Understanding Security Concerns at the County Level: Experiences from Counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya

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Abstract. It is a historical fact and current reality that most counties in Kenya, particularly those in the North Rift Region (Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Trans Nzoia, Baringo, Turkana, West Pokot, Samburu and Elgeyo Marakwet), are haunted by actual or potential security concerns. This is partly on account of the fact that communities in this region continue to consciously or unconsciously rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance and hegemony in an atmosphere characterized by scarce resources, fear, and prejudice. The proliferation of ethnic conflicts among some Kalenjin communities (Keiyo, Tugen, Pokot, Ilchamus and Endorois) is so widespread that there is hardly any county in the North Rift Region where the problem has not reared its ugly head. This paper sets out to explain security concerns at the county level by examining experiences from counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya. The discussion is guided by the theory of realism in understanding security concerns at the county level. A review of previous empirical research and ongoing field studies are used to examine four problem areas: cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms, competition over scarce resources and conflict between refugees (or internally displaced persons) and local communities. The Tugen-Pokot conflicts are related to the cultural perceptions of regarding each other as traditional enemies. This manifests itself in resource disputeslinked to livestock, pasture, water, land, territory and boundary. The conflicts have increasingly become violent dueto proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons. While the Tugen, Ilchamus and Endorois consider cattle rustling as the major cause of dispute, the Pokot consider political issues as the genesis of their hostile relationship. On the other hand, the Keiyo and the Tugen had a bitter history of conflict over livestock which they raided from each other from pre-colonial period. This was exacerbated by disputes over land. Seeking access to water and green pastures, the nomads generally follow their cattle across the region. They cross and re- cross county boundaries resulting in conflicts over water and pasture. Resource competition in a fragile economy has had grave consequences for the economic security of families and internally displaced persons. This research paper recommends formulation of a policy on security concerns at the county level that should be integrated in the national policy on peace building and conflict management (2012). The policy should ensure the county peace secretariat, anchored on the county policing authority, functions in liaison with the county security and intelligence committee (CSIC). This would accord with the spirit of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) that provides for cooperation between national and county governments.

Key words: Counties, Security, Insecurity, Peace, Peacebuilding, Conflict, and Conflict Management

Introduction

Counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya are mainly inhabited by pastoralist communities characterized by rampant cases of insecurity which continue to interfere with development activities. This in turn has scared away investors who could tap on the diverse natural resources for the wellbeing of the residents. Many parts of the region have little

infrastructure such as modern roads and telecommunication networks that could open up the area for economic development.

Dispute over grazing land and limited water resources is a major cause of conflict that threatens peace and security in the region. The conflicts have increasingly become violent dueto proliferation and use of small arms and light weapons. This conflict has also been described as historical in nature – traced back to pre-colonial period. Most communities in the region continue to consciously or unconsciously rely on ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance and hegemony in an atmosphere characterized by scarce resources, fear, and prejudice.

According to the Constitution of Kenya (2010), the county governments' legislation and practice, it is evident that while counties do not have a direct mandate to provide security, they have vital functions in priority setting and an important development mandate, which impacts upon drivers of insecurity such as unemployment, inequality and disputes over land. Moreover, it is within counties that national security concerns emerge, crystallize and are ultimately resolved. It is against this background that this paper seeks for an understanding of security concerns at the county level, drawing from experiences from counties in the North Rift Region.

Understanding Security Concerns at the County Level: Experiences from Counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya

Available literature indicate that security concerns at the county level among communities from counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya are highly complex and multi-layered (Gibbons, 2014). Discussing the nature of conflicts, Sharamo classifies them as a composite; "Conflicts and violence have tended to take the form of cattle rustling, ethnic violence, displacements, massacres and revenge attacks" (Sharamo, 2014: 3). In other writings and discourses, there is a long tradition of cattle raiding for prestige and bride prices, as well as competition over scarce and diminishing water and pasture resources (Okumu, 2013). A view from another perspective of these conflicts observes that 'commercial' cattle raiding, involving excessive violence, also occurs for mass sale to urban markets (Okumu, 2013).

The conflicts have become increasingly intractable as a result of weakened traditional governance systems; breakdown of intercommunal social contracts; elders' loss of control over the youths; the persistence of *moran* (warrior) culture; and politicisation of peace making processes (Sharamo, 2014). On the other hand, there is also one report suggesting that conflicts have intensified partly as a result of time taken by the state to protect its citizens in these areas (Okumu, 2013).

Moreover, there are indications that conflicts in the North Rift Region are being transformed, moving away from traditional resource based incidents to being driven by economic and political gain (Gibbons, 2014). A deeper evaluation of the causes of conflicts in this region like in other places indicate some commonalities as to causative factors. Such conflicts are fuelled by drivers from institutional, socio-economic and political spheres operating at national and regional levels. In Gibbon's words, the 'institutional factors driving conflicts include contested borders, weak land tenure rights, and failures of policing and justice; political-economic factors including extractive commercial enterprises without adequate benefit sharing, land alienation, divisive politics; and corrupt local administration; whilst social factors relate to historical marginalisation and exclusion, as well as issues of identity, gender and ethnicity' (Gibbons, 2014: 1).

In many environments of conflict, development projects have been attended by extreme violence even leading to militancy, this has been exacerbated by fear of what devolution portends, political, and economic interests of politicians which is transferred to their constituents. In this mix, financers have used ethnic mobilization and identity politics to misuse youths into engaging in violence. In overall building peace becomes an important process.

Women's Role in Conflict and Peace Building in the North Rift Region

The role of women in the north rift pastoralist communities in relation to both promoting conflicts and spearheading peace building initiatives cannot be underrated. Women have been involved in singing the praises of raiders after successful raids and ridiculing their sons who do not get involved. However, women were the pioneers of peace building in the North Eastern Region in the early 1990s, and were said to be critical to the success of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee. Their involvement in preventing conflicts among the Turkana, Dodoth, Jie and Toposa through the *Alokita* Peace Crusades has also been documented (Okumu, 2013). Despite the assertions by Okumu, successes of women's role in conflict and peacebuilding seems to be underlooked by their male counterparts probably due to partriachal nature of the society.

