markets (due to conflict) that would otherwise support agro-pastoral households access other economic opportunities/assets for their livelihoods' enhancement is frustrating. Insecurity constrains the free movement of people (women and men) and flow of goods and services within Karamoja cluster, yet such movements are vital for regional development and integration that would help spur Karamoja cluster economy as possibilities for creating positive change in lifestyles and livelihoods are enhanced. Due to Cross border conflicts, the human demographic growth indicators (unemployment, high dependency ratios, etc.), have worsened which creates wretchedness. Subsequently, motivated by the desire to survive, many male young people have become powerful assets for smuggling operations and other criminal activity (burglary) as they navigate conflict prone cross borders undetected. As most people (female and male) live below the poverty line, the economic opportunity that comes from the shockingly increasing illicit economic activities, such as smuggling,

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<sup>124</sup> Mercy Corps (2016), 'Karamoja Strategic Resilience Assessment: Final report', August, p 30.

<sup>125</sup> Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. 2014. Kenya Demographic and Health Survey 2014.



and cattle thefts can be a powerful incentive. Therefore, poverty is a human rights violation which subjects people to different forms of exploitation, inhuman and degrading treatment in pursuit of survival.

**v) *Changing livelihoods systems and environmental destruction***

The study observed that, due to conflicts, the impacts of climate change and changing production systems on livelihoods have only become harsher with ripple consequences. When the livelihood systems are disrupted by recurring violent conflicts which lead to forced displacement and failed land utilization/management, it greatly threatens food security and socio-economic stability since it distorts the agro-pastoral livestock value chains that employ thousands of women and men pastoralists, agro-pastoralists, and businesses. Whereas livelihood systems change is inevitable, the dramatic economic shifts is placing pastoralists at risk of losing their livelihoods to adopting environmentally unfriendly options. Already, there has been the corrosion of productive systems interdependence between farmers and pastoralists as well as negative impact on the social relationships between groups whose identity is closely intertwined with their livelihood systems. This scenario may complicate conflict transformation in near future as pastoralism is deeply connected with culture, identity, and socio-political organization. Therefore, the efficacy of pastoralism as a dryland livelihood system and its socio-cultural, economic, and environmental benefits are at stake. Cultural changes are noted, such as the increase of the cash economy as opposed to the cattle economy, increased alcohol consumption due to frustration, and new pattern of sexual networks as men and women seek for economic opportunities elsewhere. Therefore, the cost of conflict prolongs human suffering, complicates recovery, resilience and can itself generate into tensions, setting in motion a vicious cycle of environmental destruction and violent conflicts.

Significantly, although livelihood changes and challenges above linked to post-disarmament have shifted economic livelihood strategies for both men and women, the study noted that pre-existing discriminatory attitudes and gender norms expecting women and girls to shoulder the burden of all household and care work remain, now alongside new economic activities. This trend has greatly influenced the expansion of artisanal mining as an alternative economic activity that was traditionally practiced on a small scale involving both men, women, and youth (female and male). Consequently, both are exposed to dangerous working conditions, albeit in different ways. Men report developing respiratory problems from the dust created by working in the quarries<sup>126</sup>, while women grind stones to extract gold, most times at home as they must carry out other domestic work hence exposing themselves and their children (girls and boys) to dangerous levels of dust inhalation<sup>127</sup>. Men and women both face exploitative pricing and payment methods in the mining sector, but women are paid even less than men because of gendered perceptions that value work requiring more physical strength (such as breaking stones) than work requiring skill (grinding or sorting the stones to find marble)<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Saferworld and Uganda Land Alliance (2016), 'Gender, land and conflict in Moroto', July, p 6 (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1077-gender-land-and-conflict-in-moroto>)

<sup>127</sup> Eftimie A, Heller K, Strongman J, Hinton J, Lahiri-Dutt K, Mutemeri N (2012), 'Gender dimensions of artisanal and small-scale mining: A rapid assessment toolkit', World Bank, p 12.

<sup>128</sup> Saferworld and Uganda Land Alliance (2016), 'Gender, land and conflict in Moroto', July, p 6 (<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1077-gender-land-and-conflict-in-moroto>)

#### ***4. EXISTING EFFORTS TO ADDRESS CONFLICT, OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES, AND LESSONS LEARNT***

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##### ***4.1. Existing efforts to address conflict and opportunities to promote Peace in the Karamoja Cluster***

- i) The emerging role of women and diverse experiences in times of conflict have powerful implications for peacebuilding and conflict transformation:***

Women's capacity to recover from conflict and contribute to peace is influenced by their role in the conflict, whether directly engaged in armed groups, displaced, or forced to take on additional responsibilities to sustain their livelihoods and care for dependents. One of the unexplored entry points for strengthening women's roles in peacebuilding relates to the ways in which they use, manage, make decisions on and benefit from shared natural resources. However, to some extent peace efforts have been disregarding the traditional position/authority of women, including their important

function of blessing/cursing, instead of harnessing it for peace by addressing their social protection systems and empowerment concerns.

