

The Conflict Early Warning and Response mechanism (CEWARN)



in the

Inter Governmental Authority On Development (IGAD)

Region

CEWARN Baseline Study

For the Kenyan-Side of the Somali Cluster

Preliminary Draft to the Head of CEWERU, Kenya
September 13, 2006

1: Executive Summary

Pastoralists' conflicts are one of the challenging conflicts facing the Horn of Africa. Although they are classified as low intensity conflicts, they have managed to create a state of insecurity to the extent that the countries affected are at loss of how to deal with them effectively. The choice of IGAD- CEWARN to deal with this type of conflict was both timely and appropriate given the grave consequences to the population living in these fragile regions of the Horn.

Pastoralist communities have been isolated from mainstream society and policies too. "Protracted conflicts and insecurity in pastoral areas contribute to a widening of the gap between pastoral groups and the rest of the country. Economically, it prevents investments and hinders development programmes. Politically, it contributes, through the media representation, to public images of pastoralists as backward, irrational and violent"¹.

This baseline study attempts to provide a background study of the Kenyan side of the Somali cluster, which falls under the Kenyan provinces of North Eastern covering Mandera, Moyale, Garissa and Wajir districts and Eastern Province which covers Marsabit district.

The structural data of the districts reveals a cluster that is arid and semi arid yet supporting a population of over 1,100,000 people. The region is occupied by several ethnic communities but predominantly of Somali origin who have been engaged in conflict on and off in Kenya's past and recent history. The region also houses over 120,000 refugees from Somalia creating an economic and administrative burden. Key pointers to the reason for conflicts include historical factors, natural resource competition and political machinations by elite in power. Other reasons include the influencing factors of conflicts from across the borders in Ethiopia especially the case of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) and the conflicts in Somalia. The availability of firearms in the Cluster from neighboring countries is another contributing factor.

This report presents an overview of the current situation, which reveals that from May 2005 to December 2005, 47 incidences of Protest Demonstrations, Banditry, Assaults,

¹ Saverio, Kratli and Jeremy Swift. *Understanding and Managing Pastoral Conflicts in Kenya*. A literature review. Institute of Development Studies, University of Sussex, UK. P 15

and Raids occurred. From these incidents 110 people died. The Cluster is currently vulnerable due to unpredictable weather patterns. Some of the main decelerators of conflicts are the numerous peace initiatives organized by community, government and civil society actors.

The accelerators however hold sway, such as the political incitement that led to the infamous Turbi Massacre in Marsabit district in July 2005 where 84 people were killed.² Other accelerators are the presence of firearms, diminishing pasture and water resources that influence conflict and marginalization of these areas from mainstream policy development programmes.

Some of the key recommendations of this report have to do with an aggressive government policy towards investing in this region, policies on sharing of resources and continuous use of traditional mechanism for conflict management and diversifying pastoralist way of life to include other income generating activities to improve livelihood in a fragile environment.

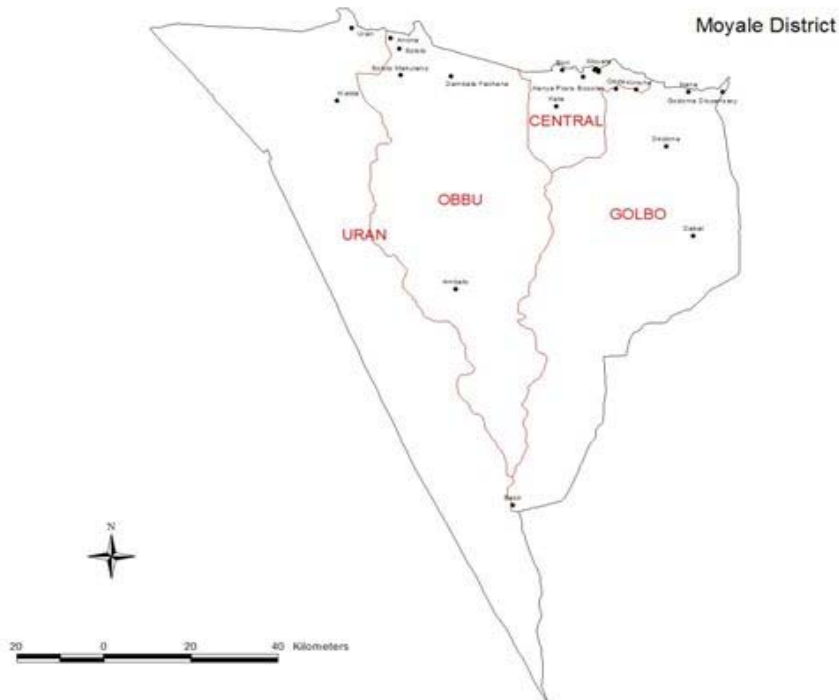
² Marsabit Conflict Assessment Report 21st – 28th July 2005. National Steering Committee, Office of the President.

2: Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this report is to provide a baseline for the CEWARN Project on the Kenyan side of the Somali Cluster. The report is part of CEWARN's goal of implementing an early warning and response mechanism in the Horn of Africa region.

The Kenyan Somali cluster comprises of the districts of Marsabit, Moyale, Mandera, Wajir and Garissa falling in Eastern and North Eastern Provinces. The report provides basic information on conflicts in the cluster; it considers some of the main structural and proximate sources of conflicts in the cluster, their aggravating and mitigating factors and provides recommendations for reducing the negative impacts in the long term, medium and immediate terms. The report includes an assessment of the current situation by looking at the incidences of deaths, livestock losses from May 2005 to December 2005.

2.1 Moyale

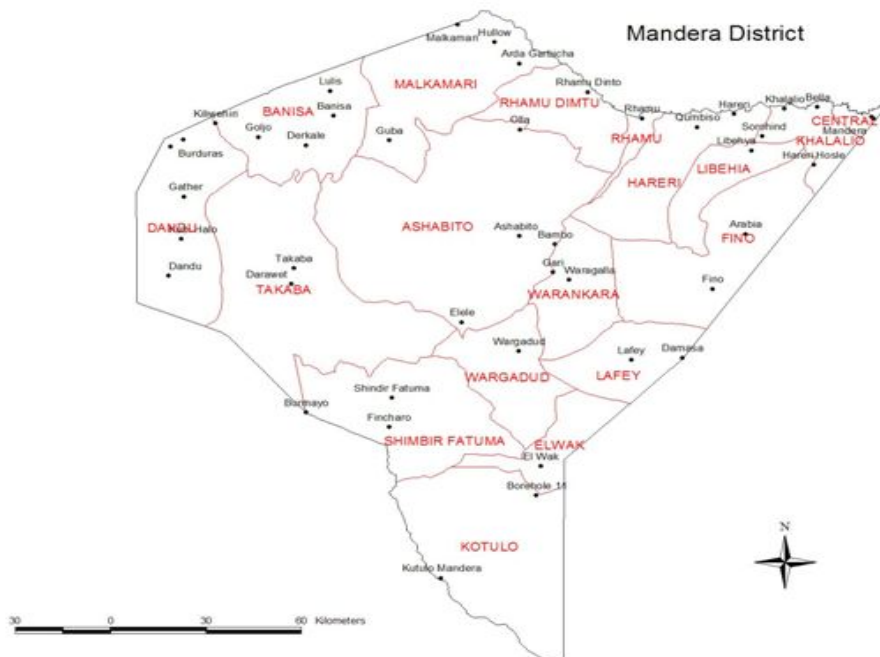


The district has a population size of 57,299 and has five administrative divisions. Central division has the highest population density where most amenities are available (roads, telephone, markets). Besides livestock herding, the district produces maize, beans, sorghum and cowpeas at a subsistence level (2-3 acres). These are mainly

found in Uran division, which has a few permanent water points. Access to health and education facilities is about 15-25km.³

The conflicts in Moyale revolve around the Kenyan and Ethiopian Boran, Gabra and Somali clans. The Oromo Liberation Front from Ethiopia significantly affects the political and conflict situation in Kenya due to the ethnic relations of the Boran communities who occupy both sides of the border. The Gabbra and Boran from Ethiopia lend support to their kinsmen whenever they are engaged in clashes.