Responses to Insecurity in the North Rift Region

The government has responded to the high levels of insecurity by proposing a disarmament campaign in rural areas, alongside deploying the paramilitary General Service Unit (GSU) to areas affected by sharp spikes in communal violence. There are doubts (Dowd & Raleigh, 2013) that this would effectively mitigate the violence, especially as similar schemes have not worked well elsewhere. In addition, it neglects the political dimensions of the problem, while poor infrastructure and dissatisfied police and security forces make policing and securing areas difficult.

According to Gibbons (2014), in the North Rift Region, the government has focused on 'peace building from below'; involving communities in maintaining and negotiating peace. He argues that there needs to be a greater emphasis on the responsibilities of the state and political leadership. The ability of communities to use traditional peace building means are 'being curtailed by modernisation, education (influencing the dynamics between elders and youth), the availability of firearms, and the commercialisation of the previously cultural practice of cattle rustling' (Sharamo, 2014: 4).

Issues such as the proliferation of small arms (Gibbons, 2014), which span administrative and ethnic boundaries cannot be effectively dealt with at the county level. There seems to be a lack of coordination and collaboration in peace and security between the local (county-level) and national level.

Peace Building Responses: Civil Society, Government, and the International Community

Although local civil society organisations and interreligious groups have long been working to limit violence (Cox et al., 2014), their work is negatively affected by divisive politics at the local level and lack of donor support. Since the 1990s a mix of local leaders, ordinary citizens, NGOs, and members of the executive have generated formal peace declarations, which are local political settlements drawing on a long-established system of customary and civilian governance (Scott-Villers et al., 2014).

Despite being flawed and limited, these agreements have often been more successful in creating peace and a sense of justice than modern state law. Laikipia Peace Caravan (LPC), is one example of local NGO initiative which worked to promote inter-community peace building among the Pokot, Samburu and Turkana communities. It emerged as aresponse to the failure of government agencies to address insecurity and violence in the area (Okumu, 2013).

There are concerns that the 'withdrawal of international assistance further increases the risk of future violence, particularly when civil society is increasingly under threat and operating within a shrinking space' (Elder *et al.*, 2014: 3). They further affirm that international community initiated a multifaceted peace building effort in the lead-up to the 2013 elections. This included promoting peace messaging and providing media and basic mediation training

amongst other activities. Halakhe (2013) adds that, they applied considerable pressure to ensure the implementation of constitutional reforms to mitigate the risk of a recurrence of violence.

The international and local peace movements 'eased tensions in the lead-up to the election and empowered groups to feel less threatened by each other' (Elder et al., 2014: 13). However, they were also criticised for suppressing dissenting opinions and ignoring lingering grievances in favour of the short-term prevention of mass violence. The UN strategy to ensure stability in Kenya has focused on three strategic areas: governance and human rights; empowerment of poor and vulnerable populations; and, sustainable and equitable economic growth; withpeace and reconciliation as a 'cross-cutting' issue (Cox et al., 2014).

This international support has enabled the Kenyan government to put in place multiple bureaucracies, such as the County Peace Forum (CPF), Sub County Peace Committees (SCPC), Ward Peace Committees (WPCs), and Location Peace Committees (LPCs), to better manage conflict inducing social cleavages (Cox et al., 2014). The conflict prevention efforts are coordinated by the National Steering Committee (NSC) on Peace building and Conflict Management, and involve large investments in new technology, early warning systems, and capacity-building programs for the country's peace infrastructure (Elder et al, 2014). The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) has also 'emerged as the principal formal bureaucratic institution at the helm of nation-wide efforts to change inter-ethnic group attitudes in Kenya and construct a more cohesive, peaceful national identity' (Cox et al., 2014).

One report suggests that a 'strong case can be made that the UN has been very successful in promoting human rights and political rights norms, as well as helping to construct new formal institutions and bureaucracies that have the potential to help reduce the propensity for violent inter-group conflict' (Cox et al., 2014). However, the formalisation of peace architecture at state level has been problematic, and traditional, ethno-centric social order remains the dominant form of socio-political organisation (Cox et al., 2014). This further justifies the need to understand security concerns at the county level.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopts realism to guide the investigation of the threats of ethnic conflict on national security in Kenya. Realists have a high regard for the values of national security and state survival (Jackson, *et al.,* 1999). Realist thinking assumes that human beings are primarily pre-occupied in things that promote their own well-being especially in their relation with each other which is characterized to be competitive. Human beings whether acting as individuals or in groups have a strong desire to control others. They however, do not wish to be dominated by others. Accordingly realists assume that, the desire of people to dominate others and to avoid the disadvantage of being dominated by others is universal in human nature.

Morgenthau observes that both domestic and international politics are a struggle for power modified only by the different conditions under which the struggle takes place. The will to power in men and women are more evident in politics. In his view, the tendency to dominate in particular is an element of all human associations from the family through fraternal and professional and local political organizations to the state (Morgenthau, 1999).

Realism's great concern and assumption is national security and national survival. In this assumption, the state is "considered to be essential for the good life of is citizen.' State provides security to all individuals and groups who live in it. It uses its security machinery to promote communal welfare and thus becomes the protector of its territory, of the population and of their distinctive and valued way of life (Morgenthau, 1991). As ethnic groups in the North Rift Region of Kenya promote their well-being, they are likely to enter into conflict with other ethnic groups. This conflict is also likely to disrupt peaceful life in the country and thus the state has to use its power to protect all groups. In the process ethnic groups sometimes find themselves clashing with the state security machinery.

However, it must be noted that realism is not without fault. Scholars of the international society approach have criticized realism of not capturing all or most important aspects of international relations. First, they argue that realism is a one dimensional theory that is narrowly focused and second, they argue that realism overlooks, ignores or plays down many important facets of international life. It overlooks the cooperative strain in human nature. It ignores the extent to which international relations form an anarchical society and not merely an anarchical system. It ignores other important actors such as individuals and NGOs (Morgenthau, 1991).

