

Conflict dynamics in Isiolo, Samburu East and Marsabit South Districts of Kenya

1.0 Introduction

Following the escalation of conflicts in Isiolo, Samburu and Laisamis (the so called Isiolo triangle) during 2009, the Conflict Analysis Committee/group (CAG), a sub-committee of the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict management (NSC) constituted and commissioned a team drawn from four member organizations to conduct a detailed analysis of the conflict in Isiolo triangle. The team was to analyse the conflict, document the findings and make recommendations to the NSC regarding appropriate interventions needed to mitigate the effects of this conflict.

The team visited various locations in the three districts including but not limited to Isiolo town, Gotu, Merti (all in Isiolo North District), Archers Post, Serolipi, Wamba (all in Samburu East District), Merille and Laisamis (all in Laisamis district). The team had discussions, interviews and focused group discussions with various stakeholders including Provincial Administration officers (DCs, Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs), District Peace Committee (DPC) members, Community Policing Committee members, religious leaders, CSOs representatives, elders, youth, women and politicians (mainly a councillor and a former Member of Parliament for Samburu East constituency).

While assessing the conflicts and its dynamics in the three districts, the team was able to identify three sub-sets of conflict dynamics (sub-systems). These are Isiolo district internal conflict, Isiolo Samburu East districts conflict and Isiolo Laisamis conflict sub-systems. In all these conflict sub-systems, Isiolo district seemed to be the convergent point of these conflicts, with at times raiders from Samburu East and Laisamis districts teaming up (forming an alliance of convenience) to raid Isiolo district with Borana community being the hardest hit (they also revenge although in less equal times).

Cattle rustling, road banditry and border/grazing disputes are the main manifestation of the conflicts. However, these conflicts have not only been greatly politicized but also and ethnicized in the process changing the whole dynamic of the conflict to be more political than the traditional resource based jostling. This was very much evident in the conflict within Isiolo district (intensified after 2007 General elections when a large section of Samburu community in the district teamed up with the Turkana to support a parliamentary candidate who battled it out with candidates from Borana community). The coalition wrangles at the top (PNU/ODM rivalries) was also devolved to the grassroots as evident in the conflict between Isiolo district (perceived as PNU) and Samburu East (perceived as ODM stronghold). Easy availability of illicit arms (including those provided by the government), drought, the culture of moranism and misunderstood functions of the various conservancies (under the umbrella of Northern Rangeland Trust) have all conspired to trigger and escalate conflicts in the three districts.

The assessment recommends that there is a critical need to organize a rapid response and dialogue specifically targeting morans in the three districts, support peace dialogues in the region, strengthen DPCs, address the issue of illicit arms, raise awareness on the activities of NRT and promote long term development initiatives in the region especially investing in education.

Table of Contents

<u>2.0</u>	<u>CONFLICT SYSTEMS IN ISIOLO, SAMBURU EAST AND LAISAMIS DISTRICTS</u>	<u>3</u>
2.1	GREATER ISIOLO DISTRICT INTERNAL CONFLICT	3
2.1.1	The conflict previewed in recent historical perspective	3
2.1.2	The current conflict system and dynamics	3
2.1.3	Leading causes and triggers of the current conflict	4
	Politics	4
	Culture/tradition	5
	Small Arms and Light Weapons	5
	Scarce grazing resources	5
	Fencing of grazing areas	6
2.1.4	Key actors	6
	Morans	7
<u>3.0</u>	<u>ISIOLO, SAMBURU EAST DISTRICTS CONFLICT SUB-SYSTEM</u>	<u>7</u>
3.1	The Current Conflict dynamics	7
3.2	Key issues precipitating the conflict	8
	Climate change and drought	8
	Culture	8
	Misunderstanding of the role and functions of conservancies (NRT)	8
	Proliferation of small arms	9
	Politics/alliances	9
	The Pokot question	9
<u>4.0</u>	<u>ISIOLO VS LAISAMIS CONFLICT DYNAMICS</u>	<u>10</u>
<u>5.0</u>	<u>ON-GOING PEACE INTERVENTIONS AND GAPS IN AND BETWEEN ISIOLO, SAMBURU EAST AND LAISAMIS DISTRICTS</u>	<u>10</u>
5.1	Intervention by respective communities and corresponding gaps.	10
5.2	The Role of DPCs, NGOs, CSOs and NSC.	11
	District Peace Committees	11
	Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations.	11
	NSC (the Secretariat) and Government (Provincial Administration)	11
	Other actors	12
<u>6.0</u>	<u>RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD</u>	<u>13</u>
6.1.	Supporting strategic peace dialogues and rapid response activities	13
6.2	Rapid Response dialogue targeting morans in the three districts.	13
6.3	Isiolo district internal peace dialogue	14

2.0 CONFLICT SYSTEMS IN ISIOLO, SAMBURU EAST AND LAISAMIS DISTRICTS

2.1 GREATER ISIOLO DISTRICT INTERNAL CONFLICT

2.1.1 The conflict previewed in recent historical perspective

For a long time, the greater Isiolo district has been embroiled in a series of violent conflicts pitting the different ethnic groups in the district against each other. The conflicts that gripped the district, as well as adjacent districts, between the years 1999 – 2001 were perhaps the most violent in which a number of lives were lost, property looted or destroyed and thousands of people internally displaced. This was the period Kenya was facing unprecedented pressure to open up democratic space by allowing multi-party democracy.

To resist the pressures, the KANU government, assisted by traditional “ethnic kingpins/warlords” clandestinely organized, sponsored or encouraged ethnic clashes where communities that were perceived to be leaning towards the emerging opposition movements and political parties were being targeted. This was mainly to coerce them into supporting the status quo or disenfranchising them altogether. Isiolo district was one of the areas that was affected by ethnic clashes associated with politics notwithstanding the fact that the district was already mired in resource based conflicts with pastoralists groups bearing the brunt of the conflicts.

This conflict was solved (managed) after a number of actors, including civil society and communities themselves intervened resulting to a semblance of peace, albeit punctuated by a number of sporadic conflict incidences. For a while, and especially after year 2002, people were happy that for the first time, Isiolo was one of the relatively peaceful districts in Kenya. Little did they know that the ghosts of ethnic conflicts will resurface gain to ruin the peaceful atmosphere they were enjoying.

2.1.2 The current conflict system and dynamics

As previewed above, after the year 2002, pastoralists' communities in Isiolo district continued, albeit at a manageable level, with their traditional cattle rustling vices and jostling, sometimes violently, over the dwindling grazing resources. The few farmers in the district were also caught in this circle of conflict. People thought this was normal cattle rustling conflicts

compounded by “livestock complex” syndrome, which is synonymous with pastoralists' communities in the Horn of Africa region.

However, immediately after the hotly contested (and disputed) general election of 2007, a pattern of violent and deadly conflict system started to develop in Isiolo district. According to almost all the people interviewed, there was a consensus to the effect that the unfolding conflict was political and therefore had little to do with scarce resources including disputed grazing borders.