The study revealed that, women are starting to occupy the space as a convener of dialogue and counselling, a position previously a preserve dominated by male traditional leaders. Because of their position in society, women efforts/approaches like peace caravans and dialogues with conflict actors in cross border hotspot areas have been widely accepted in recent times than formal political processes to promote peace, reconciliation and reintegration of ex-raiders, and inter-ethnic community. Thus, tapping into the traditional role of women remains core for transmission of positive cultural values and practices for peace from one generation to another as well as mobilizing communities for social support and development. Additionally, women's role in resource management and homecare provides significant opportunities to enhance their participation in decision-making at all levels and ability to engage more productively in economic revitalization of the cross-border communities. Where women possess collective power to cause social change through invoking curses/blessings, this can be seized as an opportunity to fight ills, especially gender-based violence, violent raids and to promote peace.

#### **THE NAKAPELIMORU WOMEN PEACEFUL CARAVAN TO TURKANA – ATOYIUTU NGIDWE (LETS SAVE THE CHILDREN) July 2021.**

*In July 2021, when all security forces became reluctant in providing safety and security of lives and animals, local thieves- Lonetia took advantage and started stealing animals from within Jie, Dodoth, Turkana, Matheniko and Bokora. At the time the Peace Committee at sub county level were strong, they apprehended some notorious cattle thieves like Umo (now deceased), Acucu (prisioned), Topos (prisioned) and many others. Although these gangsters were handed to the security forces with hard evidence including guns, they were later released back to the community. These groups remobilized and meted terror and fear through targeted killings of peace actors/committees, local leaders and any other person suspected to be a spy. Including mocking the likes of Lodiény Natimu and his colleagues who were the first to return their guns and bosting to be having connection with the security chiefs.*

*This changed the entire conflict dynamics, luring a huge number of boys as young as 12 years. Between July and August 2021, Nakapelimoru and Panyangara sub county witnessed the most sad and lowest point with weekly reports coming that out of the group that went to raid Dodoth-Kaabong, Matheniko-Moroto and Turkana 5, 10, 20 of young boys have remained. In one of these weeks, they*

**ii) *Positive cultural perceptions of Karamoja cluster identity and oneness in diversity:***

Despite the high levels of fear of inter-ethnic cross-border attacks, most pastoralists do not see violence as an acceptable way of dealing with conflicts, but instead strongly support inter-community cross border dialogues, peer –to-peer influence and effective service delivery by local authorities, as desirable ways to resolve conflicts and promote peaceful interactions between ethnic groups. Cross border communities and people (women and men) underscore inter-ethnic joint grazing of livestock and shared livestock markets/trading as contributing to peace. Community shared services (such as health, education, and water) and religious events are perceived as essential options for influencing and nurturing inter-ethnic cooperation, peaceful interaction, and transformation of inter-ethnic relations.

**iii) *Existence of customary resource management regimes:***

Pastoral communities historically have always had and in many cases, continue to have their own customary resource management regimes. In the past, these regimes controlled both intra and inter-

community access to natural resources (water and pastureland). Over the years, binding peace agreements ratified, operationalized, and monitored through customary processes/structures have proved more effective for shared resource management across the cluster. For example, the ostensible peace between Turkana and Matheniko communities is attributable to the 49-year-old Lokiriama peace accord. The customary land management systems developed under conditions of resource scarcity than currently exist in both countries, have been flexible and adaptable over time<sup>129</sup>. However current gendered dynamics of land tenure deepened by scarcity due to perceived unfair state/non-state action (conservationist and extractives growth) and resultant high monetary value for arid/semi-arid land is proving to be more detrimental and obliterating inclusive customary management regimes in many communities.

**iv) Presence of positive interdependent and complementary actor roles in Karamoja cluster:**

Over the years, actor roles in conflict and peace have undergone transformation triggered by socio-economic and political changes in both countries. Across the Karamoja cluster, the traditional elders and women are now perceived as ‘peace agents’ as opposed to previously being labelled as ‘spoilers’ because they blessed/applauded courageous raiders and demeaned those who refused to engage in raids<sup>130</sup>. Despite this attitudinal change, the elders’ role as influencers in matters of peace and security is rapidly diminishing as the youth are increasingly insolent and struggle to be independent/self-accounting in the claim that “*the elders have no alternatives and/or nothing to offer them*”. Nonetheless, the study affirms that sustained engagement of the council of elders remains key for fostering peace and security.

Religious actors (both traditional and modern) still have a niche in conflict resolution. Additionally, the former cattle rustlers/interethnic warriors, have taken the initiative to bring peace among themselves through the cross-border ‘peace caravans<sup>131</sup>,’ which have resulted in to ‘peace deals’ being signed among youth groups from rival ethnicities. The undeniable believe of these actors in conciliation and restorative justice systems as opposed to the statutory justice system offers an opportunity for addressing conflict legacies which trigger violent conflict cycles and positively reforming the core values of inter-ethnic co-existence while building the social support structures at community levels.