On the other hand emancipatory theory claims that the realist tradition of power politics is obsolete because security is now a local problem within disorganized and sometimes tailed states, and at the same time is a cosmopolitan problem of people everywhere regardless of their citizenship. It is no longer primarily or exclusively a problem of national security and national defence. The theoretical framework is significant in the analyses of the findings of this study because it helps to identify the common concepts and issues in ethnic conflicts and national security and provides guidance in the organization of the findings into an explanatory framework.

After the foregoing discussion, a review of previous empirical research examine four problem areas in understanding security concerns at the county level: cattle rustling, proliferation of small arms, competition over scarce resources and conflict between refugees and local communities.

Priority Conflict Dynamics and Security Analysis: Experiences from Counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya

The following discourse is organized around conflicts dynamics and security analysis in Countises of the North Rift Region: Turkana, Baringo, West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet, Samburu, Nandi and Uasin Gishu.

Turkana County

Turkana County is situated in the North Rift Region of Kenya and shares borders with Marsabit to the East, Samburu to the South East, West Pokot and Baringo to theSouth, Republic of Uganda to the West, The Republic of South Sudan to the North West and Republic of Ethiopia to the North. It occupies 77,000 km^2 (the 2nd largest in the country) with a population of 855,399 people (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

Priority Conflict Dynamics in Turkana County

Historically, the Turkana have had conflict with the Toposa of Sudan and the Karamojong and Dodoth of Uganda, where conflicts over cattle pasture andcattle raiding have led to a recurring cycle of raids and counter-raids over cattle inwhich rifles or automatic weapons are now primarily used. The Turkana's southerly neighbours - the Pokot - have a more ambivalent relationship with the Turkana, alot depending on how the rains have fared and whether they share common enemies across the border in Uganda; whilst the Samburu to the southeast of the lake have gradually been crowded-out of their traditional dry season pastures as the Turkana cross the Suguta Valley into Samburu County in ever greater numbers, with predictably bloody consequences.

The Turkana have been engaged in a war of attrition with almost all her neighbours including the Pokot (Kenya and Uganda), Samburu (Kenya), Toposa (South Sudan), Dassenach/Nyangatom (Ethiopia), Jie, Dodoth, Matheniko, Tepeth, Karamoja (Uganda). A recently identified hotspot area is the border between Pokot Central and Turkana South where frequent cases of cattle raids and deaths have been reported. Highway robbery along Marich pass and Kainuk has at some point worsened, making it necessary formotorists to travel with police escort.

According to reports from discussions withresidents, police officers are implicated in criminal activities, and say that many ofthem hire out their guns to criminals who use them to way lay people along themain roads in the county. NPRs are also seem to be involved in this vice (Kituku, 2012). Hence, small armsproliferation has been linked to the rising insecurity in the county.The key conflict issues have been: Cattle rustling among the Turkana and Pokot; Cross-border Conflict with Ethiopia; Cross-border conflict with South Sudan; Land; Inadequate Policing/State Security Policies; and, Resource-based Conflicts.

Security Analysis in Turkana County

The security gap in Turkana County is normally augmented by an array of home guards (NPRs) and community-sanctioned militias who are also said to engage in raids of the neighbouring communities for livestocks and retaliation. The most devastating issue about these conflicts is that they are fought using very sophisticated firearms, making it difficult for security officials to disarm the communities. Past attempts at disarming the communities have been unsuccessful due to lack of coordination with neighbouring communities along the international borders which is feared may leave the Turkana vulnerable to attacks from across the borders..

Being a frontier county, it has persistent conflicts with the neighbouring countries (Toposa from South Sudan, Nyangatom and Dassanech from Ethiopia, Jie, Matheniko, Karamojong, Dodoth, Tepeth and Pokot of Uganda). Conflicts with the Ugandan communities have recently subsided due to the signing in 1973 of the Lokiriama Peace Accord which was intended to bring peaceful coexistence among the communities. The accord is commemorated every year and there is a monument to this effect in Loima Location of Loima Sub-County.

Importantly, both the national and county governments do not seem tobe able to effectively secure the entire county. As a consequence, it is forced to recruit home guards in addition to regular police and the KDF. These are not enough and the people of the county who are able arm themselves to defend their livestock from livestock hungry neighbours such as the Karamojong, the Pokot, the Tugen, the Samburu and the Borana. Where defence does not arise, the Turkana retaliate against these communities for previous raids and theft of cattle by carrying out similar attacks and theft. It is not unusual that both human and livestock lives are lost in the skirmishes.

There is a porous border with Uganda; hence the Turkana are able to buy arms in exchange for livestock. These arms can find their way into the hands of militias during election years and cause devastation. There is need to closely monitor the security situation on the border of the county with Uganda, Samburu, Baringo and Marsabit, which in total is an expansive physical area that may require a lot of resources that only the government can muster. The discovery of oil and its further exploration within the county should be closely monitored.

Therefore, the management of the exploration, through legislation and policy, should be done with effective participation of the residents of the county. The epicentres of conflict and security in Turkana South are Kainuk-Lorokon, Kaputir-Nariomoru, Katilu. In Turkana East: Lomelo-Napeitom, Lokwamosing-Lochakula, Kapedo. In Turkana West: Oropoi, Lokichogio. In Loima: Lomirai, Lorengipi-Kotaruk, Marakalo. In Kibish: Kibish, Meyan. In Turkana North: Todonyang, Lorus, Kokiro. Finally, at the Border points with Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda.

Baringo County

Baringo County is situated in the former Rift Valley Province and shares borders witha number of neighbours namely, West Pokot, Elgeyo Marakwet, Nakuru, Laikipia, Turkana, Kericho, Samburu and Uasin Gishu Counties. It occupies an area of 11,015 square kilometers and has a population of 555,5612 people who predominantly belong to the Kalenjin community (Republic of Kenya, 2009). The county has minority groups such as the Ilchamus, Endorois,

Nubians and Ogiek who have been trying to get their ownconstituency to represent their political interests citing marginalization from the rest of the Kalenjin community.