Indeed, the 2007 General Elections saw a parliamentary candidate from Turkana community contest the Isiolo North constituency seat that had been traditionally held by Borana community. The Turkana candidate lost the election by a few thousands votes sending political shock-waves in the single-constituency district. As the Borana community was still absorbing the possibility that they could have as well lost “their” parliamentary seat, an upsurge of conflicts, mainly manifested by cattle rustling, was being witnessed in the district.

The team established that during the elections, the candidate from Turkana community was supported by a large chunk of members of Samburu communities living in Isiolo district. To thwart this emerging alliance, the Somali community (mainly Ajuran, Degodia and Garre) living in Isiolo North constituency teamed up with Boranas in supporting and voting for the current Member of Parliament.

The emerging scenario was clear, that alliances were being developed. This was confirmed by the increasing incidences of conflict pitting the Samburu Turkana alliance against that of Borana and Somalis with Meru, another sizeable ethnic group in the constituency leaning towards the Borana Somali alliance and with end result being “punished”, by the Samburu Turkana alliance. Samburus from Samburu East as well as Rendilles from Merille division of Laisamis district were also said to be backing the Turkana Samburu alliance in Isiolo North District.

No credible evidence has been adduced as to why the alliances took shapes as described above but one school of thought alleges that cultural and religious factors could have played a greater role. Samburus and Turkanas are nilotes and believed to originate from the same family tree. They are also Christians and traditionalists whereas the Borana and Somalis are of Cushitic origin and mainly Muslims (although there are many Boranas who are Christians). Garre, a section/clan of the Somalis speak Borana language further strengthening the ties between the two communities.

In this regards, the current conflict in Isiolo district is essentially political but camouflaging itself as

cattle rustling and resource-based. Perhaps this is a perspective of the current conflict that has not been thoroughly investigated. This is perhaps why if we continue describing the conflict as resource based and traditional cattle rustling, we continue missing the point and in the process designing inappropriate interventions.

Other forms of conflicts in the district include increasing number of cattle thefts, revenge missions, pastoralists' farmers' conflicts and road banditry activities. In all these conflicts, it would be fair to observe that the Boranas have been the hardest hit, losing a number of livestock and lives. This is a situation that is buttressed by the CEWARN conflict reports, media coverage and many Isiolo residents, including Samburus and Turkana themselves. This is not to say that the Borana do not attack the Samburu and Turkana but there is a general consensus to the effect that the Samburu (with covert and tacit support from the Turkana) could attack the Boranas severally before striking back and "big".

The areas in Isiolo that are most affected by the conflict include but not limited to Mulango, Kubufoni, Leparua, Oldonyiro, Merti, East and Central divisions.

2.1.3 Leading causes and triggers of the current conflict

A combination of factors has conspired to cause, trigger and fuel conflicts within Isiolo District. Although it's difficult to figure which one single factor bears the greatest responsibility for fueling the seemingly unending conflict, the following key issues could be considered as the key drivers and triggers of conflict in Isiolo.

□ Politics

As alluded to in the preceding section of this report, there seems to be a near universal consensus that the current conflict in Isiolo district has been fuelled by politics especially the events leading to and after the 2007 General Elections. This election created divisions in the district with Borana Somalia and Meru forming one voting bloc against the Turkana Samburu camp. Although the Boranas had more than one parliamentary candidate during the elections, a significant percentage of the Samburus residing in Isiolo district voted for the parliamentary candidate who happened to be a Turkana.

According to the Turkana Samburu camp, there are observations that at some point they will successfully unseat the Boranas (Isiolo North) from

parliament. Given this observation, the Boranas who are the majority in the District, have started campaigns to flush them out of the Isiolo North constituency so that come 2012, they will not have any significant challenge from a candidate fielded by the Turkana Samburu political bloc.

On the other hand, the Borana claims that the Turkana and Samburu are mobilizing their kinsmen from other districts to boost their numerical strength come 2012 (voter importation). For instance the current trend of immigration to Isiolo district by Samburus and Rendilles from Samburu East and Laisamis districts is not only viewed as search of water and greener pastures for their livestock but also a systemic process of importing voters. According to Boranas, these migrant herders should be flushed out of the district or conditions outlining how they will return once situation improves in their areas be clearly spelt out. It is such kind of suspicions and misinformation that continue to trigger the conflicts in Isiolo. The fact that the Borana Somalia bloc voted for a PNU candidate with the Turkana Samburu group voting for ODM candidate is not helping matters either.

"It's now like we have two governments in Kenya and that's why whenever one side of the government calls for a military operation to recover and return stolen livestock the other side of government comes to stop that operation", lamented an elder in Gotu location of Isiolo North District.

The elder was referring to the recent military (security forces) operation that had been launched in Isiolo and Samburu East districts only for it to be called off after the Prime Minister raised concerns on the manner at which the operation was being conducted while on a visit in Samburu. The fact that the announcement to stop the security operation was made in Samburu, which is believed to be an ODM stronghold convinced the Boranas that high stakes (and political for that matter) are involved in this conflict.

The team noted that adjacent constituencies dominated by Samburus and Rendilles also voted for ODM candidates, which again further complicates the conflict situation and in the process replaying and devolving the coalition government wrangles, with innocent citizens paying the prize. According to majority of people interviewed, politics take the central point in contributing to the escalation of conflicts in Isiolo district. Therefore, it would be an effort in futility any attempt to address this conflict without conclusively dealing with the political angle.

□ Culture/tradition

Another factor that has conspired with politics, easy availability of small arms and traditional conflicts over grazing resources to escalate and intensify conflicts in Isiolo district include some of the cultural practices, traditions and rites of passage especially those practiced by the Samburu community. The whole issue of “moranism” amongst the Samburu community is well known and documented but what needs to be voiced is the idea that by comparison, the Boranas and Somalis in Isiolo district seems to be devoid of standing militias in the name of morans. After initiation rites, the morans are supposed to spend more than ten years in the “bush” mending for themselves. During this period, these morans could be considered a standing army ready to defend the community as well as attack other communities in order to raise livestock and convince the community that they are now ready to defend them and cater for their families.

As is detailed in the conflicts between Isiolo and Samburu East and Laisamis districts in the following “conflict systems”, this cultural practice continues to stink peace efforts in the region and a conclusive, although it requires a long time to change culture, solution to it must be found, including supporting rapid response activities targeting this sector of society. Long term interventions such as education will eventually weed out this cultural practice that has been known to promote conflicts in Isiolo district.

□ Small Arms and Light Weapons

As widely known, Isiolo district is awash with illicit small arms and light weapons. These illicit weapons have continued to increase the intensity and severity of conflict as evidenced by high rate of fatalities and the number of livestock rustled. However and to exacerbate an already volatile situation, the decision by the government to supply 300 guns to Isiolo residents in the pretext of bolstering the strength of homeguards (Kenya Police Reservists aka KPR) in order to enable them to defend the Isiolo communities against attacks from neighbouring districts has made things worse. The way the 300 guns were distributed has also raised eyebrows in the district with the Turkana and Samburus claiming that many of the guns were given to Boranas.