2.2 Mandera District



Mandera District is located in the North-Eastern Province and covers an area of 26,474km². It borders Ethiopia to the north and Somalia to the east. It is the farthest district in North-Eastern Kenya. With 18 administrative divisions it has a population of 281,955. The altitude ranges from 400m to 970 with temperatures ranging from 22-39 degrees Celsius. Like Moyale, Mandera District has no permanent rivers except for many lagas (river beds), which fill with water in the rainy season but dry up once the rainy season stops. This creates problems for road construction and maintenance. Rainfall averages at 255mm making the district a harsh in terms of environmental

³ Moyale District Development Plan 2002-2008

conditions harsh refers to the environmental conditions. The livestock population is estimated at 209,500 cattle, 576,160 goats and sheep and 182,700 camels.⁴

The district headquarters at Mandera town falls under Central division, which has the highest population (43,916). Due to the harsh environment, most economic activities revolve around livestock trade and handicrafts while a few areas produce food crops such as Maize, Sorghum, Bananas and Papaws. Most of the district relies on relief food supplies to meet the communities' food needs.⁵

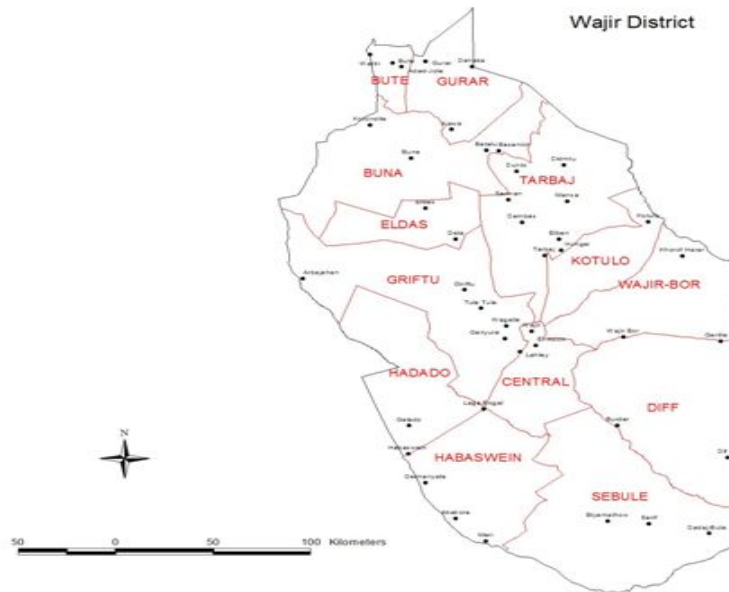
Conflicts in the district involve a number of Somali clans. The Garre and Murule, Murule and Marehan and Garre and Ajuran are the main clans in conflict. The conflicts revolve around water and pasture use and border disputes. It is estimated that 4,000 internally displaced persons live in Mandera district in Elwak, Wargadud, Damasa and Lafey. This is as a result of conflict between the Garre and Murule. The government provides the affected families with relief food and their inability to return stems from logistical problems of moving them back to their original homes.⁶

⁴ Mandera District Development Plan 2002-2008

⁵ .Ibid

⁶ Baseline Study of the conflict in 7 districts of Northeastern and Eastern Provinces of Kenya. Northern Aid, Camel bell Limited, 2004

2.3 Wajir District



The district covers 56,501 km² and has an arable landmass of 39,550km². The rainfall ranges from 150mm to 270mm except for a small section in the north of the district that receives 500-700mm of rainfall. Temperatures average at 29.56 degrees Celsius. The population size is 356,340 and the district is split into 13 divisions. It borders Mandera, Moyale and Garissa districts and Ethiopia on the northern part. Most of the district is made up of plains except for a few hills along the Ethiopian border.

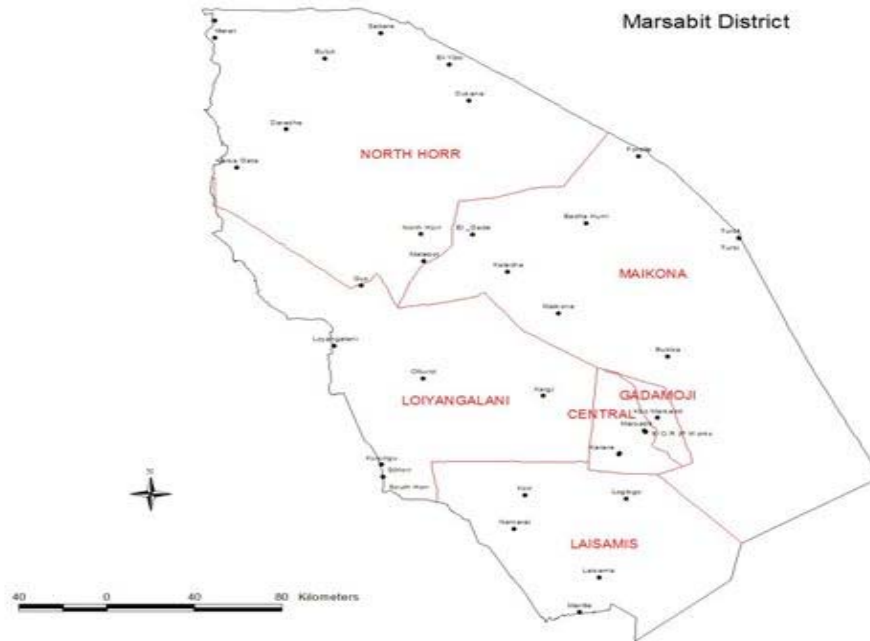
The district has no rivers but relies on swamps, which serve the district during the dry season, and also permits cultivation during the rainy season. To the North, some rain fed agriculture is possible due to higher rainfall. Crops such as maize, sorghum, beans and vegetables are grown. Some forest cover also exists with gum trees providing wood for commercial purposes in the district.

Somali ethnic groups that engage in conflict populate Wajir. The Ajuran, Garre and Degodia clans have had continuous feuds over the years. Other smaller ethnic groups

like the Borana, Gabrra and few Maasai also conflict. Wajir has a refugee population of about 120,000 refugees living in towns and camps.⁷ Conflicts revolve around the use of water and pasture.