Priority Conflict Dynamics in Baringo County

Local conflicts in Baringo County are mainly influenced by sporadic raids in the neighbouring counties. The borders between Baringo and West Pokot and Baringo

And Laikipia are porous and in the hands of armed cattle rustlers. Raiding in thesecounties is common. Relations between the Tugen and the Pokot in Baringo North constituency have for years been marked by cycles of violence and revenge attacks and cattle raids. In May 2012, clashes between the Pokot and the Tugen led to displacements of populations from their homes due to escalation of violent hostilities between the two communities. The most affected were the Tugen community who could not match the firearms used by the Pokot during the raids. Over the years, firearms have replaced more traditional weapons like bows and arrows, especially among the Pokot.

However, some argue that in 1932-35 OlArabal and Marmanet Forests land was gazetted by the government. The Endorois considered this space theirs. Since the government wanted to put up community development projects (including schools, roads, hospitals among others), others such as Maasai, Samburu and Njemps were displaced and resettled in the gazetted forest land. This was presented by the Endorois community who perceived that the settled communities were intruding on their land and contributing to their marginalization. Key conflict issues include: Cattle rustling along West Pokot, Laikipia, Turkana border; Small arms from the neighboring counties; Equitable Land use and sustainable investment; Representation from Minorities; Water Scarcity, Livelihood and Conflict.

Security Analysis in Baringo County

Surveys have revealed hotspots that need attention in Baringo County that also have poor road and communication networks, limited security personnel and serve as hiding places and routes for the bandits. Surveys have revealed that in as much as there are police stations and posts, police patrols, anti-stock theft units, community policing and the NGAO, the level of security is still inadequate in the County (Kituku, 2012). This is attributed to the remote terrain, poor communication and lack of enough equipment to support the security personnel. The capacity of the security personnel to prevent and mitigate conflict is also perceived to be limited. It is also suspected that cattle rustling in Pokot and Baringo is driven by retired security officers from Pokot who come back home to share their skills with young militia.

There is proliferation of small arms in areas alongthe border points between the Pokot and Turkana; Pokot and Samburu; Pokot and Tugen where pastoralists arm themselves for security reasons. Epicentres of conflict and insecurity include: Bartabwa; Arabal; Kinyach; Loruk; Silale; Kalapata; Chemo; Yatya; Kakir; Marigat; Kambi Nyasi; Sibilo; Koroto; Chepkising; Naborot; Nadome; Paka; Akwichatis; Kading'ding' Seretion; Lokis; Ang'oretiang' Kulal; Tirioko and Kapao.

Elgeyo Marakwet County

Elgeyo Marakwet County borders Baringo County to the East, West Pokot to the North, Uasin Gishu to the West and Trans Nzoia to the North West. It has a population density of 122 people per Km^2 occupying 3,030 square kilometers and a population of 369,998 people, who predominantly belong to the Keiyo and Marakwet sub tribes of the Kalenjin community (Republic of Kenya, 2009). There are also a few Tugen from the neighboring Baringo County. The county has 4 constituencies: Marakwet East, Marakwet West, Keiyo North, and KeiyoSouth.

Priority Conflict Dynamics in Elgeyo Marakwet County

Elgeyo Marakwet County was synonymous with violence before a relative peace was negotiated between the Pokot and the Marakwet in 2003. The early 1990's conflict between

Marakwet and Pokot involved the Marakwet of the current Marakwet East Sub County and Pokot of the East Pokot Sub County. This violence over the years weakened the capacity of the region to remain the undisputed 'bread basket' for the country since ethnic fights and forceful displacement of persons led to the fleeing of investors and large-scale farmers from the region.

Conflict in Marakwet West involved cattle rustling and ethnically instigated pastoral violence over livestock and water point's access between Pokot and Marakwet, leading to heavy self-arming of both communities. Land conflict resulting from boundaries and tenure disputes among clans are also prevalent. Other causes of conflicts in the region includes economic inequalities, youth unemployment, land encroachment, access to grazing lands and water points, competition over elective post and harmful traditional practices mainly Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

The major security challenges in the county include the proliferation of small arms especially in the valley which has hampered enforcement of law and order. Inter-tribal conflict over land between the Pokot from East Baringo and Marakwet along the Valley; human-wildlife conflict in Embobut and Kipkunur Forests; land claims by squatters who have been evicted from the forest; cattle rustling involving the Pokot warriors in Kapterit and Kamoi Locations of Kapcherop.

Conflict over water and pasture is evident between the Pokot, Marakwet and Tugen along the Kerio Valley especially during dry spells when the pastoralists bring their animals to graze in the valley. Livestock grazing in the game park (Rimoi) has always ignited conflict between the community and the Kenya Wildlife Service as it has prompted poaching in the game reserve. Key conflict issues include: Land and land disputes; Politics; Cattle rustling; Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW); Cross-border conflicts.

Security Analysis in Elgeyo Marakwet County

The county is relatively calm inspite of few isolated incidents of theft and robberies which have been contained by security agencies. The security situation in Elgeyo-Marakwet is relatively calm. The county does not have a major security threat following the 'Kapkanyar' declaration between the Pokot, Marakwet and Tugen. Isolated instances of cattle rustling occur between the Marakwet and the Luhya inthe areas bordering Trans Nzoia County, and the Pokot along the Kerio Valley (Kituku, 2012). These instances are however viewed as criminal activities that have no tribal backup and perpetrators are dealt with in accordance to the law.

Epicentres of conflict and insecurity in the county include: Iten Township in Kapchemutwa. In Kapcherop Division; Rogor Location; Kapterit Location; Kapmoi; and Tambach. In Tunyo Division: Arror Location;-Kapterik clan has conflict on Kapchenyegwol clan land. In Kapsowar Division there are criminal activities. In Chebiemit Division; - in Chebara Dam there is conflict due to lack of compensation for those moved to give way for dam construction. In Tot Division, conflict in Chesoi.