Again and revisiting the political wrangles, the Samburus and Turkanas are of the opinion that maybe the PNU side of government, with lobbying from the Isiolo North MP and Minister for Livestock Development, have resorted to arming “its” supporters in order to punish the ODM sympathizers. Although this could not be independently verified, these are some of the issues that are causing great discomfort on the part of Samburus and Turkanas residing in Isiolo district.

Although the whole debate of disarmament is hot and needs to be approached with sober minds, all the residents in Isiolo district opine that the day these illicit arms will be removed from civilian hands is the day peace will be realized.

□ Scarce grazing resources

As is widely known, Isiolo district is predominantly occupied with pastoralists’ and agro-pastoralists communities. This kind of lifestyle, as in other pastoralists’ areas, is prone to conflict over access and control of dwindling grazing resources. The current drought has not helped matters either forcing people to migrate with their livestock towards Meru North District.

Isiolo is also relatively blessed with some pasture and water resources if compared with the adjacent Laisamis and Samburu East districts meaning that during the dry spell as the situation is currently, the district will receive visitors who normally compete with the residents for the few grazing resources. This has been a known cause of friction in the district but what angers most of the people of Isiolo district is that these visitors do not follow laid-down procedures and agreements concerning sharing of grazing resources. According to Modogashe, Garissa and Laikipia declarations, those seeking grazing resources in adjacent districts should first notify elders, District Peace Committee (DPC) members and authorities on their intention before moving in. To their dismay, the Rendilles and Samburus from Laisamis and Samburu East districts have migrated with their livestock to Isiolo district without informing anybody. So whenever the visitors are confronted regarding as to why they have not sought permission to graze in Isiolo district, they resort to force and violence leading to unending circle of conflict.

in “manyattas” occupied by Borana, Turkana and Samburu communities.

□ Fencing of grazing areas

Closely related to drought and attendant resource based conflict is the emerging issue of fencing of grazing areas especially in Turkana inhabited areas in Isiolo district. The Boranas allege that the Turkana have fenced large tracks of land and in the process inhibited the free movement of livestock. They also claim that the fenced areas have prevented their livestock from accessing pasture because the Turkana consider the fenced area as part of their “land” hence trespassers are not allowed.

However, the Turkana community, through their elders and leadership, refute these accusations. According to them, they have only fenced their “compounds” where weak livestock graze. According to them, the biggest fenced area is the size of a football field so it’s just normal fencing for homes. However and what angers them is the practice of the Boranas of forcefully driving the livestock into the private fenced area leading to conflict.

The team, due to time constraints, was not able to visit the fenced area to authenticate the raised claims. Nevertheless, the Isiolo North District Commissioner (DC) alluded that indeed fencing is a major problem in the district in which they are currently addressing. At one point, the government ordered that all fences be removed in the district to allow free movement of livestock especially during this dry spell further confirming that this is indeed a big issue causing conflict that needs to be addressed.

Suspicion that Turkanas and Samburus in Isiolo district provide safe passage to raiders from Samburu East and Laisamis districts

In addition to the political alliances taking shape in the district as highlighted above, there is suspicion, on the part of Boranas, that the Samburus and Turkanas collude with their kins in Samburu East (and also Laisamis) districts to raid them. To corroborate their allegations, they pointed to various incidences where their cattle have been singled out

“How comes that our cattle are the ones raided when we are in the same grazing camp with our brothers the Samburus and Turkanas. It seems that some of us are facilitating the safe passage of raiders and informing them that these cattle belongs to Borana and these others are ours”, said the Chairman of Central Division Peace Committee of Isiolo district. Those present in the focused group discussion were quip to support him claiming that this is an inside job.

2.1.4 Key actors

According to all the people interviewed, there is a near consensus that the following are the actors who bear the greatest responsibility in as far as this conflict in Isiolo, as well as the conflict with adjacent district, is concerned.

Politicians

If the current conflict is anything to go by, then there is no doubt that politicians of all rank and file could be deeply involved in the conflict. All the camps are doing their best, including incitements and supporting conflicts, to ensure that come 2012, they will have an upper hand in the elections. In terms of interventions, this is a group of actors that must be targeted. It is in record that conflict incidences in Isiolo district escalated in 2008 after the elections inferring that the politicians must have played a greater role in precipitating the conflict.

The chiefs and their assistants, as well as some members of DPCS, are increasingly siding with “their” communities at the expense of impartiality and objectivity. From the way they talk and defend their communities, one can easily tell that they are likely to amplify the conflict rather than help in preventing or resolving it. It was alleged that some members, including chairmen, of the DPCs in Isiolo district are becoming point-men of the MPs (Isiolo North and Isiolo South) in the process casting doubt on their ability to arbitrate conflicts.

There were also allegations by the Turkana and Samburu that the leadership of Borana community has been facilitating fundraising efforts to raise resources needed in fighting with cattle rustlers from neighboring districts. Asked about the same, the DPC members could not deny or accept the allegations meaning that there is possibility that fundraisings for war have been ongoing and if this

is the case, there is no way that the political class, local administration and government intelligence agencies could be absolved of this. Maybe, they are also key actors in the conflict.

□ **Morans**

The morans, the so called standing army of the Samburu and Rendille from the adjacent Laisamis district, including the traditional elders who support cultures that encourage people to engage in cattle rustling and related conflicts in order to acquire a form of identity and prove that they are now “men” cap-able of defending the communities, are perhaps the real actors and perpetrators of the conflict. The Boranas and Somalis in Isiolo district seem to lack this segment of warriors/fighters and that’s why they are overwhelmed. The fear is that if the conflict continues and Boranas continue to be the main victims, the possibility of them outsourcing militias (including the remnants of Oromo Liberation Front – OLF fighters) is increasingly becoming a reality.

3.0 ISILOLO, SAMBURU EAST DISTRICTS CONFLICT SUB-SYSTEM

In addition to the issues raised and discussed in the Isiolo district conflict sub system that also greatly mentioned the linkages and connections between what was going in within Isiolo district and the adjacent district, it might be beneficial to highlight some specifics regarding the conflicts between the Boranas of Isiolo District and Samburus from Samburu East district. Although it might be difficult to differentiate between the Samburus of Samburu East and Isiolo in terms of conflicts with the Borana of Isiolo, there are still some peculiarities in as far as Isiolo (Borana) conflict with Samburu East district (Samburus).

3.1 The Current Conflict dynamics

As is widely known and documented, conflict between the residents of Samburu and Isiolo districts dates back to many years ago. Traditionally, the communities from the two districts have

engaged in cattle rustling and other forms of resource based conflicts. These conflicts were easily and amicably solved by elders of the two communities. This is the period when elders’ words were final and no young man dared oppose the elders’ verdict. Those were the good old days that perhaps the current generation and conflict system dearly lacks.