⁷ Wajir District Development Plan 2002-2008

2.4 Marsabit District



Covering an area of 66,00km², Marsabit District borders Turkana and Samburu in North Rift Valley Province and, Moyale and Isiolo districts in North Eastern Province and the Ethiopian border. It has 7 administrative divisions with a population of 127,560 (2002). The district has a varied topography, which includes Lake Turkana (fed by River Omo in Ethiopia and other seasonal rivers) to the West, and extensive plain and mountain ranges to the North. It has a volcanic mountain (Mt Kulal), Hurri hills and Marsabit hill in the west and central respectively. It also has the Chalbi depression. There are no permanent rivers but it has several seasonal rivers. Rainfall ranges from 200-1000mm but evaporation is high since the district falls in the driest region of Kenya. Forest cover is found around Mt Marsabit, Hurri Hills and Mt Kulal. Economic activities include fishing and livestock trade. The district has yet to aggressively tap into its tourism potential with its archeological sites, game parks and lakes.⁸

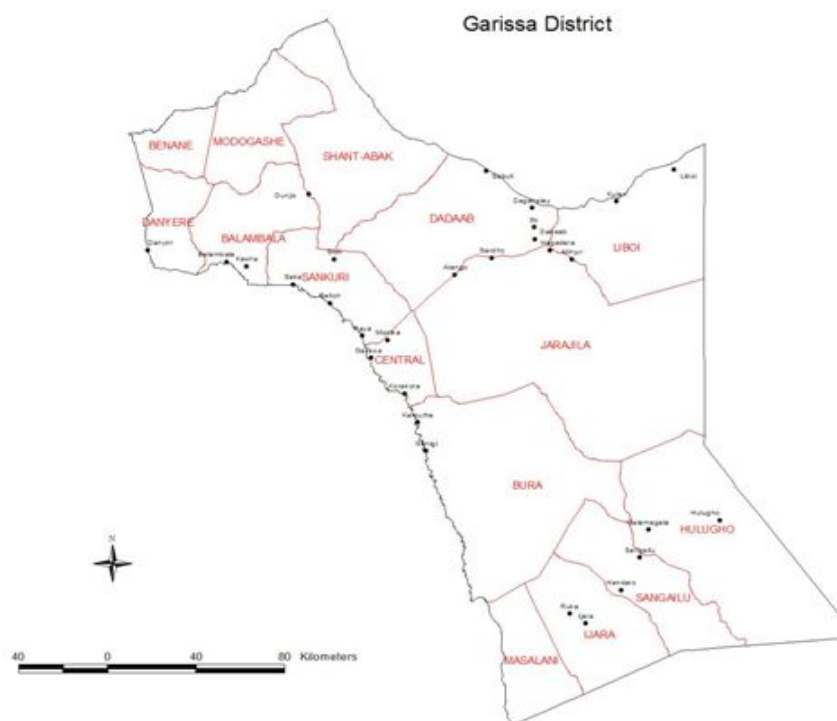
Despite its potential the district is classified as one of the poorest in Kenya. The ethnic groups occupying the district and are involved in conflict include the Rendile, Gabra, Turkana, Borana, Burji and Dasennach around use of resources. The Samburu live in the south and are involved in attacks with the Turkana. The Gabra and Boran share a

⁸ Marsabit District Development Plan 2002-2008.

language and cultural identity. The Borana are found on both the Kenyan and Ethiopian borders. The Turkana are also extensively affected by conflict because they are considered immigrants into the district and their presence is not often welcome. Estimates show that 39% of the people in Loyangalani location are affected by conflict.⁹

⁹ Karimi, Martin (ed), Pkalya Ruto et al. *Conflict in Northern Kenya: A focus on the internally displaced victims in Northern Kenya*, ITDG- EA .2003. p. 55

2.5 Garissa District



Garissa district of north Eastern Province, which borders Isiolo, Wajir, Tana River and Somalia to the east, covers an area of 33,620 kms² and has 11 administrative divisions and three parliamentary constituencies (Dujis, Laghdera and Fafi). By 2002 it had a population of 368,593 making Garissa the most densely populated district of the Somali cluster. It has a mean Rainfall of 434.8mm and a temperature range of 20 degrees to 38 degrees Celsius. By 2002 it had a population 396,500 cattle, 71,800 camels and 306,600 sheep and goats. The district has an absolute poverty of 68%. It does not have many relief features and has semi arid climate with small parts of the districts able to support vegetation cover. It is however a predominantly fragile environment.¹⁰

Garissa District has hosted over 120,000 refugees since the early 90s from Somalia, Ethiopia and Uganda. Poverty levels have continued to increase reducing the pastoralists to a sedentary lifestyle in urban centers who depend on relief food and aid. The conflicts in Garissa involve clans of Aulihan and Adudwak who are both Ogaden

¹⁰ Garissa District Development Plan 2002-2008

(Somali) ethnic groups. The second is the Aulihan and Boran and Abudwak and Abdalla clans. Their conflicts involve disagreements around water and grazing sites, administrative and constituency boundaries.¹¹

¹¹ Baseline Study of the conflict in 7 districts of Northeastern and Eastern Provinces of Kenya. Northern Aid, Camelbell Limited, 2004. p 14

3: Background, Actors, Historical Context

3.1 Introduction

A diverse and dynamic grouping of people who have managed their lives through difficult climatic conditions and a history of conflicts inhabit the Kenyan Somali cluster.

People of Somali origin and others including, the Gabra, Rendile, Turkana and Maasai, inhabit the Somali cluster. Most inhabitants have relied on Pastoralism as a means of livelihood. This has however been challenged continuously by factors such as drought, insecurity and poor livestock marketing strategies. As a result the Cluster has become heavily dependent on humanitarian relief supplies. The Gabra, Boran, Rendile, Maasai, Somali and Turkana communities are continuously involved in conflicts in the cluster. Conflicts in Ethiopia and Somalia also play a big role in Mandera, Moyale Wajir and Marsabit further complicating internal conflicts. The Oromo Liberation Front sympathizers in Ethiopia affect the Gabra and Boran conflicts in Marsabit and Moyale and the Somali in Wajir and Mandera districts since they often hide in Kenya as well as lend support to kinsmen in Kenya when the clashes occur. Likewise a lack of a government in Somalia creates an influx of refugees in these northern districts.

3.2 History

The region is a makeup of complex conflicts that have their roots in pre independence history, natural resources use, political factors and spillover of conflicts from neighboring countries particularly from Ethiopia and Somalia.

The cluster falls into what was referred to as the Northern Frontier District (NFD), which was separated from the rest of Kenya politically due to secessionist goals of both Somalia Republic and the Kenya Somalis community residents in this region. This created an isolation of the region with minimal government investment towards its development. The secessionist plan did not succeed as a result of several events including the Ogaden war between the Somalia Republic and Ethiopia. The war put to test the Kenyan government forces through what is famously referred to as the "Shifita Wars" involving Somalis from both sides of the border. The loss of the Ogaden War by Somalia gave the Kenyan army a chance to suppress all attempts by the Kenyan Somali community to join Somalia. This operation resulted to Kenyan security forces

using excessive force to disempower any counteractive forces. As a result, the Somali people have often felt that the government was hostile to them. At the same time the Kenyan government undertook efforts to unite the country juxtaposing its responsibility to secure porous borders with Somalia while ensuring a semblance of constitutional freedom and rights of the people of northeastern Kenya.¹²

In the past three decades however, this has gradually changed and the region has opened up and infrastructure developed though not significantly different from other Kenyan pastoralist areas. The shift has now turned to focus on internal ethnic conflicts that are rampant in the region. Conflict mostly involves the various Somali clans in the North Eastern part of the. Although speaking the same language and having similar cultural practices these Somali clans are often engaged in protracted conflicts mainly involving resource use such as water and pasture. Like all other pastoralist, the residents of Somali cluster struggle under diminishing pasture and water sources emerging out of changing climatic conditions and encroachment on pastoral lands by agriculturalists. The communities often find themselves on a collision course as they negotiate for pasture and water.