West Pokot County

West Pokot County borders Turkana to the North, Baringo to the East, Elgeyo Marakwet and Trans Nzoia to the South andthe Republic of Uganda to the West. It covers an area of 9,169.4 km^2. Kapenguria Town is the administrative headquarters. The Pokot are the predominant community in the county with some spilling overinto the arid parts of the neighbouring Baringo county. These people were formerly known as the 'Suk', a noun derived from 'Msuk' which in Pokot means 'stump'.

The Pokot claim to have occupied the land stretching from Soy up to West Pokot before they were displaced by the British colonialists who pushed them into the Karenger and Kanyarkwat ranches. Consequently, the Pokot harbour a historical and political grievance over land. Currently the county has three constituencies: Kapenguria, Pokot South, Sigor and

Kacheliba. Kapenguria is the leading urban centre in the county and has a population of about 35,000 people.

Priority Conflict Dynamics in West Pokot County

Over a period of time there has been an enormous resource-based conflict between Pokot, Turkana and Marakwet. The region is mainly inhabited by pastoralists

who derive their livelihoods from livestock, which depend on pasture and water. Reduced access to these resources, particularly pasture and water, has in the pastfew years put these communities under intense pressure often leading to conflict.The county also ranks as one of the most conflict-prone counties in the country owing to the insecurity occasioned by the inter-community theft of livestock.

A key hotspot area is the border between Pokot Central and Turkana South where frequent cases of cattle raids and deaths have been reported. The primary conflict aggravator in this corridor is the proliferation of small arms given the porous nature of the neighbouring borders. However, the Location Peace Committees believe that the catalyst behind the intra and inter community conflicts are the opinion leaders and traditional seers who give inciting information to their communities, as they scramble to outdo each other for territorial identity and clansupremacy.

The use of SALWs which are more catastrophic resulting in greater fatalities and displacement of hundreds of people. Cattle rustling has also assumed a commercial aspect where stolen or raided livestock are hidden in Kabolet forest and sold to dealers who in turn sell them to slaughter houses for distribution to the markets beyond the region. Highway robbery along Marich pass and Kainuk sometimes worsens, making it necessary for motorists to travel with police escort.

According to reports from discussions with residents, some police officers are implicated in criminal activities – that they hire out their guns to criminals who use them to waylay people along the main roads in the county. NPRs are also said to be involved in this vice (Kituku, 2012). Hence, small arms proliferation has been linked to the rising insecurity in the county. Key conflict issues include: Cattle rustling among the Pokot and Turkana; Inadequate policing and state security policies; Land; the KVDA; Marginalization; and, Human-Wildlife Conflict.

Security Analysis in West Pokot County

Isolated cases of insecurity have been witnessed in areas like Adurkoit village in the county. Cases ofcattle theft and armed robbery have been experienced particularly along border points with the Turkana County and within Kapenguria town. There are reported cases where animals are seized and confiscated unlawfully by Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) in border areas of Loroo, Kanyerus and Katikekile. Trade in illegal firearms and arms trafficking are notable in Kapenguria township and across the neighbouring counties.

Pokot North Sub County is facing a security challenge in that a number of residents were displaced and sought refuge in some areas considered to be secure both in Kenya and Uganda. The border disputes between the Pokot and Sabiny pastoralists have affected many communities in Katikomor, Kanyerus, Chepchoina and other border areas like Akoret, Kapalata, Chemorongit, Orwa, Turkwel, Ompolion, and Akulo among others. There are two schools of thought that try to explain the problem: cultural and ecological.

The cultural explanation is simplistic and assumes that the Pokot and other pastoralists (Karamojong, Turkana and Sabiny) are likely to go for cattle raiding just to steal cattle and plunder their neighbours. The ecologists argue that raids occur to replenish dwindling stocks as a result of ecological catastrophes and famine. This needs to be verified. Highway robberies along Lowus in Pokot Central, a distance of 3kms only from Turkwel Gorge, pose a security threat to motorists.

Inadequate personnel and equipment pose a challenge to security operations in the county. Following the voluntary disarmament exercise in the region, the Sub County Peace

Committee (SCPC) and theTraditional council of elders have been on the forefront in encouraging the warriors to voluntarily surrender their guns. However, it was noted that old arms are the ones mainly surrendered. Powerful ones are retained allegedly for 'community protection' purposes. Epicenters of conflict and insecurity include: Kabolet forest; Sigor; Ompolion; Amolem; Kasei; Orwa; Makutano Town; Katkomor bordering Pokot and Transzoia; Akulo; Karon; Nanyapong; Takaiywa; Kanyerus; and Chepurwo.

Samburu County

Samburu County borders Marsabit to the North East, Isiolo to the South East, Laikipia to the South, Baringo to the South West and Turkana to the West. The county is vast and stretches north from the Ewaso Nyiro River to the South of Lake Turkana. It has a total population of 223,947 (Republic of Kenya, 2009). It occupies a surface area of approximately 21,022.2km. The county is home to the Samburu people who constitute about 70% of the total population while the remaining 30% is unevenly shared by Turkana, Kikuyu, Meru, Somali and other ethnic communities.

The County is arid and semi-arid, making pastoralism and agro-pastoralism the main economic activities. Crops such as maize and wheat are grown in the highlands particularly Loroki Division whereas livestock keeping is practised in the low lands.Tourism is another major source of income to the Samburu people courtesy of the national parks, wildlife conservancies and hotels that dot the county. Despite this natural resource endowment, the Kenya Integrated Household Budget Survey of 2005/06 indicates that poverty rate in Samburu County is 73%, a much higher figure compared to the national average of 47.2%.

In terms of community relations, the Samburu and Turkana have been conflicting over the years. The Turkana, particularly in Baragoi area of Samburu North claim that they have been discriminated against in employment opportunities within the county and are also under-represented in the Samburu County. The Turkana have also blamed the media for not recognizing them. There are some concerns that when the Turkana in Samburu North are raided either by the Samburu or Pokot the media reports that a raid has occurred in Samburu North without specifying the victims of such raids (Ruto, P., 2011). With such reporting, many Kenyans think that it is the Samburu who have been raided when in actual fact it is the Turkana.