#### **4.2. Challenges & lessons learnt in promoting peace and security in karamoja cluster**

**i) The state and civil society organization (CSO) actors work methods are conflict insensitive and inconsistent with conflict and peace realities in cross border areas:**

Consultations with cross border communities fault some CSO’s work methods to be politicized, insensitive, self-defeating, and inconsistent in their pursuit for peace and development. Whereas they have credible information on that would be useful for conflict transformation, they need to be organized and strategically engaged in post disarmament peace building and conflict resolution. To many, the limited or lack of peace building efforts crucial for addressing conflict legacies and grievances after disarmament served to increase the perception of neglect which prompted the locals to seek other options of making their concerns heard. Reformed youth in Kotido said, “*because the*

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<sup>129</sup> Trocaire, Technical Paper on The nexus between climate Change and land conflict in Turkana County, September 2020

<sup>130</sup> SHALOM-SCCRR; Briefing paper No 4: An analysis of Turkana-Pokot Conflict; multi-stakeholder approach in the management of natural resource-based inter-communal conflict along Turkana-West Pokot borderline: the missing link, October 2020

<sup>131</sup> The peace caravans involve local groups of young men and women who see themselves as agents of change, mentors, and leaders of a new paradigm in local governance and peacebuilding, traveling to areas of high tension within their pastoral communities. The aim is to present a united front to their warring kinsmen and women and create a platform for intercommunity dialog on causes of conflict to finding amicable solutions.

*NGOs are shy, we have lost many committed peace actors, people like Aboka, Lokwang, Toyan, Lorionongole, Lowok, among others, yet their families have not been compensated<sup>132</sup>”.*

For CSOs actors working in Karamoja cluster, changing methods drawing from ‘within’, with consistency, proactiveness and timeliness in response to peace and human security should be pursued intently. This will also address the stereotyping that “all Karamojong are thieves” which has sometimes created resistance to development efforts perceived to be externally inspired and fostering violent conflicts (burglary) within communities. Some youth affirmed that “*we are neglected by those meant to target us; therefore, we will pursue them for what belongs to us*”.

***ii) Co-ownership of a gun, and disarmament intelligence.***

Initially, voluntary disarmament was largely encouraged but later turned forceful when the warriors largely ignored the call to surrender their guns under the voluntary disarmament programme. During the FGD and interviews with active warriors (Karacunas) in the districts of Kaabong, Moroto, Kotido and Amudat, it emerged that out of 5 guns, 4 were locally own, while 1 were guns from elsewhere on hired or loaned, a practice which the study found very common among the Karimojong of Uganda. Also, of the 4 locally owned guns, 2 were co-owned as a joint investment during acquisition by 3-5 owners (warriors). This gun is therefore used in turns during raids. Sadly, when such guns are recovered from one unfortunate person as they referred, the other co-investors will not let go but will continue to demand their share of the gun back from the one who surrendered their gun which compounds the process of surrendering the guns. A LC I leader interviewed in one of the villages noted that the practice of co-owning of a gun has made government intelligence think that all the 3 or 5 who are co-owning 1 gun each have a gun independently yet not. Thus, whenever these group of warriors are apprehended by the security forces during cordon and search, they suffer the torturous processes in the army detention which have most cases led to death. Additionally, although government is offering incentives to those who surrender their guns voluntary, obviously, the reality of sharing incentives based on ‘shares and co-ownership’ in these guns, becomes a source of another conflict.

Moreover, providing disarmament incentives without due consideration of any emerging crisis (hunger, livestock disease prevalence or disaster) is defeating the purpose. Consultations with reformed youth and leaders revealed that the timing of the intervention (mainly supply of goats, an incentive to conflict) is not appropriate and more so, selective compensation is creating disgruntlement among youth and hindering voluntary disarmament. The youth assert that “*guns were bought with bulls and millions; how can we be given a few goats or nothing<sup>133</sup>”*. Besides targeting only 15 youth per parish is such a small number to motivate one to surrender<sup>134</sup>. While in Kenya majority of young people in Turkana noted that during the grace period (amnesty period), those who surrendered their guns voluntarily were rewarded with life changing investment like bikes for Boda-boda business, capital to start business or resettlement which has motivated them to abandon cattle raids<sup>135</sup>.

In this regard, engaging conflict actors using peer-to-peer influence woven with conflict sensitive peace incentives is imperative and should be planned in a manner that considers the motivation and possible options for resolving the conflict.

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<sup>132</sup> FGD with Peace Actors/committees in Nakapelimoru, Kotido

<sup>133</sup> FGD in the kraals in Kaabong Kotido and Moroto with the real armed warriors.

<sup>134</sup> FGD with youth in Nakabale, Panyangara, Kotido.

<sup>135</sup> FGD with youth in Loima, Kalobeyei

***iii) Upholding the irrefutable part culture plays in shaping actors' response to cross border peace and conflict:***

Culture bestows meaning to a Karamojong's life, it molds a person and determines to a great extent their behavioral orientation. Evidence suggests that peace and security measures not inspired by a set of locally rooted values for co-existence are not sufficient to guarantee sustainable peace and security, given the power of culture in driving conflict. Thus, the government programs/laws perceived to run contrary to the esteemed cultural practices and interpretations of resource management as well as conflict resolution has proved challenging.