3.3 Politics

Politics also plays an important role in these conflicts. The demarcation of parliamentary constituencies and administrative boundaries has been a source of tension and sometimes resulting to outright violence. The demarcation between Moyale and Marsabit district has brought in contest between the Gabra and Boran communities.

“Political leaders in North Horr have insisted Moyale stays in Marsabit district while Moyale politicians have always claimed it. When Moyale district was created, areas around Forole and Turbi, it is alleged should have formed part of that district. The Boran claim that the late Hon Bonaya Godana influenced the retention of these areas in Marsabit district and subsequently had the areas occupied by Gabras. It is also alleged that the Boranas would like to have these areas so that their tribesmen will have occupied the areas from Ethiopia to Moyale, Marsabit up to Isiolo. The attack on Turbi was construed as an intention

¹² Baseline Study of the conflict in 7 districts of Northeastern and Eastern Provinces of Kenya. Northern Aid, Camel bell Limited, 2004

to scare away the Gabra from this area so that the Boranas can take the land”¹³

The Garre and Murule of Mandera conflict over constituency boundaries with the Murule believing the Garre are encroaching over their territory when they graze their animals. Part of the problem arises from arbitrary demarcation of boundaries that ignore intricate relations of these communities. Politicians also resist settlement by ethnic groups they believe will not favor them in election¹⁴.

Political incitement is believed to be one of the biggest problems in the Somali cluster. Politicians and administrators play a key role in either creating harmony or disrupting peace. The case of Marsabit (Turbi) massacre on 12th July 2005 points to envy and hatred between the Gabra and Boran. The Boran accused the Gabra of taking up all the lucrative business opportunities and positions (truck business, government employment, commercial building in Marsabit town,). They are also accused of having larger stocks of animals in the markets. Politicians have hence used such sentiments to divide the two communities in the claim of defending the interests of ‘their people.’ Prior to the massacre, politicians’ words inflamed the people in public meetings and the Rendile and Boran allied against the Gabra started to steal animals from each other leading to the massacre a few weeks thereafter.

3.4 Refugees

The clan conflicts in neighboring Somalia affect conflicts in Kenya through the increasing population of refugees, which fuel internal conflicts. Disputes over water and pasture are numerous creating enmity and alliances in the Kenyan border. The Marehan ally with the Murulle against the Garre. For instance when thousands of refugees fled South Somalia in March and April 2005 due to the Marehan and Garre clashes in Somalia, it created a crisis in Mandera over resources and further created conflict between the Marehan and Garre in Mandera. There are conflicts over relief food distribution with the Marehan being accused by the Garre as being the main recipients of Relief food. ¹⁵

¹³ Marsabit Conflict Assessment Report 21st – 28th July 2005. This was a report from a mission undertaken under the auspices of the National Steering Committee on Peace and Conflict Management (Office of the President) with the support of a consortium of NGOs. The mission was undertaken immediately after the Turbi Massacre with the aim of carrying out an independent and objective assessment of the conflict situation in Marsabit district. P. 13

¹⁴ <http://www.irinews.org>

¹⁵ Ibid

But a major impact of Somali clan conflicts and refugee flow is the free flow of arms. The lack of a government in central Somalia has resulted in the flow of small arms into Kenya where common disputes over rangeland and other disputes are resolved through the use of these arms. These factors, compounded with the high levels of poverty create an unrelenting experience of insecurity.

3.5 Impact of the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF)

The Oromo liberation Front remains an important influencing factor in the communal conflicts in Northern Kenya. The Boran and Gabbra who inhabit part of Northern Kenya share an identity with their Oromo kin in Ethiopia who are agitating for their secession from Ethiopia. Often alliances are formed with their kinsmen both Gabbra and Boran across the Kenya-Ethiopia border to fight in local conflicts in Kenya. The OLF factor influences the districts of Moyale and Mandera too. The Marsabit massacre is an example of the use of mercenaries from Ethiopia to respond to conflict between the Gabbra and Boran. In terms of diplomacy, the Ethiopian government perceives the Kenyan government to be silent on its stand on the Oromo movement and the Ethiopian forces have continuously engaged the rebels across the border in Kenya and in many occasions the conflict has heightened tensions between the two countries.

3.6 Mercenaries

Besides the OLF factor, the use of mercenaries is also very prevalent in this region. They are on many occasions involved in internal conflicts within Kenya. From the period of the Shifta wars beginning in the 1960s, mercenaries from Somali were used and later during the Ogaden War continued to supply a ready force on any side of the Ethiopian and Somali borders. The mercenaries were again used in 1997 during the interclan battle between the Ajuran and Degodia of Wajir district. Similarly during the Bagalla Massacre in the same district in 1998 the Boran were accused of using mercenaries. In 2000 the Garre and Ajuran engaged mercenaries from Ethiopia. As recent as 2003 conflicts between the Garre and Ajuran saw the Garre use mercenaries from Ethiopia. As a response the Marehan hired mercenaries from Kismayu in Somalia to fight the Gare.¹⁶

¹⁶ Opcit., Baseline Study: Northern Aid. P 18

4: Current Situation May 2005- December 2005

4.1 Introduction

The Somali Cluster has overtime been characterized by high tensions particularly in Marsabit and Moyale districts following the Turbi Massacre of Marsabit, which occurred on July 12, 2005. The massacre led to the deaths of about 84 people in a span of three days and an innumerable amount of property loss. 6000 people were displaced from their homes, which translated to about 2500 homes. Through the support of Kenya Red Cross, Food for the Hungry International and other NGOs some humanitarian assistance was provided. The other districts - Wajir, Madera and Garissa - experienced fewer incidences predominantly around protest demonstrations and banditry and conflicts around resources - water points and pasture.

The Turbi Massacre in Marasabit District was the most serious incident to affect pastoralist communities in the area in recent years. The massacre occurred after incidences of livestock theft between the Gabra, Boran and Rendile communities were reported. The Gabbra bore the brunt of the massacre with most of the lost lives coming from their community. Several days following the massacre the Gabra retaliated and killed some of the suspected Boran attackers. What is also significant about this incident is that 28 children and 24 women died in what was seen as a senseless killing because it targeted school children and women.

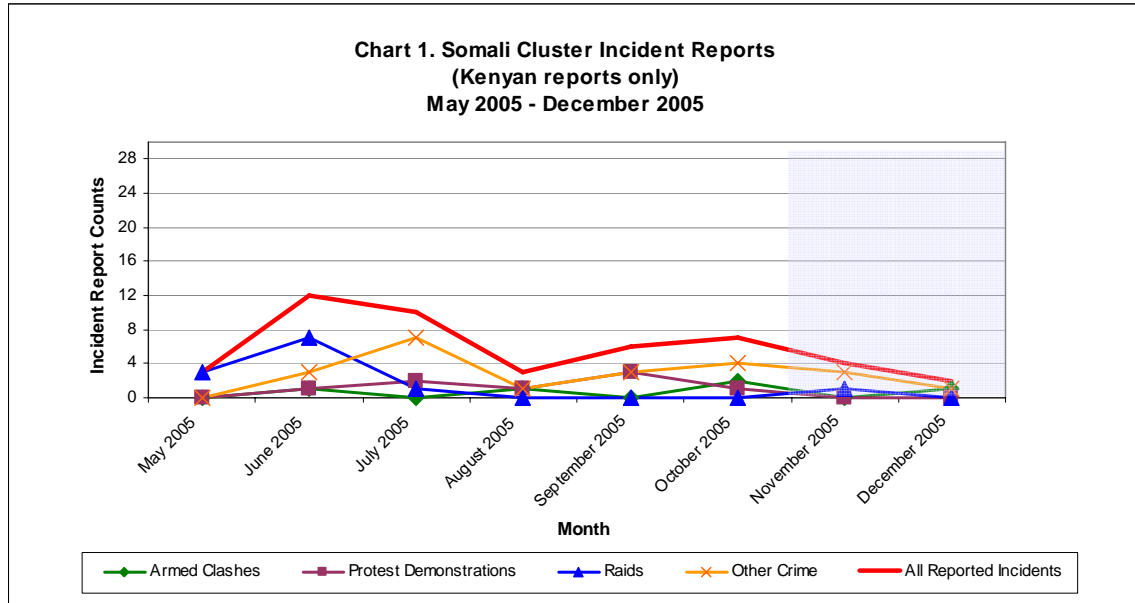
In the reporting period too, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera Districts were significantly affected by the constitution review referendum in November 2005. Several public riots were reported and this brought to light glaring political differences between the clans. In one incident in Garissa, the vice president of Kenya watched as members of the community on opposing sides attacked one another in a public meeting over the constitution review campaign.