However and over the years, the situation has greatly changed. Elders not only have lost the outright authority to “govern” but climate change (resulting to near annual droughts) and proliferation of small arms has changed the whole conflict scenario with cumulative results being increased frequencies, severity and impact of inter-ethnic conflicts in the region.

As the case was with the conflict in Isiolo district, increased incidences of conflicts between Samburu East and Isiolo districts was recorded after the 2007 General Elections. This conflict has all to do with the alliances that shaped the conflict in Isiolo district with the Turkana Samburu alliance in Isiolo district providing a safe passage for raiders from Samburu East district who raided and drove away many livestock from Isiolo district. The Boranas and Meru were the most affected with the latter suffering even more since they can’t match the Samburu firepower. At least for the Boranas, they were able to mount equally deadly counter-raids.

Although the political dimension of the conflict in Isiolo was about a tussle between candidates hailing from Turkana and Borana communities (and their allies), the political dimension of the conflict between Boranas of Isiolo and Samburus of Samburu East is a function of devolution of the wrangles in the coalition government.

This was clearly demonstrated in March 2009 when the government carried out an operation targeting the Samburus with express aim of recovering stolen livestock and illicit arms. During the operation, livestock were rounded off in suspected cattle rustlers hide-outs and driven to Isiolo for owners (mainly Borana and Meru) to identify and collect them. According to the Samburus, this operation was ordered by Hon. Kuti, the Minister for Livestock Development (a minister from the PNU side of the government).

However and before the operation could be intensified and disarmament initiated, the Prime

Minister and leader of ODM, the other half of the government toured the area and called off the operation. Although his decision could be justified on the ground that innocent people had suffered with the possibilities of real rustlers escaping, this decision, and the fact that it was announced in Samburu area, an ODM stronghold, sent a wrong signal to the Boranas of Isiolo district.

According to the many Borana respondents, the PM was simply protecting his voters and watering the tree of impunity. It was devolution of the coalition wrangles!

Another ethnic dimension to the conflict was also alluded to. The Boranas alleged that since the current Minister of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security and the Assistant Minister for Internal Security, it is possible that these two are from the *Maa* speaking groups (Masaai and Samburu), there was no remote possibility that they would get justice.

This ethnic dimension of the conflict was also buttressed by an incident where the government lost four soldiers in a second attempt to carry out security operation in the area. This was not only a clear indication of how militarized the Samburu morrans are but also a confirmation that perhaps somebody at the “top” is sanctioning their attacks.

This is not to say that the Boranas are not armed or do not attack the Samburus. CEWARN Field Monitor reported that on 30th June 2009, the Boranas attacked the Samburus in the process rustling more than a thousand livestock. So the uniqueness with this conflict is the devolution of the coalition wrangles and perceived ethnic question at the helm of Ministry of Internal Security that seems to favor Samburus. CSOs, DPCs and Provincial Administration have organized several peace meetings between the two communities but the conflict is still simmering.

3.2 Key issues precipitating the conflict

The following are some of the key and additional causes and triggers of conflicts between Samburus and Boranas in the two districts.

□ Climate change and drought

In the recent past rainfall patterns have changed drastically in the two districts, this year being the worst. The short rains received at the beginning of the year were below average and the situation has continued to worsen. The months of May- August have in the past been classified as wet season but this year the areas (Isiolo and Samburu) have not received rain. This has put a lot of pressure on water and pasture resources. Pastoralists have been forced to move from their areas in search of these resources.

The Samburus have moved from their areas e.g. Wamba and settled in areas bordering Isiolo district, some have even crossed over to Isiolo district and with the pressure on the already depleted pastures they have conflicted with their hosts over the few resources. Only few boreholes have not dried up. As highlighted in the previous section, the Somalis and Borana communities argue that the visitors should have notified them as spelt out in Modogashe and Laikipia declarations. Contacted on the same, the Samburus claim that Modogashe declaration is Islamic and contravenes their culture and that during drought, its better to forcefully enter ones area instead of watching your cattle succumb to drought.

There is also a feeling that with continued drought, Samburus will invade parks and conservancies, tourists will stop visiting the parts, poverty will increase, there will be more pastoralists drop outs with cumulative effect being increased road banditry. Pastoralists also raid more livestock during dry season with the hope that the more you have the more likely that some of the livestock will survive the drought hence the ability to reinvigorate the pastoralist economy.

□ Culture

As discussed in the Isiolo district conflict system, the culture of moranism has exacerbated conflict between Boranas/Somalis of Isiolo and Samburus of Samburu East district. Unlike the Samburus and Rendilles, the Somalis and Boranas do not have morans “standing army for the community”. This makes it difficult for them to fight such a militarized group of young men.

□ Misunderstanding of the role and functions of conservancies (NRT)

From the interviews conducted, it was very clear that respondents from Borana community were suspicious of the role played by conservancies in the entire conflict system. Taking the cue from Lewa Dam conservancy, a number of conservancies were established in Samburu East and Laisamis districts under the umbrella of NRT.

Since most of these conservancies were established in Samburu East district and were staffed by trained and equipped (armed) guards, the Boranas thought that this was another plot, in the name of conservancies, to arm Samburus in order to terrorize them.

During one of the revenge raid mounted by the Boranas on the Samburus, the NRT soldiers received a distress call and informed Meru North Police Chief who requested the conservancy to help the Police by availing a fuelled vehicle to carry the Police to the directions the raiders headed. When the raiders, who happened to be Boranas were confronted by Police officers who were using the NRT vehicle, they quickly concluded that the NRT has come to support their kinsmen, the Samburus.

The government launched investigation and confiscated communication equipments and disarmed the NRT guards but after a while, the guards were absolved of any wrongdoing and their equipments returned. In other words, the misunderstandings surrounding the activities of NRT have precipitated the conflicts between Boranas and Samburus.

□ **Proliferation of small arms**

Guns and ammunitions are readily available in the two districts. Any one can own a gun if you have the money to buy it. Those who trade in arms are the Somalis; the Samburus acquire the guns and ammunitions from them. Some of the guns used are G3, AK47 and M16. It is also alleged that there could be other more sophisticated illicit arms in civilian hands in the two districts. This has given the youth from both communities the courage to raid and fight the other communities as one way of amassing wealth (livestock) and testing their might. Some not only use these guns during raids but also attack vehicles plying those routes.

□ **Politics/alliances**

As discussed above, the coalition wrangles have found their way in the grassroots in the process precipitating conflicts in the two districts. The political alliance formed in Isiolo district to attempt to change the status quo have given the Samburus from Samburu East district additional support and safe passage while raiding Boranas of Isiolo district. The situation (alliances) could drastically change come 2012 if Samburu North district (Baragoi) becomes a constituency where in the long run candidates from Samburu and Turkana communities will vie for the parliamentary seat. This competition for political power in Baragoi will eventually force the Samburus in Isiolo North district to support a non-Turkana candidate to the advantage of the Boranas. This might open up another round of hostilities or drastically reduce conflicts in Isiolo district by dismantling the Turkana Samburu alliance that is responsible for a good portion of current conflicts in the district.