The study affirms that cross border communities still retain their trust in their cultural processes for conflict resolution, notwithstanding the inherent deficiencies and capacity gaps. Henceforth, for sustainable peace and security to be actualized in Karamoja cluster, is it judicious for governments and development actors to work with the existing cultural structures that have supported people to co-exist for decades, rather than disregarding and undermining the very structures that previously supported and served to address conflicts, thus creating an imbalance in power relationships. Their effectiveness could be enhanced by providing them with the capacity to better understand peace/security regulations, human rights and gender equity, follow-up judicial cases, and to provide psychosocial support to both survivors and perpetrators of violent conflicts in cross border communities. More so, clan leaders/elders can influence the social relations of their members and by extension influence community attitudes and perceptions on conflict and peace, drawing on the Karamoja cluster values that foster co-existence and resource sharing. Further still, the culturally defined human rights if well documented and shared could provide opportunities for building local capacities for peace, advancing women/youth empowerment especially strengthening their position/influence for peace and development in Karamoja cluster. The cultural structures provide a wealth of resourceful persons to contribute to better governance of Karamoja cluster. There is need to shift the paradigm perspective from one that views culture merely as an obstacle to peace and security to one that seeks to ensure empowerment and equal enjoyment of socio-economic rights.

***iv) Getting a balance between informal traditional and formal justice systems in addressing cross border conflict and development concerns:***

Both formal and informal systems of justice and accountability exist in Karamoja cluster, but work in parallel to each other, which in most cases, has had adverse effects for women and men. Although the formal justice system is acclaimed for removing wrongdoers from the community, among the Karamojong pastoralist across the region, it is perceived by women and men as foreign, corruptible, and nurturing perpetual enemies who undertake revenge attacks on peace committees or local leaders. The informal institutions and mechanism (with associated processes) active in Karamoja cluster communities are completely male dominated with only a few elder women involved in decisions. Despite issues such as GBV and domestic violence being regulated by national and international legal frameworks, the informal mechanisms tend to base their decisions on traditional measures, with a stronger focus on community interests rather than the individual survivors. Notwithstanding the limitations, the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms still wield influence over local people as it is seen to be of value, invoking truth telling, respect, accountability, and promotion of the social order. Women and youth assert that it is reformative and corrective as it appeals more to one's conscience, with other conflicting actors engaging directly with each another.

Henceforth, for Karamoja cluster that is faced with numerous structural challenges hindering access to formal justice, a balance between the existing formal and informal justice systems is crucial for

sustainable peace and security to prevail. In 2013, the council of Elders in North and South Karamoja adopted the Morutit and Nabilatuk Resolution as a strategy to punish and discourage animal theft, which requires the perpetrators of livestock theft to return double the number of stolen animals and one more animal as a conflict management system in the recovery and return of raided livestock. The recovery and return of stolen livestock are essential to preventing retaliatory raids and breaking the cycle of conflict. The resolution from the onset, was well respected across the land as it was an effective way of recovery of raided livestock and a deterrent to raids. With credible and reputable leaders presiding over the entire process was understood to provide for a just and rapid solution compared to the long and costly waits for the outcome of formal justice systems which is mired with impunity as confirmed by community members that *“some security actors do not want peace to prevail between cross border communities as the prevailing conflict is survival strategy for them. Recovery missions are always unfair and mired with impunity. Therefore, absence of protection of local peace actors means overwhelming fear of revenge attacks meted against them by released criminals”*<sup>136</sup>. However, the resolutions came under scrutiny in 2016 when Human Rights defenders argued that it was unlawful. Besides, it was overthrown by government, local politicians, and paramilitary resulting to exaggeration of number of livestock with innocent people affected leaving the real culprits untouched. According to most elders (men and women) interviewed in Turkana and Karamoja, the interference of government in traditional conflict and peace governance is a challenge to resolving the ongoing conflict

**v) *Persistent human rights concerns around disarmament operations:***

Whereas it is generally acceptable by both women and men that removal of arms and stopping arms inflows to the cluster is a bedrock for security to prevail in the cluster, regrettably despite experience of the previous disarmament, the current disarmament operations have been reported to be marred with gross human rights concerns<sup>137</sup>. This signifies the lack of commitment to address the conflict legacies which is a jeopardy to the arms control intentions and aspirations of stakeholders. Both the leaders (formal and informal) and community members (women and men) claimed that *“when there is an operation, the enforcement officers loot so many things, including saving boxes suspecting that they have bullets inside”*<sup>138</sup>. In Urum, a Turkana warrior narrated that *“most times, cows are equally impounded and on recovery many healthy cows are reportedly lost in the barracks”*<sup>139</sup>. While Lokor in Loyoro, Kaabong noted that *“once a suspected person is arrested, he is beaten and compelled to lie about another being in possession of a gun in the hope that he would escape beating”*<sup>140</sup>. During the field study it was common to note that beating of arrested men and male youth is increasing false and counter accusations, thus increasing animosity among community members affecting both women, men, youth (male and female). These human rights abuses fortify the already existing conflict grievances which lead to violent conflict cycles.