In the Cluster, Marsabit, Mandera and Garissa districts where the most violent for the reporting period and recorded a total of 32 incidences alone. What may seem as common community conflicts, for instance disagreements in marriage, cannot be taken for granted since it can result in deep rifts between ethnic groups. This context differs in many ways from the Karamoja Cluster where conflicts are often strictly around resources.

After the drought of late 2005 and early 2006 it is expected that the livestock lost by the communities will somehow be replaced. Past trends show that livestock raids and theft are the most accessible means of restocking in northern Kenya. This is the expected scenario in the short term. Communities may venture out to raid their neighbors especially those they are already in dispute with. The resultant effect is increased incidents of raids and theft involving large numbers of deaths in a bid to protect livestock and property. In future, should there be a continuation or recurrence of drought, it is expected to result in more raiding further compromising the welfare of the already vulnerable residents.

CURRENT BASELINE ANALYSIS

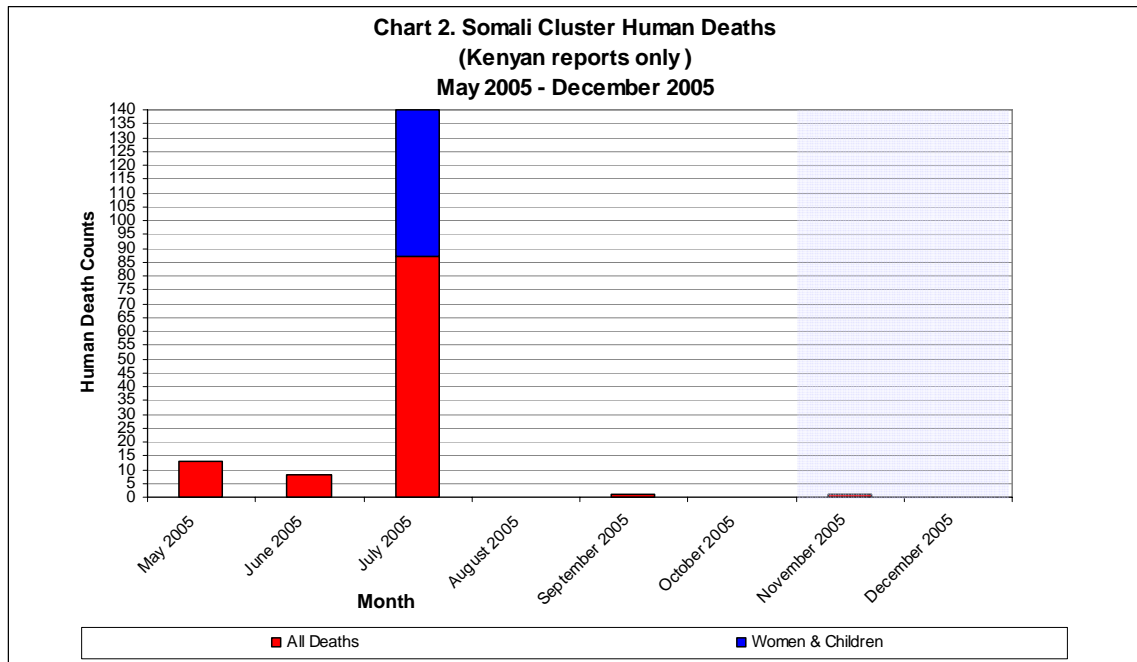
4.2 Chart 1 below present the total number of incidents for the reporting period.



There were a total of 47 incidences in the Somali cluster for the reporting period May 2005 to December 2005. Most incidents involved highway banditry especially in Moyale, protest demonstration, cattle theft, rape, military clashes (between Somali clans and Police in Mandera) and riots over the constitution review.

Incidents were high in the month of July and lowest in the month of December. The high number of incidents in July was as a result of livestock thefts just before the Turbi massacre. During the period from May 2005- Dec 2005 the Somali Ajuran and Boran communities broke a peace alliance they had over grazing zones. The agreement had allowed Ajuran to graze their animals in Boran areas of Moyale district (Gobo area). The Boran however changed this due to overstocking and the Ajuran were asked to return to Wajir district thus creating tension between the two communities.

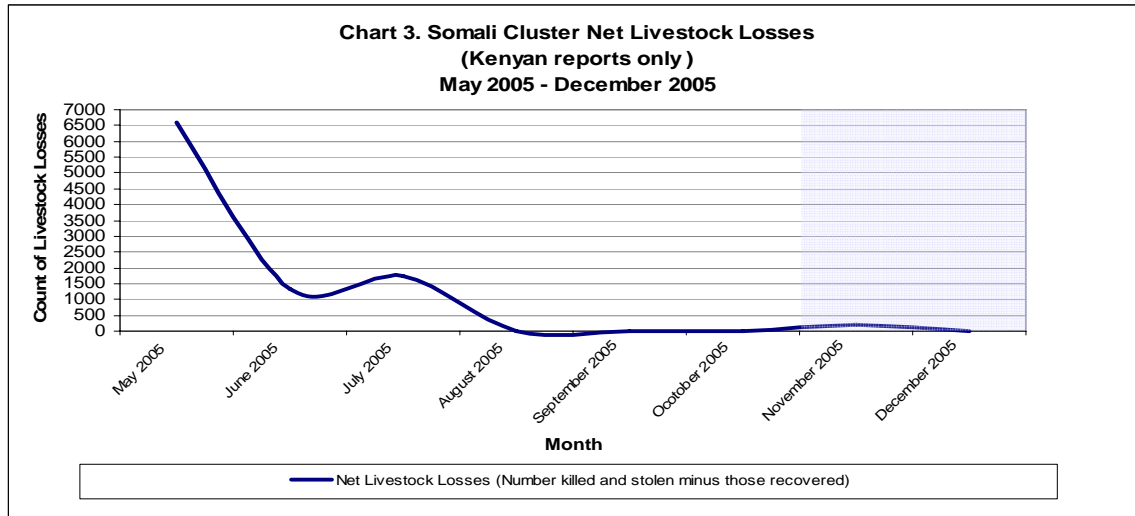
4.3 Human Deaths



During the reporting period, there were a total of 110 deaths. These deaths were mainly reported in Marsabit district in July as a result of the massacre. A total of 74 people were killed on 12th July 2005 when Boran attackers invaded Turbi. 24 children, 21 women and 11 men all of Gabbra community were killed. In pursuit of the attackers, the Gabbra killed 18 of the attackers on the same day. On the next day the Gabbra retaliated against the Boran by setting roadblocks along the Marsabit- Moyale highway and waylaid a vehicle and killed 2 men, 3 women and 4 children that were in the vehicle. The district remained tense since the incident and potential for future violent conflicts still exists since the underlying issues have not been adequately dealt with.