Priority Conflict Dynamics in Samburu County

General perceptions of Samburu is one of the factors that may threaten peace within the county. The county has often beenportrayed as a highly conflict risk and prone county. This is hardly surprising considering the highly publicized Baragoi incident of 2013 in which about 50 government security officers were killed by suspected armed bandits in a botched cattle-recovery exercise. However, the epicentre of conflicts in the county is Samburu North Sub-county. It has been noted that Samburu North, perhaps due to its vast and difficult terrain and harsh climatic conditions, is aregion that is bereft of law and order. Government presence seems to be very minimal and is perceived to be characterized by a week criminal justice system. A high level of ethnic identity and consciousness has resulted in communities in the region (mainly Samburu and Turkana) communalizing and politicizing conflicts/crime hence making it difficult to resolve inter-community grievances.

Despite myriad peace building efforts by government, local leadership and civilsociety organizations, the benefits expected from such efforts have been finite,partly attributed to poor stakeholder mapping (mainly targeting elites) and mostinitiatives undertaken in major urban and peri-urban areas of the sub-county. CSOs have also not escaped censure for what is regarded as 'commercialization' ofconflicts. Hence, for effective mitigation, the conflict requires a serious analysis to identify the real actors, motivations and interests; followed by long-term grassroots peace building efforts to ensure the peace is owned by the supposed-beneficiaries.

Indeed, the County Government should take a lead role in addressing the conflicts in Samburu County as their persistence poses a serious threat to sustainable development of the county. The genre of conflicts prevalent in the county have been identified as, but not limited to; Highway Banditry; Cattle raids (rustling)/stock theft; Conflict over resources (land, pasture, water); Political conflicts; SALWs; Negative ethnicity and tensions (especially in Samburu North).

Security Analysis in Samburu County

The security situation in Samburu County is manifested by livestock thefts, highway banditry and boundary disputes, which have been worsened by inadequate state penetration, availability of SALWs and hostility between the Turkana and Samburu communities particularly in Samburu North. In terms of state penetration, the number of security personnel posted in the county is perceived to be inadequate, poorly distributed and ill-equipped to deal with the danger posed by hardened cattle rustlers from the neighbouring communities. Lack of basic amenities has complicated matters. The proliferation of SALWs into the hands of Samburu warriors and fellow tribesmen has compounded cattle rustling and conflicts in the entire North Rift Region.

A study by Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC) in 2003 estimated that 16,478 illicit arms are in the hands of the community. Recent surveys, including the one done by Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2011 infer that there could actually be more illicit firearms in Samburu. To demonstrate the severity of community armament in Samburu and the extent to which hardened livestock rustlers can go to protect their property, suspected Turkana bandits in Suguta valley, Baragoi shot a military chopper that later crashed killing Samburu District Commissioner James Nyandoro in 1996. Since then, anumber of security personnel have lost their lives in the Suguta Valley.

Nandi County

Nandi county stretches from the low-lying Soin to the South, through the lush green highlands of Kapng'etuny (Nandi Hills) and to the stretch of endless plateau in Mosop to the North. Thelandmass seems to rise laboriously from the tip of Kapseng'ere to the west throughthe pristine forested midlands of Chesumei through Kapsabet and to the elevated ridge of Ol'Lessos to the forests of North Tinderet. In between lies the tea estatesand a whisper of wattle plantations.

The administrative headquarters is Kapsabet Town. It has 8 constituencies (Mosop, Aldai, Emgwen Tinderet, Nandi Hills and Chesumei). It borders Uasin Gishu to the North and East, Kericho to the South East, Kisumu to the South, Vihiga to the South West, and Kakamega to the West. The county has a total population of 752,965, of which 376,488 are male while female are 376,477. The topography of the county is dominated by the scenic Nandi Hills. The local people are mostly of the Nandi sub-tribe from the Kalenjin tribe but there are other ethnic groups including Ogiek, Luhya, Luo, Kikuyu, Kipsigis and Terik living in the county.

Priority Conflict Dynamics in Nandi County

The problem of land has remained a persistent conflict issue in Nandi County. It can be traced backto the independence period when many non-Kalenjin communities moved in search of wage and self-employment. Using the economic and political leverage available to them during the Kenyatta regime, the Kikuyu, Meru and Embu groups, but especially the Kikuyu, took advantage of the situation and formed many land-buying companies.

These companies would, throughout the 1960s and 70s, facilitate settlement of hundreds of thousands of Kikuyu in the Rift Valley, especially in the districts with arable land – notably Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Trans Nzoia and Narok. The land in the said districts historically belonged to the Kalenjin, Maasai and kindred groups such as the Samburu. But the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru were not theonly ones to acquire land in the Rift Valley after independence.

The new entrants in the post-independence period also included the Kisii, Luo and Luhya, who moved into and bought land that bordered these districts.

This new settlement continued despite opposition by the indigenous ethnic groups of the Rift Valley. In fact the Nandi, in particular protested in a more dramatic manner when in 1969 at a meeting in Nandi Hills, what became known as the "Nandi Declaration" was made after a gathering of radical political leaders in Nandi met to protest what they regarded as an invasion of their ancestral land by outsiders. The land issue is still very contentious in the county from time to time sparking violence between the Nandi and the Luo community along the border.

The Nandi have always believed that Chemelil is part of their ancestral land and this has always resulted to strained relationships between these two communities especially during election periods. Recently, the Nandi/Nyando border has also been a cause of conflict. Young menfrom both communities have been involved in inter-ethnic violence using bows, arrows, spears, machetes and other weapons. Although violence is not something new to most villagers, stock theft remains an immediate cause of concern. Squatters from both the Kalenjin and Luo communities raised concern that the conflict had more to do with land ownership, and that the people behind it were rich individuals who had interest in the parcels of land.