**vi) *Maximizing land use for pastoral and agro-pastoral livelihoods enhancement as a precursor for peace and security:***

Karamoja has fertile green belts but cannot optimally be used by agro-pastoral communities along the borderline areas to enhance food security without tools (oxen and ploughs) which have been lost to conflicts and animal diseases. Whilst Karamoja cluster remains predominantly a pastoral society,

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136 Interview with local security leader

137 See 83 cases of human rights violations registered against security forces in Karamoja. Accessed from [<https://www.independent.co.ug/83-cases-of-human-rights-violations-registered-against-security-forces-in-karamoja/>]

138 Interviews with a local councillor in Matheniko.

139 FGD with mixed group in Orum, Kenya

140 FGD in Loyoro, Kaabong



sustainable agro-pastoralism could provide space for women and youths' empowerment, building on their traditional gender roles of planning for household food security. Consultations with women and men directly linked current poverty and GBV to inability to utilize land for agro pastoralism as core issues. The study concludes that food insecurity is both an impact and trigger for conflicts as many young people asserted that *"it is better to die hustling than starve to death"<sup>141</sup>*. Consequently, for livelihoods of cross-border communities to be revitalized and their socio-economic empowerment realized, enhancing access to production tools is paramount.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

The study concludes that cross-border conflicts within the Karamoja cluster are primarily caused by culture of cattle rustling and competition for scarce natural resources underpinned by the emergence of patronage and conflict profiteering systems, reinforced by climate change/environmental stressors. Furthermore, well-founded perceptions of government neglect and socio-economic exclusion constitute powerful conflict grievances in cross border conflict cycle, as they compound conflict drivers'/trigger events of significance such as high poverty levels, high youth unemployment, shrinking space for pastoral livelihood system, substance abuse/alcoholism, and small arms proliferation/disarmament inadequacies. Substantial factors determining the incidence and severity of conflicts in the Karamoja cluster with high level of influence on cross border conflict transformation

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<sup>141</sup> Interview with an armed warrior in Kaileng, Kotido

are the degree of conflict impacts/legacies and resilience capacity of affected cross border communities.

Therefore, this report, recommends the following broad strategies for action by governments and UNDP in a bid to foster peace, security, and development in Karamoja cluster.

**1. *Support adoption of gender transformative approaches in peace and development programing***

Karamoja cluster has observed significant changes in traditional actor roles in conflict and peace triggered by socio-economic and political changes. Markedly, the positive traditional gender roles which have powerful implications for peace and security in cross border areas is now more evident. The tradition of women being perceived as passive actors is changing to ‘a more trusted conveners and peace agents’ since they possess undeniable emotional and experiential attributes useful for shaping attitudes toward violent conflicts more than their male counter parts. Whilst women’s and youth diverse experiences in times of conflict have potent inferences for post conflict recovery and peacebuilding, their recognition as change-makers and knowledge-holders rather than merely passive recipients of assistance and/or disarmament incentives rarely matches the rhetoric in most sustainable peace and development efforts by state and non-state actors in Karamoja cluster.

Given the shifting gender norms in cross border conflict affected contexts, this analysis recommends integration of the gender action and learning (GALs) model in resource management and socio-economic revitalization as a significant possibility for fostering mind transformation for sustainable peace and security since it serves to inculcate a culture for co-existence, equitable and accountable resource sharing in transhumance areas while linking to fulfilment of fundamental human rights. The conflict transformation conversations, stress/trauma healing sessions and soft life skills development will fortify the positive perception/attitudes of human identity and intercommunity cross border co-existence. Besides, development action should prioritize intentional dialogue with traditional male-dominated power structures using male engagement approach to transform ideals of patriarchy and masculinity that perpetuate violence and sustain gender stereotypes that nurture the culture of conflict as mechanisms for addressing household/community economic hardships/pressures.

**2. *Promote inclusive development and management of shared community resources along the borderlines:***

Even though there are community resources that serve as connectors for the cross-border communities, their socio-economic viability is rapidly diminishing due to climate change/environmental risks and security risks. An example is the Kobebe Dam in Moroto which was dubbed the largest livestock water dam has drastically decreased in size and water volume. Therefore, as part of climate change adaptation and livelihoods development strategies for Karamoja cluster, development of transboundary shared resources like water infrastructure, pasture lands, migration corridors or grazing reserves and veterinary animal health checkpoints at the mapped transhumance border points that have manifold legatees is crucial and can substantially help prevent transhumance from becoming a source of confrontation and conflict as it fosters communication. It also serves as break-even points for broad cooperation and interaction among conflicting communities which is a precursor for building relationship that can help to defuse potentially tense counter attacks or conflict situations. Consultation with women and youth asserted that “*peace is when animals graze together and marketed together*”<sup>142</sup>.