□ **The Pokot question**

Closely related to the remote question of political games in 2012 in the event that Samburu North becomes a constituency is the Pokot question in the conflict system. Although the respondents could not comment on the involvement of the Pokot other than the believe that Pokot warriors may have joined hands with Samburu, the assessment team opine that since the Samburus have been attacked several times by the Pokot in Samburu North and West districts, they may have found the Boranas as a soft spot to vent their anger and replenish their lost stock.

Samburu East DC was of the opinion that the Samburus, even from his district, have found the Boranas in Isiolo district as "their hotel" where they could go anytime and feed (raid) without paying. This is because Boranas are not very militarized and lacks the culture and practice of moranism that is at the heart of Samburu defense. However, it could also be argued that the Samburus have been driven away by the Pokot and found Boranas a soft landing space. This line of thought needs further scrutiny.

4.0 ISIOLO VS LAISAMIS CONFLICT DYNAMICS

The conflict assessment team established a third sub set of conflict featuring the Borana and the Rendille of Isiolo and Laisamis districts respectively. It was observed that tension has been high in Kom and Merti from the beginning of the year since Boranas undertook a revenge raid on the Rendiles in Budas area, on January 26, 2009. The incident left three people dead (two Rendiles and a Borana), with unknown number of livestock reportedly driven away. Efforts by security agencies and local communities to trace and recover the animals were futile. The raid was avenged by the Boranas on a series of raids by Samburus which were blamed on Rendilles. The team established that the Boranas do not find much difference between the samburus and the Rendilles hence the revenge.

Although dwindling water and grazing pastures were mentioned as proximate causes of the conflict, the team established that before the raids, Kom, a division bordering Isiolo and Laisamis had hosted herdsmen from Samburu East and Laisamis. Indeed majority of people interviewed from both parties in conflict concur, that the Samburu's cultural practices revolving around moranism is the main cause of the conflict. Key among these practices is the requirement that a moran, popularly known as "Warani" in both Samburu and Rendille, must kill and bring home raided cattle to be able to marry. In addition to this, the team was informed that after circumcision, a moran is expected to feed for himself and not from the family until he is old enough to move to the next age group known as "Lmoolt"¹

The team identified illicit arms proliferation in both communities as the main motivating factor fuelling the conflict. The easy availability, accumulation and uncontrolled supply of small arms fostered by long porous borders with unstable neighboring states, large refugee population, relative stability in an unpredictable region, geographically vast and isolated arid and semi arid areas of Isiolo and Laisamis, that cannot be policed adequately have served to aggravate the Borana/ Rendille conflicts to ruinous effect². The team established that Boranas sold arms to the Rendilles. It is also feared the British military training in Samburu could

1 *Lmoolt* refers to age group between 25 and 35 year in Rendille community. It is the age one is considered old enough to marry

2 The three districts do not border any international border but their proximity to border districts has facilitated their acquisition of guns and ammunitions.

be mishandling ammunitions ending up in the hands of Samburu morans. The Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)³ was also feared to be supporting the Boranas in actual attacks or supplying them with arms. However, the team could not authenticate this information and is hereby recommending further investigation. Other proximate causes include local politics aimed at building political blocs come 2012. The issue of boundaries came up with both Rendille and Boranas claiming to own the areas around Kom.

5.0 ON-GOING PEACE INTERVENTIONS AND GAPS IN AND BETWEEN ISIOLO, SAMBURU EAST AND LAISAMIS DISTRICTS

In response to the escalating cattle-rustling related conflicts in Isiolo, Samburu and Laisamis districts, a number of actors have expended their efforts towards preventing escalation and managing the conflict. These efforts have largely been spearheaded by many stakeholders including Community(s), District Peace Committees (DPCs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs); National Steering Committee (NSC); Government, Faith Based Organizations (FBO) and others. Despite this, there are existing gaps which makes their efforts less effective and not visible particularly at the grassroots levels where actual conflicts continue to take place.

5.1 Intervention by respective communities and corresponding gaps.

Owing to the negative impacts of the conflict, the Samburu, Borana, Rendille, Turkana, Meru and other communities in the "Isiolo triangle" have been involved in various peace building activities. Loosely knitted community based groups like Women associations, Community based policing groups; religious groups; elders and others have played different roles in trying to prevent these conflicts from escalating. Occasionally, and in the spirit of community policing, the community do share information with the administration/security officers in the process preventing and reducing the frequency of these cattle-rustling related cases. These efforts however have been marginal and the effects across the community divide have not reduced the reported incidences of conflicts. In

3 OLF is a rag-tag rebel outfit operating in Southern Ethiopia and drawing support largely from Oromo speaking group to which Borana belong.

particular, the elders in the Samburu community lack total control over the Morans making it difficult for any peace agreement to be respected or implemented. Equally, the pastoralist communities across the “triangle” continue to overlook the provisions laid down in the Modogashe and the Laikipia peace declaration/pacts. As a result of this, any effort to achieve peace has been difficult and ineffective.

5.2 The Role of DPCs, NGOs, CSOs and NSC.

□ District Peace Committees

A large percentage of respondents noted that Peace Committees play a significant role in facilitating consultative peace dialogues; act as alert systems to prevent conflict before they happen; and also raise awareness within and between the warring communities. There are several concerns however which were raised touching on the role, the structure and capacity of these Peace committees. With regard to their roles, many felt that the Peace Committees do not have defined roles and as a result their impact at the grassroots level where the actual planning and carrying out of conflict particularly by the Samburu *Morans* has not been realised. The structure of these Peace committees is also loosely organised, unrepresentative and not all-inclusive. They are also under-resourced both logistically and financially making their capacity and attempts to prevent and mediate conflicts less effective.

The Peace Committees also lack enforcement mechanisms. They just have to rely on community goodwill in the process of implementing and enforcing peace agreements. Sometimes they are perceived as illegal outfits established mainly for the purposes of “eating” funding from NGOs. They have also been accused of taking sides during peace dialogues, exaggerating conflict situation in order to get funding and that some of them might be participating or benefitting from cattle rustling activities. The list continues to say that some of them have turned out to be point-men of political leaders with others using DPC as a stepping stone to politics. Still, others (members of DPCs) are accused as traitors whenever they try to perform their duties with cumulative effects being loss of morale and energy to perform their duties. These accusations mainly originate from a small section of the community but all in all DPCs work under extreme difficult situations, with threats to their lives increasingly lurking.

□ Non-Governmental Organizations and Civil Society Organizations.

Non-governmental organizations such as Oxfam GB, APFO, SRIC, Safer World, CJPC and others have been instrumental in assisting these communities work towards achieving peace. Apart from efforts aimed at training the DPCs, the NGOs have also worked with local organisations in developing early warning mechanisms.

CSOs have been funding peace dialogues, lobbying the government to be more responsive and working hand in hand with NSC to speed-up the policy development process that will among other things and once enacted, legitimise and fund DPCs.