Apart from the Marsabit District massacre the rest of the districts in the Somali cluster did not register a large number of human death counts. The reduced incidences were as a result tightened security by the government to avert a possible repeat of the massacre.

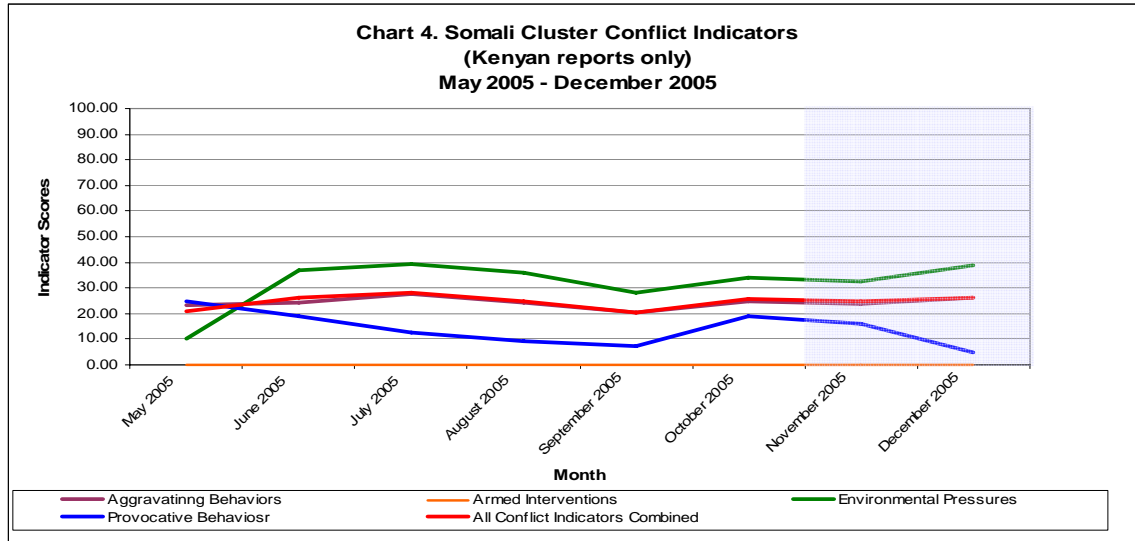
4.4 Livestock losses



A total of 9675 livestock were reported stolen during the period. On 26th of May 2005 in Turbi, Marsabit 6000 goats and sheep, 218 camels and 2 donkeys were stolen when 200 armed Ethiopian Boran raided a Gabra village stealing the animals and killing one man and injuring two. Only 100 camels were recovered through the efforts of home guards. This was one of the earlier incidents that provoked the communities and later contributed to the Marsabit Massacre. The Boran and the Gabra mounted several revenge and counter revenge attacks thereafter creating a deep rift in the communities.

The sudden drop of cases of deaths and livestock is attributed to increased security provided by the government after the Turbi Massacre.

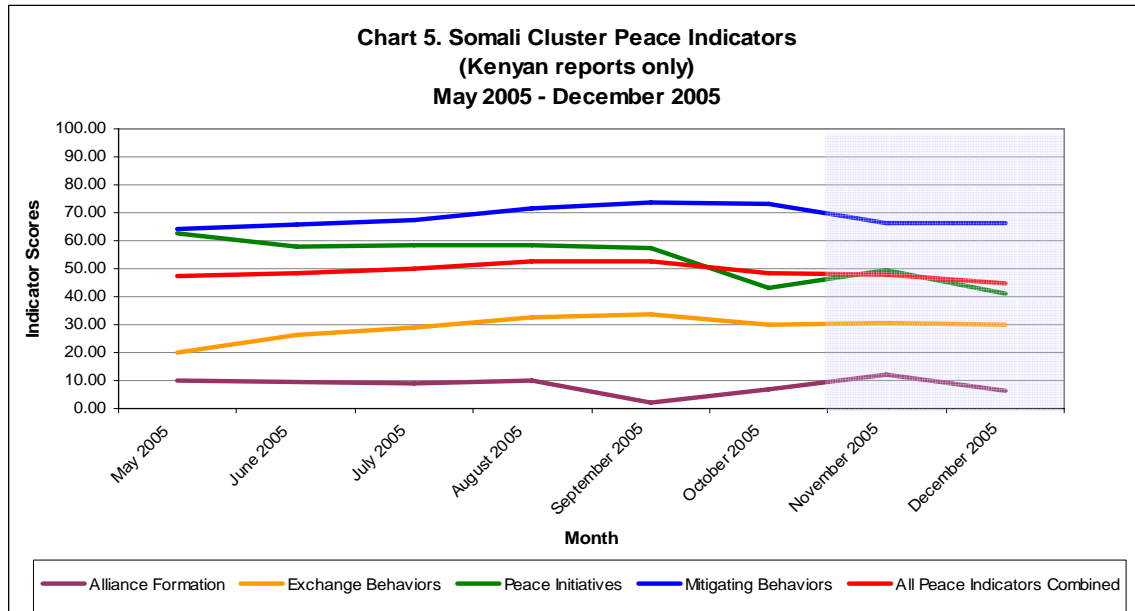
4.5 Conflict Indicators (Chart 4)



The conflict indicators remained relatively stable and low through out the reporting period. This corresponds well with the reduced number of deaths, incidences and livestock stolen immediately after the Turbi massacre. There was a slight rise in November and December of aggravating behavior and environmental pressure which corresponds with the tension brought about by the Kenyan Constitution review process and the drought which affected the entire Northern Kenya by the end of the year.

The rise in conflict indicators also corresponds with Chart 5 when peace indicators dropped at the end of the year for the same reasons given above.

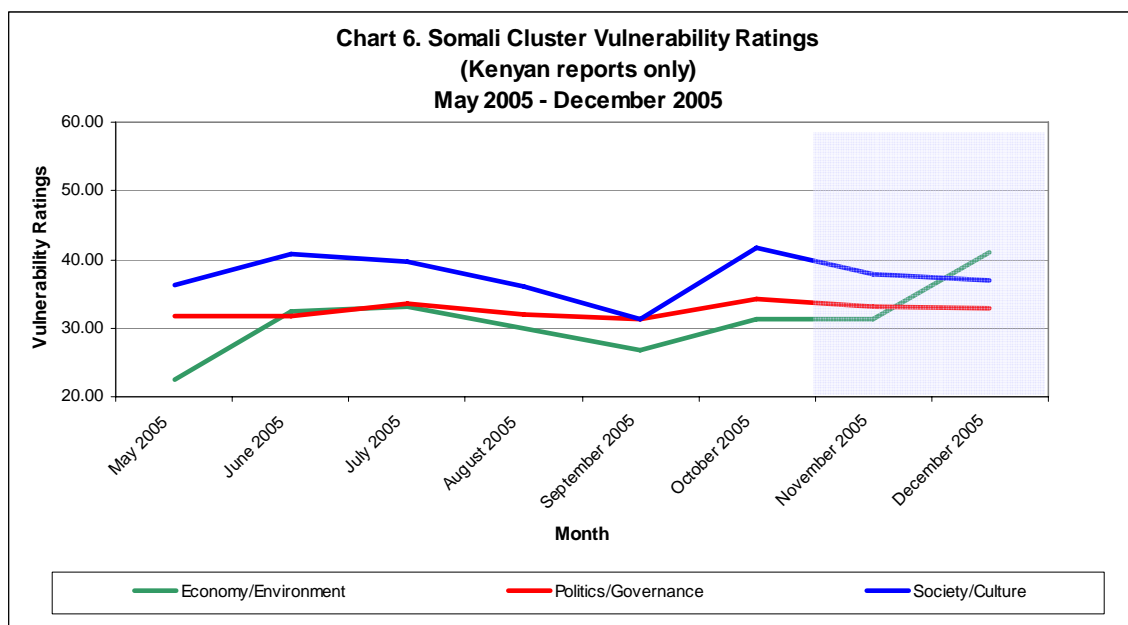
4.6 Peace indicators (chart 5)