According to squatters, the inhabitants of the vast 1,100-acre plantation have been restless ever since the Provincial Administration and the Ministry of Special Programmes decided in late 2012 that the land would be used for resettling squatters. It was this decision that the residents who were affected by the clashes believe angered some who had allocated themselves large portions. Key conflict issues include: Cattle raids at the areas bordering Nandi/Kisumu counties; Land ownership and squatter problem; Cross-border conflicts; Rape and defilement cases.

Security Analysis in Nandi County

The security situation in Nandi is relatively good. However, there are common security threats in some areas especially the border between Muhoroni and Nandi East, Nandi South and Khamisi, Nandi North and Kakamega North, and Tinderet Sub

County and Muhoroni. This is an area that has always been the centre for violence in the two bordering counties following rampant stock theft through a network of individuals. Conflicting issues between Nandi and Luo community in Chemelil is historical in nature.

The public is reported to be relating positively with the security agents and thus there is good collaboration between the two. This could be one of the attributes of the peaceful elections conducted in 2017. Epicentres of conflict and insecurity include: Kapkitony and Soba Locations; Tinderet Tea Estate; Meteitei location; Nandi East; Nandi South; Songhor location; Tinderet, Muhoroni border; Nandi South bordering Vihiga County; Kabirer Location; Kapmasai; Kapmungei.

Uasin Gishu County

Uasin Gishu County lies in the mid-west of the Great Rift Valley region and borders six counties namely: Elgeyo Marakwet to the East, Trans Nzoia to the North, Kericho to the South, Baringo to the South East, Nandi to the South West and Kakamega to the West. The county covers an area of 3,345 Km^2 with a population of 894,179 people. It has a population density of 267 people per sq. km. and represents 2.3% ofthe total population of the country (Republic of Kenya, 2009).

The administrative town of the county is Eldoret Town. In 1912, the town of Eldoret was established in the midst of the farms to serve as an administration centre. The name "Eldoret" is based on the Maasai word "eldore" meaning "stony river" because the bed of Sosiani River is very stony. The county has, since the early 1990s been inhabited by settlers who immigrated from England, Scotland, South Africa and Zimbabwe to farm in the county. Uasin Gishu is a

multi-ethnic county composed of mainly Kalenjin, Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Somali, Turkana, Maasai, Kisii and Kamba. Other ethnic groups are also found in the county.

Priority Conflict Dynamics in UasinGishu County

There is general agreement that elections are a trigger to settle historical conflicts revolving around multi-ethnicity and perceived historical injustices, skewed land settlement allocation and political party affiliation in Uasin Gishu County. The county was marked as one of the epicentres in 2007/08 post-election violence that rocked the country. The violence was most prevalent in areas like Sugoi, Soy, Matunda, Langas, Kiambaa, Burnt Forest and Munyaka which registered a stunning number of casualties during the skirmishes.

The Waki Commission came to the conclusion that there were three underlying reasons for the clashes: Ambitions by Kalenjin to recover what they think they lost when the Europeans forcibly acquired their ancestral land; The desire to remove "foreigners", derogatorily referred to as "madoadoa" or "spots" from their midst. The reference was mainly towards the Kikuyu, Kisii, Luo and other communities who had found permanent residence in the RiftValley; and, Political and ethnic loyalty.

However, a close scrutiny reveals that the conflict was not exclusively inter-ethnic inthat members of the same community were also involved in violence over differences in political affiliations. The post 2008 political context has been characterised by shifting political alliances still based on ethnicity and personal rivalries which had adirect trickle-down effect in Uasin Gishu, tending to define the ethnic interactions at lower levels of the community. Key conflict and insecurity issues include: Land; Crime; armed gangs and youths; Tribalism and Negative Ethnicity.

Security Analysis in Uasin Gishu County

Uasin Gishu county is one of the promising counties in terms of economic investments in the larger Rift Valley region. It is considered as the capital 'city' for the region populace. This is because of availability of proper infrastructure such as the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH) which is one of the few hospitals in Kenya that boast latest medical technologies. For example, it has an AMPATH Centre for people suffering from Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus (HIV). The County's Achilles Heel is its vulnerability to conflicts arising from historical land grievances harboured by the Kalenjin vis-à-vis the Kikuyu community.

Generally, Uasin Gishu County is relatively stable in terms of security and it is a 'modest political risk' county. This is with the exception of post-election period where security situation is usually sensitive. The most affected areas are usually those occupied by the non-Kalenjin communities, especially the Kikuyu, such as Turbo, Kiambaa and areas on the outskirts of Eldoret Town. Both the community and the security agencies agree that the crime rate in Eldoret has significantly reduced over the past few years. The police bosses however are concerned that they can only deal with prevention and prosecution of crime but have no capacity to deal with perceptions which are often what conflicts are about.

It has recently been observed that there is significant improvement in the maturity of the residents since 2013 election. However levels of crimes could rise anytime in view of large number of unemployed youths in the county. Epicentres of conflict and insecurity include: Kiambaa; Munyaka; Langas; Yamumbi; Burnt Forest; Eldoret Town; Cheptiret; Turbo; Huruma; Kesses; Maili Tisa; Moiben; and, Kimumu.

Summary of the Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter outlines a summary of the findings, conclusion and recommendations drawn from the discussions on, "understanding security concerns at the county level: experiences from counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya."The discussion has been guided by an

examination of the priority conflict dynamics and security analysis of the counties in the North Rift Region.

Summary of the Findings

From the foregoing discussion, understanding security concerns at the county level with reference to experiences from counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya cannot be conclusive without interrogating the concept of cattle rustling. Cattle rustling is clearly an economic activity for most of the population categories in the North Rift Region of Kenya. Livestock pastoralists seem to perceive the government as not giving them enough support according to their expectation.

The absence of a national policy for pastoralist economies marginalizes this group compelling them to turn to illegal activities for sustenance. Consequent redress mechanisms like forced disarmaments have proven elusive since governments have resulted in at times co-opting citizens to carry out disarmament policing and this has spiralled into un-checked 'government enabled militias' whose activities have also not been so objective.