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<sup>142</sup> FGD with mixed groups of women and men in Orum, Lorugum, Lorengkipi

The following places were identified as ideal for shared water and grazing points:

Country	Location	Resource	Cluster groups sharing
Uganda	Nalapatui and Kalapata (Kaabong) Kaalale (Kaabong/Kotido) Loroo and Karita (Amudat) Nakiloro/Nakabaat (Moroto)	Livestock Market	Dodoth, Jie, Turkana and Pokot
Kenya	Lokiriama, Oropoi, Nakitongo, Lorengkipi Kainuk and Kapedo (Turkana) Makutano, Alale, Masol (West Pokot)	Livestock Market	Karimojong, Turkana and Pokot.

**Table 5.** *Karamoja Cluster shared water and grazing points identified*

Pastoral communities continue to have their own customary management regimes about natural resources – these regimes control both intra- and inter-community access to resources. Over the years, the peace accords generated through customary processes have proved effective in fostering peaceful resource sharing between cross border communities although the recent Ugandan government action is perceived to strain or obliterate customary management regimes and may jeopardize established resource sharing relationships. For example, the Lokiriama peace<sup>143</sup> accord signed 49 years ago by the Matheniko, and Turkana communities is still effective. Therefore, nurturing organically emerging community led customary resource management regimes instead of investing enormous resources on elite-driven initiatives are core to long-term sustainable peace in the cluster.

Furthermore, investment in gendered environmental peacebuilding will offer new ways of harnessing shared scarce resources and mechanisms of bringing cross-border communities together. The untapped potential in peacebuilding efforts to contribute to reducing the negative effects of climate change in ways that strengthen conflict sensitivity needs to be explored through broad involvement of women and men affected by climate change and biodiversity loss as agents of change.

### ***3. Promote pastoralism livelihood systems growth through adoption of conflict sensitive and inclusive development policies***

<sup>143</sup> The peace accord requires that Turkana from Kenya seek permission in advance from Matheniko leaders on the Ugandan side to bring their animals into Matheniko land to graze during the dry season

Governments should urgently prioritize building a livestock industry that can withstand environmental shocks and animal pandemics as part of the broader climate change adaptation strategies for strengthening pastoral communities' resilience to climate change risks. This may include basic investments in animal health services, early warning systems, and market integration to build resilience against shocks in a more proactive way as opposed to the current reactive service delivery response (quarantines). Low cost and effective veterinary care services through Community Animal Health Workers (CAHW) and Community

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*In Uganda, livestock contributed about 4% to total GDP and 16% to the agricultural sector's GDP in 2019/20, while in Kenya it contributed to 12% to total national GDP and 42 percent to agricultural and 16 percent to the agricultural sector's GDP.*

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Disease Reporters (CDRs) who can reach remote pastoral areas, can curtail the current rapid loss of young livestock following disease outbreaks. Opening cross border markets like Kaalale, Nalapatui, Lokiriama, Loroo, Kalapata, Makutano, Kainuk and Kapedo. In Turkana one such market has been constructed by NDMA/EU in Kainuk.

Whilst the social and economic value of pastoralism as a regional linkage for Karamoja cluster is already enshrined in various multilateral declarations and frameworks like the African Union Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa (2010) and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) protocol on transhumance (2020), these arrangements do not seem to practically guarantee the free movement and protection of livestock, due to their lack of local socialization and operationalization. Therefore, it is vital for governments and development partners to support efforts leading to reforming and operationalizing legal frameworks on pastoralism and land tenure so that the legitimacy of pastoral livelihood system is recognized and protected. These instruments will also enhance protection of cross border communities' access to shared grazing land and water resources as the perceived risk of being dispossessed by state agents and or political/economic elites would have been averted with enhanced understanding of their legal rights and responsibilities in inclusive development of transhumance areas. For example, Kobebe Man-made Lake is greatly perceived by the cross-border communities as a key factor to resolving the cross-border conflict. The government of Uganda and Kenya are implored to make the contents of Kobebe peace & development Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) known to development actors and communities for effective transboundary collaboration between the peace & development actors. Governments should fast track this MoU to ensure it is operationalized and commitments are fulfilled.

In addition, support for flexible pastoralism adaptations to climate change realities while minimizing potential triggers for conflict through promotion of complementarity between pastoralism and conservation efforts is key. Essentially for protected/game reserve areas overlapping with traditional livestock grazing corridors or migration routes, adoption of participatory management models like cooperative practices with conservationist institutions like UWA is encouraged rather than ring fencing which triggers conflicts. A comprehensive extension network must integrate cross border youth and women in decision-making roles and pay attention to cultural and agro-ecological conditions. Regional/local governments should be supported to incorporate an analysis of ecological extreme events into development planning to better anticipate emerging risks and vulnerabilities agro-pastoral and pastoral systems to assess the likelihood of resource induced conflict in Karamoja cluster and enhance preparedness to prevent violent conflicts.