In terms of identified gaps, there seems to be a lack of coordination in as far as CSOs activities are concerned. As a result, many activities are duplicated and become short-lived. CSOs also seem to exclude key actors in the conflict, the morans, in the various peace processes they engage in. Most of the meetings are also held away from the actual “hot spots” in the process brokered peace agreement being rendered unbinding to the morans. CSOs need to rethink and review their engagement with DPCs and approaches in peace building efforts.

□ NSC (the Secretariat) and Government (Provincial Administration)

The NSC has and continues to play a critical role in Peace building and conflict management. Although its main role has been understood to be coordination of peace building activities, it has played critical role in facilitating peace work by liaising closely with government officials to support the work of CSOs and DPCs.

NSC is spearheading the process for developing National Conflict Management and Peacebuilding policy document. This policy document will define, coordinate and secure peace building efforts in the country and across the borders where appropriate. It's actually DPCs association with NSC that has given it the little legitimacy they enjoy. Even the work of the assessment team was made easy by the fact that the team had been send by NSC (Office of

the President).

On the other hand, DCs in the “triangle” were complaining that NSC secretariat promised to fund some of the peace building activities they were to organize but such support has been missing. And for the very few times such support is availed, it is not enough, the DCs complained.

The government has also been handy in responding to conflict issues in the three districts. Among these are; the conduct of operations by the security forces in Samburu district; establishment of rapid response mechanisms to combat cattle-rustling and drought; facilitating dialogue between the warring communities; provision of small arms particularly to the Borana community. On the latter issue, the government provided 300 small arms to the Borana police reservists to combat attacks by the Samburu and Rendille communities. A major concern however on the issue of arming the Borana community when the mood at the ground was to disarm the communities, especially the Samburus and Rendilles.

However, and the government has admitted it (DCs) use of force alone will not result to peace. As such, the government needs to work closely with other actors in getting to the root of the conflict and in designing appropriate response mechanisms. Human security calls for close collaboration between government and communities. Other gaps include lack of vehicles and fuel (especially during rapid response activities to track, recover and return stolen livestock). Some of the Administration Police Posts are understaffed and ill-equipped with basic communication gadgets lacking.

□ **Other actors**

The Conservancies and the Northern Rangeland trusts have assisted the Samburu and the Rendille communities in conflict management and the combating of the effects of drought. The Lewa Wildlife Conservancy in particular, has worked closely with the Meru Police in providing fuel and vehicles to track animals that have been stolen. The Conservancy has also provided demarcated grazing lands to the neighbouring Samburu community. Some of the proceeds from tourism have also been channelled towards the establishment of schools, awarding of scholarships; sinking of boreholes amongst other positive developments. It is also a source of employment especially to the Samburu community.

The Conservancies however have not raised sufficient awareness on the importance of conservancies. The Boranas in Isiolo district feel that the Conservancy is encroaching on their grazing lands. As a result, propaganda and negative political sentiments have taken center stage in the “triangle”.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS AND WAY FORWARD

The following are the key recommendations to ameliorate the effects of conflicts in the larger Isiolo, Samburu East and Laisamis districts. This is based on the understanding that no single factor or intervention could prevent or manage the conflict but a combination of approaches and interventions could play a significant role in pacifying the region. Some of the recommendations may not be something new but the way they are stressed makes some departure from the normal and ongoing interventions. It is a question of intervening differently from the way we have been doing. For example, it might be much strategic to concentrate on solving the internal conflict in Isiolo district before other districts are targeted. In terms of peace dialogue, a peace process targeting the Morans from Samburu and Rendile communities might bear fruit. Vetting and gazetting the names of DPC members might be better than the normal capacity building trainings we the CSOs have been doing. Use of force, mainly to law and order and disarm the communities, might be a last resort worth advocating for, if it reaches that point.

6.1 *Supporting strategic peace dialogues and rapid response activities*

Conflict resolution and peacebuilding is basically a bout talking talking and talking. It is largely an oral endeavor that is often given impetus by other interventions including long-term socio-economic development and the whole question of justice and equity. Regarding the conflict systems in Isiolo Samburu East and Laisamis districts, a number of dialogue and peace dialogue activities needs to be supported as a priority intervention. The following are the nature and types of peace dialogues that needs to be supported:

6.2 *Rapid Response dialogue targeting morans in the three districts.*

There is a critical need to urgently convene grassroots dialogues in the three districts specifically targeting the morans. The morans are the real actors in the conflict and unless peace building efforts target them, we are likely to see continued upsurge of conflicts incidences in the three districts. Peace dialogues targeting elders, DPC members and local leadership have been held and continues to be held despite of the fact that conflict incidences are on the rise. This infers that there is a fundamental problem with the way the dialogues are conducted with one school of thought opining that morans, and real morans in the manyattas and foras (grazing areas) have not been included.

Such moran specific dialogues need to be held so as to prevail upon the morans not to raid their neighbors in order to provide a conducive environment for wider dialogues and consultations. Vetted DPC members, chiefs, CSOs and government representatives could ideally be used to facilitate such rapid response dialogues with government reminding the youths that in the event that raids do not stop then the government will have to order a security operation much more than what was witnessed in Mt. Elgon district.

Elders and DPC members still have some authority to prevail upon morans not to raid other communities as was witnessed recently (actually during the course of this assessment) when DPC members and elders stumbled on a group of Rendille and Samburu morans who were plotting to attack Boranas in Isiolo district. This raiding expedition was called off after this intervention meaning that more positive results could be achieved if elders and DPC members target morans in the grazing areas in their peace building endeavors.

CEWARN's RFF as well as other rapid response initiatives like the one managed by NSC in collaboration with APFO could be used to support such an initiative that specifically target morans. Also, these meetings must be held in the grazing fields and not towns or urban centres. Specific meetings could be held for

various locations in the respective districts where there are significant concentration of morans before a large meeting bringing together all key leaders of morans is convened.

6.3 *Isiolo district internal peace dialogue*

Albeit most of the violent and intense conflict incidences seem to pit Isiolo district (mainly Boranas) and adjacent Samburu East (predominantly Samburu community) and to an extent Laisamis districts (Rendille), there are internal conflicts within Isiolo district that have compounded the larger conflict system in the tri-district region.

According to many Isiolo residents interviewed including both political and administrative leaderships, there was a critical need for the residents of Isiolo district i.e. the three major communities (Borana, Samburu and Turkana) to dialogue, identify issues that have affected their once cordial relationships and agree to live peacefully as residents of one district. "To many of us, the major problem is the conflict within Isiolo district and if we can be able to sort out this particular internal conflict, it will be much easier to engage with Samburu East and Laisamis districts in peace process", noted Mohamed Galgalo, Isiolo DPC member.

This was a position that was voiced by many people, with a Chief from Kipsin location, Oldonyiro division saying that "if we unite as Isiolo people and form a block to engage with elders and leaders from Samburu East district with the Samburus of Isiolo (Oldonyiro division) taking lead by prevailing upon their kinsmen in Samburu East to stop raids, this conflict will be managed". The Chief noted that whenever raiders suspected to be from Samburu East strike Isiolo (Borana occupied areas), it's them the Samburus in Isiolo that will suffer the consequences for the Boranas will just turn to them since a Samburu is a Samburu.