Peace indicators were highest in the months of June to August although there was a slight drop in July. This corresponds well with the vulnerability ratings, which rose in July 2005 due to the massacre. The peace indicators were high as a result of efforts to bring peace between the Boran and Gabra of Moyale and Marsabit districts. Several meetings were held prior to the massacre and after the massacre to broker peace.

Cross border meetings were also held between Kenya and Somalia in Mandera district between the Garee and Murulle and Garee and Marahan in June. By the end of the year peace indicators had dropped sharply due to the drought, which brought tensions between the communities and also the constitution referendum.

4.5 Vulnerability ratings



Overall the vulnerability rating remained low despite the Turbi massacre. Measures were taken immediately by government to increase security and this may account for minimal increase of vulnerability ratings.

The highest vulnerability rating for Economy/Environment was in July as a result of the massacre. This impacted on economic activities especially in Marsabit and Moyale districts. Due to the tension, the movement on the highway was affected due to people restricting their own movements. This however reduced in September but Social/Cultural and Political vulnerability ratings rose slightly in October and November due to the referendum on the Kenyan constitution politics, which affected Wajir, Mandera and Garissa. It is peculiar that Environmental Vulnerability did not rise in November and December when they should have risen due to the biting drought during these months. There were a few reports of conflicts around dams especially in Mandera and Garissa in December. The World Food Programme stopped providing relief food by October 2005 when the drought was just beginning and it affected the people's lives negatively.

5: Analysis and vulnerability Assessment

5.1 Decelerators: Peace Initiatives

If ever a part of the country required constant vigilance and negotiation, it is the Somali cluster. An extremely fragile land with limited pasture and water resources yet supporting a large population of Kenya, the region faces constant threats from both natural and human factors. Yet in its fragility the government's presence is limited and confined mainly to a few ministries with heavy influence from the Ministry of Internal Security due to the regions proximity to Somalia and Ethiopia.

Community Peace Processes

Over the last 10 years, violence in the cluster has been mitigated as a result of efforts by the communities, which have continuously sought to end their conflicts through negotiated processes. These have brought successes and one can only imagine the number of violent cases that have been averted as a result. Some of the Peace initiatives are presented below:

5.1.1 PPDI- Pastoralist Peace and Development Initiative

This process emerged out of a protracted conflict between the Aulihan and Abdwaq clans of Garissa who conflicted over natural resource use. Parts of the Sankuri division in the district were being claimed by the Abdwaq as traditional land being encroached on by the Aulihan. The conflict was further exacerbated by political factors where the Aulihan from Somalia moved into Kenya and acquired national identity cards and began to increase the number of resident Aulihans thus influencing the voting patterns in Dujis and Fafi constituencies. Conflict erupted into violence killing large numbers of people. A peace process was initiated that brought representatives from both clans and is referred to as PPDI. The initiative has made great efforts at peace building in the district despite continued conflict but none having reached the magnitude of those experienced in 1998. What remained significant about this process was that the community contributed Kshs 800,000 for the elders on both sides to travel and negotiate on behalf of the clans.

5.1.2 Wajir Peace Process

The infamous Wajir peace process began in 1993 through the efforts of women groups who were later joined by elders, youth and government institution. It culminated in the Al Fatah Declaration, which was to guide the community towards peace. The process was integrated within the district administration in 1995 creating the Wajir Peace and Development Committee -WPDC, a subcommittee of the District Development Committee and chaired by the DC. ¹⁷(reference)

The peace process was again tested when conflict between the Ajuran and Garre erupted in 2000 resulting in large number of deaths. Estimates put it at 400 deaths and 15000 livestock stolen.¹⁸ Although it was initially impossible to stop the violence, later in 2001 the hostilities ended through an aggressive process of WPDC.

¹⁷ Baseline Study of the conflict in 7 districts of Northeastern and Eastern Provinces of Kenya. Northern Aid, Camel bell Limited, 2004

¹⁸ Oxfam GB- *Peace building initiatives in the Arid Districts of Kenya: Lessons and Challenges*. 2003. p 25

5.1.3 Modagashe Declaration

This was a declaration arrived at by members of Garissa, Mandera and Wajir districts to find solutions to the many issues the districts faced including banditry, trafficking of arms, livestock movements, socioeconomic problems, identifying role of peace committees among others. The declaration outlines decisions made by the community around these issues affecting the community especially unauthorized grazing, cattle rustling, trafficking of arms, control of livestock disease and trade, highway banditry, identity cards by non-Kenyans and others.

5.2 Accelerators

Somali cluster conflicts are often an interplay between diminishing resources and political incitement. Political incitement is by far one of the main accelerating points of conflict. Politicians and administrators play a key role whether in creating harmony or disrupting the peace.

The Marsabit Massacre is a case in point. Envy and hatred between the Gabra and Boran have emerged over the years with accusation that the Gabra have benefited more from trade and business in Marsabit enriching themselves as a result at the expense of the Boran. Politicians have used these sentiments to divide the two communities in the claim of defending the interests of their own constituents (tribes). Prior to the massacre, politicians' words inflamed people in public meetings and soon after the Rendile and Boran allied and began to steal animals from the Gabra. Shortly after this the massacre occurred. As a response, the government blamed the politicians for the massacre and as a result some were expected to give statements to the police concerning their actions and any information on events leading up to the massacre.

The rapid depletion of pastureland due to global warming and climatic changes is having a devastating impact on pastoralism in the Horn of Africa. In northern Kenya, this is evidenced by the large stock of animals that died between the end of 2005 and early 2006. These statistics have yet to be released by the Arid Lands office under the Office of the President. The resulting condition is one of few livestock, which creates room for future restocking. Restocking often involves raiding and stealing of livestock.

Large stock of arms from Somalia and Ethiopia are an accelerating point. Wajir has one of the largest stockpiles of arms due its proximity to the Somalia border and the trade

employs idle youth. These arms find their ways to cities in Kenya. The firearms act as a catalyst to an already volatile situation. All efforts to reduce violence must also address the problems of arms availability.

External factors also accelerate conflict in this cluster. The presence of a weak government in Somalia also accelerates conflicts in the cluster mainly by increasing the already the large number of refugees creating arms flow and influencing the OLF factor.