#### *4. Support capacity strengthening of existing and emerging local peace and development mechanisms in cross border areas*

Although government systems and CSOs peace advocates have most times undermined the important roles and position of the council of elders, they remain the most reliable informal indigenous structure for peace and security in the cluster. More so, the credibility and influence of some traditional leaders has been compromised by political partisanship, patronage, survival-for-the-fittest seeking behaviors, or co-option by national/local elites hence upsetting the enforcement of the existing peace accords. Notwithstanding these concerns, the study found that these structure remains the most informal recognized and trusted early warning systems given their highly secure consciousness with great potential to promote peace and recovery along the borderlines. It was reported that “*even with presence of guns, these elders can still navigate to recover stolen animals and resolve the conflict without causing further harm to the aggrieved communities<sup>144</sup>*”. Additionally, facilitating the safe and legal movement of livestock as provided for by the transhumance regional frameworks requires a regional security architecture (cross border policing) that engages the community leaders who have long played a leading role in negotiating livestock migrations, mediating conflicts, and protecting livestock against raids/theft.

The following points were identified during the FGD with respondents as bandit/raiders crossing points that require joint security presence and patrols:

- i. Loyoro-Losilang
- ii. Nakiloro-Nakabaat-Lokiriama
- iii. Kosiroi-Alale-Lorengkipi-Naoyapong
- iv. Urum-Kobebe
- v. Nakitongo-Kaileng
- vi. Kamion-Tultul-Nalapatui- Nawountos
- vii. Kiwawa-Natemer
- viii. Alale-Lopuke
- ix. Lomelo-Kanyeris -Turkwel
- x. Marispas-Kainuk
- xi. Kapedo-Tiati - Lokwamosing

Therefore, capacity strengthening of the council of elders, clan leaders, local political leaders, women leaders, and religious leaders in peace building and conflict resolution through tailored transformative learning programs will augment local conflict resolution mechanisms and processes that can help communities to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts in a productive, peaceful, and just manner. In addition, supporting the review of the existing peace accords like the Nabilatuk and Moruit resolution (considering current conflict trends as it is still highly regarded by some border communities), has potential to further influence peaceful relationships in cross border communities if adapted well through the low-financed community led inclusive processes.

The capacity of community-based peace and security actors to anticipate and respond to natural resource-related tensions and livestock crimes before they break down into violent cross-border conflicts needs reinforcement. Since there is undeniable intuitive links between environment shocks/climate related risks and recurrent cross-border conflict legacies, securing future ecological sustainability and restoration in a manner that is inclusive and sensitive to the needs and interests of cross-border communities and strengthens pastoralism livelihoods is crucial. Therefore, capacity

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144 FGD with LOKADO

development of council of elders (women inclusive) for harnessing the traditional forecasts of climate change trends as a risk multiplier for violent conflict should trigger early preventative action for potential conflicts. The existing community peace structures are underscored to be a reliable link between government and communities; thus, it will be imperative for UNDP and its partners to support revitalization of these structures in all border districts.

***5. Investment in rural infrastructure development like roads and telecommunication for peace and security in cross border hot spot areas***

Conflicts of cross-border nature are usually highly local but with regional outlook and consequences. Therefore, poor road infrastructure in remote cross border hot spot areas and wide geographical stretch of conflict/peace corridors hampers the quick and joint response capabilities of the UPDF and KDF to intercept cross border intrusions and raiders before crossing territorial boundaries. Besides, security operatives are often territorially limited hence cannot easily operate beyond certain points to intercept rustlers and recover raided animals. Worse still, coordination of early warning mechanisms is curtailed by communication challenges which render local/county governments, security agencies and civilian peace actors unreachable and unresponsive when needed because hot spots generally lack telecommunication services to support regional security surveillance.

Based on the FGD, local leaders and communities recommended the following peace road connection points and water dam for livestock as shown in the map: Kamion-Oropoi, Nakitongo-Kaileng, Lokiriama -Nakabaat, Karita-Asilong, and Kwen-Alakas- Makutanu.



***Map 5. Karamoja cluster proposed infrastructure network***

Therefore, intentional investment in rural infrastructure development like roads and telecommunication connecting cross border hot spot areas will significantly foster peace, security and inclusive development as it catalyzes trade as well as cooperation and coordination among actors and local/county governments in their efforts to effectively respond to threats, potential or actual cross border conflicts as they share real time information on conflict trends, resolve conflicts, and coordinate with security forces in their respective localities. More so, uncertainty of border closures due to human and animal pandemics increases the urgency of improving infrastructure for coordination.

***6. Strengthening the local governance, peace, and security systems for pursuance of human rights principles in peace and development initiatives***

Uganda and Kenya governments have passed national legislation that nominally increase the authority of local governance systems, which may help restore the ability of community leaders to manage conflicts effectively. However, as noted, cross border conflicts are a result of bad or poor governance systems portrayed as non-responsiveness from civic leaders mandated to mediate disputes over resource access and protect against banditry or ensure that pastoral communities are not dispossessed by development initiatives is apparent. Growing evidence from past and ongoing conflict management initiatives demonstrates that multi-stakeholder approach - pulling all actors to work together is a cutting –edge strategy with great potential to increase opportunities for honest, accountable, and inclusive dialogue on peace and security initiatives like disarmament incentives. Particularly, it is imperative to build the leadership capacity of local leaders through tailored conflict sensitive leadership and governance learning programs targeting especially the formal and informal leadership structures. Notably, strengthening local governance will address the perceived political nature of ineffective and unfair service delivery without discounting its ability to unlock the socio-economic opportunities that provides services equitably and justly. This will open quick inroads to achieving peace and development aspirations in terms of good governance and human rights fulfilment.