Although the Isiolo North DC trivialized the internal conflict in Isiolo district, solving this internal conflict will untangle and untie the conflict chains/links in the entire region. This is why investing in this peace process within Isiolo district will be a strategic move to open doors in the region for prevention and management of conflicts within and between Isiolo, Samburu and Laisamis districts. It is imperative to ensure that the political leaders, elders and local government officials (especially Chiefs and their Assistants) are involved in these peace dialogues. Without their support and goodwill, nothing much will be achieved leaving use of force to the remaining option.

6.4 *Isiolo, Samburu East districts peace dialogues*

Conflicts between residents of Isiolo and Samburu East districts seem to be the most violent and intense and that's why a series of grassroots peace dialogues involving key elders, morans, political class, women and government representatives are involved. These meetings should be held in the conflict hotspots areas. Previous peace agreements that provided frameworks for resolving conflicts and sharing grazing resources during the dry spell should be revisited in the dialogues. The operations of the various conservancies under the Umbrella of Northern Rangeland Trust (NRT) and Lewa Conservancy because it seems many people, especially the Boranas and Merus, do not understand how they work, including supporting rapid response initiatives.

Again, the political support and goodwill is vital in this process including establishing a process where Morans respect peace agreements and that there is other sources of identity other than livestock rustling and killings.

6.5 *Isiolo/Marsabit South districts peace dialogues*

The residents of Merti Division in Isiolo district have been conflicting with Rendilles from Liasamis, Kwaya and Merille areas (Laisamis district). The conflict has mainly been precipitated by ongoing drought and the culture of moranism and little to do with politics. As such, traditional dialogue process, as provided for in the Modogashe Garissa declaration, needs to be emphasized on peace dialogues that should ideally be held at the grassroots.

Again, there is critical need to ensure that political, administrative and community leaderships are supportive of these peace dialogues. The central role of morans needs to be taken into account during these dialogues.

In the aforementioned peace dialogues, political goodwill, government/security timely response, the support of morans should be emphasized. Although it is non-civil society, it is suggested that the government, through security forces, should ensure that residents be reminded that if they don't give dialogue and other pacifists means of solving conflicts a chance, then the government will have no other option other than to use force. In real sense, force will not bring peace in the three districts but could be used strategically to "whip" people into dialogue.

6.6 Strengthening response and institutional capacities of DPCs

Despite of the challenges and shortcomings facing DPCs in the three districts, many people still believe that DPCs have tried their best to prevent or reduce severity of conflicts. Most of the respondents were aware of the existence of DPCs and still think that they are necessary in facilitating peace building initiatives. However and for these structures to be more responsive and efficient in peace building initiatives, the following needs to be done/undertaken:

□ *Reconstitution of DPCs in order to conform with NSC guidelines*

The way the members of DPCs were selected, elected or nominated leaves a lot to be desired. For instance and as was confirmed by a Chief in Merille location of Laisamis district, people were shocked to realize that one of the most troublesome warrior who was killed during a raiding expedition was a son of a respectable member of DPC in Merille division! This is a wake up call to all peacebuilders especially NSC. NSC should ensure that all DPCs not only in the three districts but the whole of the country are reconstituted to conform to the guidelines and terms of reference for DPC in the country as developed by NSC.

□ *Vetting/gazettelement of DPCs*

Closely related to reconstitution is the critical need of establishing a thorough process and mechanism of vetting the members and functions of DPC members. To make them more legitimate and accountable (before the policy process is concluded) to the communities and local authorities, officials of DPCs (in the whole country) should be gazzetted. The government might as well decide to enlist the support of the Police (including Administration Police) in helping DPCs enforce resolutions and peace agreements brokered by communities.

□ *Retraining DPCs on their role, functions and principles of DPCs*

As alluded to above and by arrogating themselves the role of astute community defenders, DPCs have largely failed impartiality test. They are more and more behaving as warlords and this was evident in the interviews held with most of them. If a DPC member says that we are not going to attend that peace meeting then there is a lot to think of. As such, there is a need to retrain DPCs countrywide emphasizing on their roles, functions, principles, values and other critical avenues of impartiality and objectivity as clearly spelt out in the draft policy paper and the ToR for DPCs in Kenya (NSC document). It might also be beneficial to organize regional and national peer review workshops for DPCs so that they could critique themselves, including evaluating their approaches to peacebuilding.

□ *Training Chiefs and Assistant Chiefs*

Although this group of administrators is not necessarily part of DPCs, they do interact greatly with DPCs in their conflict resolution efforts. Some of them are members of DPCs whereas others collaborate with DPCs. The assessment also found out that Chiefs and their assistants are grassroots government officials that interact on day to day basis with conflicts and peace efforts in their localities. They have enormous potential to contribute to peace building and buttress the work of DPCs but recent events indicate that Chiefs are increasingly behaving like DPC members. They side with their communities during peace building activities when they are supposed to be neutral and objective.

It should be borne in mind that the Provincial Administration, with the leadership of former NEP PC, Mohamed Saleh, played a commendable job in pacifying NEP. It might thus be useful to organize trainings and workshops purely for Provincial Administrators for them to review their role in peace building efforts. People

like the former PC Saleh could be contacted to facilitate such kind of training workshops and share his NEP experience.

On a separate note, the assessment team thinks it's a high time for the CSOs and research institutions (including academia) to document the experiences and success stories of Provincial Administrations intervention in NEP during Saleh's time. Wajir success story has been widely documented but we think that the contribution of Provincial Administration, a great one for that matter, in pacifying NEP also needs to be documented, published and disseminated widely.

□ *Hasten peace policy process*

There is also the need to continue pushing and hastening the policy development process, a process that will eventually secure and legitimize the roles and functions of DPCs including facilitating their activities. This will reduce over reliance on CSOs and government philanthropy with cumulative results being independent and accountable DPCs.

6.7 Revisiting and Reviewing previous peace declarations/agreements

A number of peace agreements had been brokered in arid and semi-arid areas of Kenya including Isiolo, Samburu and Laisamis districts. Modogashe, Garissa and Laikipia declarations stand out from the rest as demonstrated by the commitment of large sections of pastoralists' communities to abide by them. However and especially as the Isiolo Samburu and Laisamis conflict system is concerned, a number of reasons had been raised regarding these declarations. This is not the first time the communities are raising it but perhaps their concerns have not fully been addressed.

First, and from the assessment, it was very clear that these agreements are no longer being followed. The issue of migrating to neighboring district in search of grazing resources without informing the host was a good example suggesting that such declarations have been rendered moribund and ineffective.

Secondly, the Samburus, Turkanas and Rendilles claim that the declarations, especially Modogashe one, is more Islamic as it borrows heavily from Islamic values. This is perhaps why it has been more effective in North Eastern Province, a predominantly Muslim region in Kenya. To argue their case, the "non-Islamic communities single out part 3 section 5 on cattle rustling in the declaration (Modogashe) where it states that 100 livestock (camel) will be paid as compensation for every man killed. For the women, the compensation is "half price" i.e. 50 livestock (camel). Samburus insist that they do not kill women during raids so no need of even stating that they will be compensated.