5.3 Intervention

Early Warning needs to be incorporated in all peace initiatives due to the fact that indicators are always present before conflict occurs. The case of Marsabit massacre is a glaring example where indicators such as continued raiding and revenge raiding occurred between the Boran and Gabra several weeks before. Furthermore, sentiments from the politicians pointed to the possibility of large-scale conflicts between the communities. Early Warning therefore means information must be relayed to the relevant authorities especially the relevant government authorities such as those involved in security.

The District Peace Committees must be strengthened to provide information and disseminate information to different stakeholders. These committees hold the key to improving peace because they comprise of different sectors of the community including elders, women, youth and government representatives. The current initiative by the National Steering Committee to establish a peace policy for Kenya will provide the legal framework for the existence of the peace committees, which comprises of both government and community leadership. Such a policy puts peace at the forefront and enables other government initiatives as well as private sector and civil society to find a basis to engage in peace and conflict management initiatives.

The Kenyan government needs to also work closely on the influencing factors from neighboring countries. Somali will always remain a destabilizing factor not only because of the flow of firearms but due to the flow of refugees who create more pressure on an already fragile land. It also tests the ability of the government to distinguish between the Kenyan Somali and those from Somalia and its objectivity in dealing with the newcomers in relation to the local residents.

The OLF factor is also a delicate matter that should continually be negotiated with the Ethiopian government. Currently each state downplays the role it has in affecting peace and stability in the cluster.

An aggressive policy around pastoralist livestock management may also be one major ways to mitigate the conflicts in the cluster. The development of water and pasture resources and livestock marketing are only examples in what might possibly improve the animal health care of pastoralist- a resource they are closely knit to. "One major reason for the weak participation of pastoralists in commercial markets is their ineffectiveness and inequitability. This is partly because pastoral areas are remotely situated from major consumption centers while transportation network is poor or non-existent. Other factors which limit effective participation by pastoralists in commercial livestock marketing include lack of animal market circuits, lack of water networks and holding grounds, low prices due to lack of market information, restrictive legislation such as quarantines and lack of credit facilities for traders."¹⁹

The legal status of pastoralist commercial enterprise as a whole needs to be regularized to protect the rights and properties of the communities. Such a process is only possible

¹⁹ karuiki and Letitiya in Discussion paper No. 031/2002 by John Omiti and Patrick Irungu on *Institutional and Policy Issues Relevant to Pastoral Development* in Kenya. 2002. p 40

if within government a specific department or ministry is set up to cater only for pastoral issues. Currently there are no major initiatives by legislators from pastoralist region or other major lobby groups to further an agenda of Pastoralism in the national policy. Although the establishment of the ALRMP- Arid Lands Resource Management Project under the Office of the President is a positive move it does not however respond to some of the major concerns of pastoralists since it looks at Pastoralism only as a development issue exclusive of its history, culture, influence from neighboring communities and other issues that affect Pastoralism as a way of life.

6. Diagnoses and Response options

Pastoralist communities face the continued threat of being marginalized in an economy that is classified as being in the developing stages. Considering that the economy of Kenya grows at a paltry figure of less than 2% annually and in view of past isolation of the pastoralists communities from mainstream society, the outlook is not good unless specific changes are made in the livelihoods of the people and economies of pastoralist regions. There is a need to recognize pastoralist conflicts as emanating from a persistent experience of a state of insecurity more than anything else. Insecurity in this definition is an experience of more than just the conflicts. It involves an experience of unpredictability, hostility and misery given all the factors facing these communities. This constant state leads to the use of whatever means-even violence- to safeguard one's survival.

Some of the key recommendations include developing policies on sharing of resources, policies that would direct the use of range management, alternative livelihoods and strengthening of traditional institutions for conflict management.

Policies that enable the community to share the limited resources should be a short-term priority of the government currently. Given that the resources are often limited, the exercise of negotiating for water and pasture should not be left to the communities alone.

To assist in the same use of resources, government should strengthen its capacity to educate the communities on range management. Currently the communities are often left to manage the resources as they see fit and considering that these resources are limited conflict is often inevitable. Range management solutions should also include the marketing of livestock for the pastoralist in internal and external markets.

Although Pastoralism is a way of life this does not negate the possibility of incorporating other means to diversify livelihood of these communities. There are several opportunities to use available resources in these regions in ways that generates income for the benefit of the communities. Marsabit district has great potential of developing eco-tourism just as an example. Activities such as bee-keeping game hunting, micro enterprises, and production of medicinal plants, fisheries and mineral excavation are some of the other examples. In other words, these areas have great potential for greater productivity if only a systematic framework by government and other

stakeholders is laid out. Such decisions demand greater political will than is currently manifest.

The Somali community still has effective traditional and customary conflict management institutions using the elders. This is a great asset in an environment that demands constant negotiation. These should continue to be used and recognized by the government. The Modogashe and Garissa declaration are useful examples to show how the community can deal with conflict using internal mechanisms.

Within the IGAD region efforts to bring peace to Somali should continue even after the new government has been established in Somalia. No peace will be realized in the Kenyan Somali cluster unless a government in Somalia is functioning. The current flow of refugees is a testimony to the fact that the new government has not taken control of the country.

Although the position of the Kenyan government is a precarious one over the OLF factor, Kenya needs to come out in the open and take a position because this is a factor that will have influence in the internal stability of this region of Kenya. The situation is one of latent conflict waiting for a situation that will allow for it to erupt. Whatever position will be held by the Kenyan government it must recognize the shared identities of the communities living along the Kenya and Ethiopia border but at the same time ensure that it does not antagonize its relation with Ethiopia.

7: Scenario Building

7.1 Status Quo

In the absence of any changes the situation should continue with low intensity violence and occasional large-scale conflicts, which will gravely affect the communities. One immediate impact is that the environmental factors will further diminish the fragile livelihoods of the people of this region. This means that the Somali cluster like the rest of northern Kenyan would not significantly contribute to the GDP of the country. What is most disconcerting is that the attitudes of the government as well as the rest of the Kenyan community will not change towards pastoralists and the danger in this would be continued marginalization of this area of Kenya.

7.2 Recommended change scenario

The likely scenario is that once pastoralist way of life is supported by long-term policies and attempts at dealing with conflict are undertaken, conflicts will subside in the short run. In the long term, the communities in this region can play a part in national development hence the experience of exclusion will no longer exist. Even though cases of violence will still be evident they will not be to the extent of the current situation. There will be some level of maturity in governance where politicians will not easily incite the community. Further still, the differences found around demarcation of administrative and political boundaries will reduce since communities will have learnt how to resolve conflicts. With further investment in these areas the diversified livelihood will see the improvements in incomes of families further ensuring an improvement in development.

Customary institutions will work side by side with the government in a region that is culturally cohesive with communities sharing a similar identity. These customary institutions will assist government in the short run to deal with issues of conflicts as the formal legal framework is slowly integrated.

7.3 Worst case Scenario

A steady rise of conflict is inevitable if the situation is not rectified. With indicators pointing to a steady decline in environmental factors such as deforestation, it is inevitable that as the population increases will create pressure and conflict will continue to mount around the relationships of the inhabitants in this region.

The escalation of violence will revolve around clans of Somali community and also the other tribes. But of great significance to the country is the influence of the Oromo Liberation Front, which will continue to affect greatly the communities of Gabra and Boran. Hatred between the two communities will fester aided by a poor political governance environment and it could result in unprecedented deaths among the communities.

Already feeling marginalized, all these impacts will affirm in the minds of the communities in the Somali cluster the view that the government has isolated them and sentiments against the government will rise probably to the levels felt during the period of the "Shifto Wars."

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