Furthermore, to curtail the displeasure, mistrust, and inconsistency in accountability mechanisms between security operatives and local communities, transfer of long serving security officers should be considered urgently. Significant to note, the local community negative attitude towards disarmament efforts is a reaction to the adopted cordon and search approach which is perceived to currently violate human rights hence deepening grievances which jeopardizes the disarmament processes. Moreover, delay in response to human rights violations including sexual gender-based violence puts an end to the peaceful conflict resolution. Therefore, scaling up training for local governments and security/enforcement authorities on human rights-based approach will consequently improve their work approach which is a precursor for nurturing mutual accountable relationships for peace, security, and development of cross-border areas. This will also reduce counter accusations for conflict and human violations including unfair evictions of transhumance pastoralists.

#### *7. Stimulate regional collaboration in arms inflow/outflow control in cross border contexts*

The ongoing disarmament policies and practices in Karamoja cluster is perceived to continue creating a power imbalance between cross border communities in Uganda and Kenya. Consequently, the peace actors regard disarmament as “Panadol” rather than a lasting solution since it declines the authority of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms without a corresponding increase in influence of formal governance institutions thus rendering the cluster a perpetual hub of gun violence. To avert this trend, regional collaboration should be the driving spirit of arms inflow/outflow control in cross border contexts. This will provide a greater stance for diversity of voices from across geographies and cross generations thus promoting intersectionality for peace coherence and development. In this regard, intentional and focused dialogues with kraal leaders and youth groups is urgently required alongside advocacy for operationalization of robust and binding regional peace frameworks to hold states and actors’ accountable for arms control.

#### *8. Governments should extend the gender responsive effective service delivery to borderline communities:*

Fostering equitable and effective gender service delivery is extremely vital for promoting sustainable relationships and peace in cross border communities and will remove barriers that cross border communities face in navigating complex socio-economic development systems that influence their resilience capacities to conflict and livelihood shocks. It will also enhance state and cross border community relationships which have over the years been eroded due to historical neglect, injustices,



and conflict legacies. The core services that should be prioritized for peace and development in cross border areas are health, education, and water. Governments should consider affirmative action for promotion of peace boarding schools and peace health centers within the cross-border areas with adequate funding and staffing. Significantly, support to wider and deeper participatory planning processes in cross border areas is key to nurture accountable and effective service delivery which guarantees peace and security now and future as it dismantles the notion of deliberate neglect by government authorities.

The governments should strengthen access to justice for the majority of Karamoja cluster. This should involve addressing structural obstacles to justice access for cross border communities such as mobility to courts, witness protection, accountability, and feedback mechanism of the judicial processes. Cognizant that unresolved past conflict grievances and impacts, have a bearing on current and or future conflict situations in cross border areas, transitional justice remains indispensable to recovery from and resilience of communities in conflict. Besides, upholding transitional justice in Karamoja will offer auspicious opportunities for conflicting cross border communities to have conversation on conflict legacies and grievances which cause horrific cycles of violent conflicts. Therefore, governments and UNDP are implored to bolster the enactment of regional/national transitional justice laws and policies as guarantees for non-recurrence of cross border conflict among transhumance communities as it enhances accountability and redress for injustices.

#### *9. Develop well-designed, contextualized, and focused youth and women empowerment programs for cross border communities*

Integrating “empowerment” in the cross-border peace and conflict agenda will help address the surging youth burden that provokes destructive cattle theft and revenge violent cattle raids. Enhancement of livelihoods options through skilling of youth and women in viable business skills is key as it will distract them from violent conflicts induced by poverty. It will also transform them into a positive force or opportunity which increases chances for peace and stability in the region. At societal level, the development initiatives on the local economy should demonstrate geographic and sectoral diversity while seeking to constructively engage young people and women in cross border social enterprises which have potential to increase financial capabilities while reviving the social-cultural networks with a high premium on cross border peace. More so, the communal pastoral character of the cluster should be harnessed and developed into dynamic livelihoods cooperative society arrangements made of, owned, and managed by young people (male and female). This will give the young people a real stake in the new money economy thus controlling emergent commercialized conflicts as they become assimilated as strong connectors and agents of sustainable intercommunity co-existence.

To fully reintegrate the youth in peace building and disarmament agenda, provision of peace dividends targeting at least 100 youth per parish and compensation to peace actors who sustained injuries/died in pursuance of peace during disarmament processes should be undertaken. The type of peace dividends should be focused on the strategic needs as identified by the targeted youth rather than generalized top-down response. The existing economic empowerment programs like the Uganda parish development model should be intently considered considering the conflict and peace dynamics of Karamoja cluster.

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