The assessment team are aware that Oxfam GB is (or was) leading a process to review these declarations. As a matter of priority, Oxfam GB needs to speed up the process, and in a more consultative way, with NSC secretariat (including Conflict Analysis Group/Committee) ensuring that the same is done in a timely manner.

It also came to the attention of the assessment team that there are a number of workplans that were developed to respond to conflicts in Isiolo and adjacent districts. UNDP Kenya, NSC and possibly other actors may have facilitated the design of such workplans but little has been done in terms of facilitating DPCs and government agencies in implementing them. "If these plans were implemented, we could not be talking of conflicts now", noted Isiolo North DC. As a matter of question, it's advisable not to develop workplans if resources to implement them are not there.

6.8 Capacity Building and Empowerment of Morans

It's unfortunate that we keep on repeating this issue of Morans. This is purely because of the greatest responsibility they bear in as far as this conflict is concerned. From our understanding and interpretations of respondents' comments on Morans, this is one of the most important rite of passage for the Samburu and Rendille communities. It is supposed to give one an identity in society that now he is a grown up and capable of defending the community. As such, it is recommended that peace builders needs to spend a lot of time with these Morans, discussing other socially and nationally acceptable forms of identity, including engaging in trade.

Although this will take time, this might be time to design tailor made trainings and economic empowerment projects that are geared towards preventing morans from raiding other communities.

Elders, including DPCs and Chiefs, also need to stay close and monitor the activities of Morans during their initiation period so that they don't engage in conflict.

6.9 Reviewing and demarcating administrative/grazing Boundaries

To solve the persistent squabbles over administrative (including grazing) boundaries, the government and the relevant Ministries should hasten the process of reviewing and clearly marking boundaries in the three districts. For instance, an area such as Kom has been contentious in terms of ownership with the Borana, Samburu and Rendille communities all claiming part of the area. This is because during the dry spell, all of them converge there hence conflicts over who is encroaching on whose district or grazing region. This is what the Boundaries Review Commission chaired by Hon. Ligalle could be advised to do. NSC and its membership could thus launch appeals, advocacy campaigns and lobby the Commission to address the boundary issues in the region.

6.10 Conservancies/Northern Rangeland trusts.

There is need for the management of the Conservancies (especially NRT) in Laisamis, Meru North, Isiolo and Samburu districts to raise awareness of their activities and their role in peacebuilding, if any, to the general public. The Borana and Somali communities in Isiolo are very wary of these conservancies, especially their guards, meaning that meetings need to be organized where the NRT will explain its course. The conservancies must also be involved in the dialogue workshops so that they explain their case and clarify any lingering questions.

The government, and especially the Police, should desist from using NRT equipments during security operations for this will definitely send wrong message that the conservancies are involved in supporting sections of communities in the conflict cycle.

6.11 DISARMAMENT

Among the recommendation the communities came up with is disarming all the parties involved in the conflict. However, the team noted that arms proliferation in pastoralist communities has a complex history which requires careful handling.

The team recalled that in the last disarmament, 2007, the Samburu surrendered their arms out of conviction that the government would provide them with security, sink boreholes, construct roads, and build for them schools. They also surrendered their firearms out of conviction that neighboring communities were also giving out theirs. It turned out that this was not the case. The government failed to meet its promises and the Pokots, among other communities did not surrender their arms. Those disarmed were left vulnerable to attacks by neighboring communities who were yet to undergo the same. Indeed, the Samburu's were attacked two weeks later.

Today, security is still a big issue in pastoral communities and armament has been going on, this time with more sophisticated weapons. Kenya is neighbored by countries in conflict (e.g. Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Uganda, etc) thus making trafficking, trade or acquisition of small arms an easy process.

Instead, the team felt Peace building processes be given a chance to address the conflict. The feeling was that once conflicting parties have attained sustainable peace, the use of arms becomes obsolete. The team therefore recommends disarmament be taken when everything else has failed or when the residents are convinced that the government is in a position to guarantee their security including that of their livestock.

6.12 SOCIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The pastoral communities in Kenya are characterized by high levels of poverty rooted in a combination of political, economic, and ecological factors. Indeed these communities have experienced a long history of drought coupled with economic and political marginalization from the central authorities. As a result the communities suffer from limited investment and lost opportunities for trade and employment. In retrospect, they understand and interpret resources as land, pasture, watering points and hunting grounds mainly in forests.

While the team appreciates the efforts by the current government to develop pastoral regions, we recommend concerted rehabilitation and re-orientation of the pastoralists into mainstream society by aiding them with alternative livelihoods such as eco-tourism, small scale business enterprise, and provision of social amenities such as schools, health facilities and water. The team also recommends that efforts be redirected to the morans whose socialization process require they raid, kill for social identity and prestige.

Finally and as a long-term goal of eradicating cattle rustling not only in Isiolo triangle but in the rest of conflict prone regions in Kenya is heavy investment in education and other socio-economic ventures that will open up these regions. School enrollment, retention and completion rates need to be tripled especially in Northern Kenya. The government, through Provincial Administration, could ensure that all school-going pupils are in schools. The ministry of Northern Kenya and other Arid Areas need to come up with a master-plan of improving living standards in arid areas of Kenya. The government should ensure that this Ministry is adequately funded.

Authors:

Dominic Ruto – Pact Kenya

Kyalo Musoi – SRIC

Irene Tule – APFO/NRI

Benard Kirui – NSC Secretariat

About Amani Papers

The Amani Papers is published monthly by UNDP Kenya as a contribution to knowledge development and management in Africa. It solicits contributions from researchers, academics and field practitioners with a slant on peace building and conflict prevention issues generally. It promotes policy oriented and actionable research to strengthen national capacities and to generate political will for peace building and conflict prevention interventions. Articles are welcome on any subject related to peace building, security, transitional justice, reconciliation, traditional conflict management, alternative dispute resolution, national cohesion and conflict transformation. Practitioners' notes are also encouraged so as to inform policy from practice. Articles should be sent by email to the Journal Editor, Dr. Ozonnia Ojielo on ozonnia.ojielo@one.un.org.

This is the report of a research team constituted and commissioned by the Conflict Analysis Group (CAG) of the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC) with UNDP funding to conduct a detailed analysis of the conflict in the three districts, document the findings and make recommendations to the NSC. Appreciation goes to the Coordinator of the NSC, Mr. Samuel Maina and the Senior Programme Officer Mr. Dickson Magotsi for supervising the research. stakeholders and actors.

Disclaimer

All articles and contributions are the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP or of the United Nations



United Nations Avenue,
Gigiri
P.O. Box 30218, Nairobi
Phone: (254-2)7624394
Fax: (254-2)7624409
Email: registry.ke@undp.org
www.ke.undp.org