This has exacerbated violence, increased the number of weapons into the conflict epicentres and decelerated development in most of the region. It is clearly evident that purely militarized remedies have given a blind eye to the development alternatives where the answer sought should be based on understanding the cultural matrixes of these communities. As such, tapping into the social-cultural alternative modes of resolving such conflict should be part and parcel of peace-building national policies for cattle rustling areas in the North Rift Region.

Conclusion

The roots of the conflicts and insecurity in the North Rift Region of Kenya are multiple and overlapping. They stem from economic and social inequalities, marginalization, high youth unemployment, and unsettled clashes over land and resource ownership, use, benefit and disposal. Insecurity in this region also stems from ethnic tensions related to political interests, and spillovers from conflicts in neighbouring South Sudan and Somalia. A number of these conflict triggers are longstanding while others are newly emerging.

Experiences from counties in the North Rift Region of Kenya reveal the significance of understanding security concerns at the county level. The shift to devolved governance units after promulgation of the Kenya Constitution (2010) holds important opportunities that can turn around some of the conflict triggers, redress years of marginalization and poor access to services, increase participation of civilians in governance of their localities and increase the fronts on which Kenya can address the challenge of radicalization of youth, propagation of violent extremist ideologies and terrorist attacks.

However, devolution also comes with the risk of new conflict triggers with political actors stirring up ethnic tensions where they were previously minor issues, new marginalization and exclusion, unemployed youth and the presence of organized criminal groups and militia including violent extremist ideologues, and the corresponding insufficient presence of policing structures and actors. The counties were also at different levels of socio-economic development at the time of establishment. Some counties were better endowed with natural resources such as rich agricultural land, livestock and more friendly climatic conditions compared to others.

Recommendations

This paper recommends formulation of a policy on security concerns at the county level that should be integrated in the national policy on peace building and conflict management (2012). The policy should ensure the county peace secretariat, anchored on the county policing authority, functions in liaison with the county security and intelligence committee (CSIC). This

would accord with the constitutional spirit of consultation and cooperation between national and county governments.

There is need for enhanced capacity building of relevant national and county government agents to develop and implement coherent national security policies, action plans and strategies. A stronger evidence base should be developed to inform policy frameworks and decision making in order to promote peace and stability. A key assumption in this logic, however, is that political goodwill will remain at a positive level, which welcomes and supports engagement by the various actors and remains focused on seeking ways to counter the existing and new security challenges and inclusive in the approaches to tackling the challenges.

Measures to Strengthen Security in the North Rift Region of Kenya

A recent study on security issues in the North Rift Region of Kenya (Lind *et al*., 2015) recommended redressing of regional inequalities and historic marginalisation by following the moral intent of the Kenya Constitution (2010) and sincerely implementing its provisions to devolve powers and resources to new sub-national county governments. There is also need to mobilize political support for security sector and policing reforms that aim to reign in abusive, predatory and corrupt practices and to promote accountability to a citizenry in need of protection. The role of women and girls is pivotal and must also be recognized, strengthened and built upon towards practical solutions to conflict resolution.

A report by the Kenyan National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) looking at the state of security in Kenya also recommends: fast tracking security sector reforms; making sure that police are properly equipped and their welfare is looked after; addressing corruption; taking personal responsibility for security lapses; adding human rights to the police curriculum; sensitising the public on national cohesion; addressing youth unemployment; investigating and prosecuting human rights violations; facilitating the movement of police vehicles; and, making public the findings of previous commissions of inquiry on insecurity and conducting inquiries into other security lapses (KNCHR, 2014).

Measures to Address Pastoral Violence in the North Rift Region of Kenya

A recent report looking at the politics of pastoral violence, with a focus on counties in the North Rift counties, recommends: the leadership of the devolved county governments must promote inclusive governance; awareness raising around development projects, such as Vision 2030, should be undertaken to ensure that the communities fully understand and appreciate the projects and position themselves to reap the economic windfalls; guidelines for establishing wildlife conservancies should be established and sufficient communal consultations held before one is set up; ensure communal pacts are binding and supported by all communities; build the capabilities of young people so that they can benefit from development projects; better vetting of National Police Reservists and disarmament programmes; the government should invest in and use early warning and response systems; and, deter revenge attacks by ensuring justice (Sharamo, 2014).

A recent brief looking at peace and security in the North Rift Region of Kenya recommends: focusing on the systemic drivers of conflict which cross administrative boundaries; integrating peace and security and the activities of local communities at the county level and the state; and, integrating peace building with other sectors such as development and governance to ensure they are conflict sensitive (Gibbons, 2014). This should be carried out in an integrated, coordinated, long-term approach throughout the North Rift Region as a whole.

Measures to Avoid Future Conflict that may Lead to Insecurity

A recent report looking at lessons learnt from the 2013 elections for avoiding future conflict recommends that: the constitution and reform agenda remain an opportunity to move beyond short-term crisis management and resolve underlying grievances and potential drivers of future conflict; the Kenyan security sector must regain citizen trust; civil society should prioritise – and be supported to prioritise – bottom-up reconciliation programming between

ethnic communities; government and political leaders must create opportunity and guarantee space for active citizen engagement; sustainable mechanisms must be found to increase the perceived cost of violence; preventing electoral violence requires sustained international support; and trade-offs between short-term prevention of mass atrocities and long-term conflict prevention merit further evaluation and learning (Elder et al., 2014).

The report also recommends that peace building organisations should offer technical assistance on better practices for mitigating triggers for election violence and addressing underlying drivers of widespread political violence. Another report looking at conflict management in the North Rift Region of Kenya recommends that: community-based peace-building programmes should be broadened to address root causes rather than focusing only on conflict management; donors should support programmes that specifically address the historical grievances that are fundamental conflict fault-lines among communities in the North Rift Region; and, development programmes working in conflict affected areas should be both conflict sensitive and put addressing the root causes of conflict at the centre of their efforts.

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