

Responses to pastoral wars

A review of violence reduction efforts in Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya

Cattle herders are widely dispersed throughout the border regions of southern Sudan, northern Uganda, and north-western Kenya. Known collectively as the Ateker,¹ these pastoralists share common community structures, languages, and ethnicity. Inhabiting the political, social, and economic periphery, they have long suffered marginalization at the hands of central governments, while at the same time seeking to protect their own independence and cultural autonomy. Competition between the pastoralists over common property and resources is ongoing, often taking the form of armed cattle rustling. Once limited to isolated incidents these low-intensity conflicts have, however, been transformed by the contagious effects of civil wars in southern Sudan and northern Uganda—and by the accompanying diffusion of high-powered assault rifles—into larger-scale violent clashes. These ‘pastoral wars’ go largely unreported.

This *Issue Brief* reviews the causes and consequences of, as well as the responses to, conflicts in pastoralist areas in the Sudan–Uganda–Kenya region. A perspective that transcends borders is crucial: cross-border inter-tribal clashes frequently erupt in these areas (see Box 1), as well as among groups within each of these countries. Pastoral conflicts have become increasingly bloody and protracted, thereby contributing to a spiral of retributive violence. Over time they have also become entangled with outside political and commercial interests. The human costs range from widespread and indiscriminate intentional killings to long-term displacement of households and severe livestock depletion.²

State responses to pastoral violence in Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya are often politically driven and typically consist of coercive measures that focus on disarmament without reconciliation. Although favoured by governments, weapons collections alone seldom reduce violence over the long term. Paradoxically, they can engender new vulnerabilities for some populations as well as stimulate violent resistance. Even when disarmament of pastoralist groups is peaceful, recent experiences in South Sudan demonstrate that promised security often fails to materialize, subjecting the same communities to violent attacks.

More positively, a number of civil society organizations (CSOs), often in cooperation with regional and inter-

national agencies, are stepping in to support traditional approaches to conflict mediation and resolution. Notwithstanding their limitations, these initiatives are helping to foster community safety where state presence is virtually absent. These initiatives are undercut, however, when states—sometimes with international support—engage in heavy-handed tactics to recover weapons from these communities.

Untangling the root causes of pastoralist violence

Pastoralist violence is often viewed narrowly as a symptom of inter-tribal conflict over cattle and other common



Ugandan soldiers round up Karimojong pastoralists in a cordon and search disarmament exercise near Moroto, North-eastern Uganda, March 2007. © Euan Denholm/Reuters

Box 1 Pastoralist violence in the border areas

Pastoralist communities in Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya straddle national borders (see map below). Unsurprisingly, cross-border conflicts are common and can involve several hundred fighters at a time, in some cases up to a thousand or more.³ Because they do not involve state forces directly and are far from the centres of power they tend to arouse little public curiosity. Even so, violent confrontations between the Toposa and Turkana, among others, occur on a weekly basis.⁴ The human costs of this are far-reaching and present a growing array of risks to the security of the states involved.

During one particularly violent clash in 2004, for example, more than a hundred Turkana warriors from north-western Kenya crossed the border into southern Sudan to attack a Toposa *kraal* (homestead): more than 30 Toposa and three Turkana were killed with at least 100 cattle stolen.⁵

Violent attacks continue on a regular basis. In May 2007, over 50 people were reportedly killed—almost all of them women and children—and 11 injured when Toposa tribesmen attacked Didinga villagers outside Kapoeta, Eastern Equatoria (South Sudan). The attacks were extremely well coordinated and involved a combination of 12.7mm machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and assault rifles.⁶ In August, 67 people, including nine children, were killed in clashes between Logir and Dongotono warriors near Ikotos, Eastern Equatoria.⁷

property resources. While resource competition plays a fundamental role in exacerbating periodic outbursts of violence, the reality is more complex. Equally important to understanding insecurity among pastoralist groups is their distant and often oppositional relationship to the state. As with other peripheral groups in the region, pastoralists have suffered systematic mar-

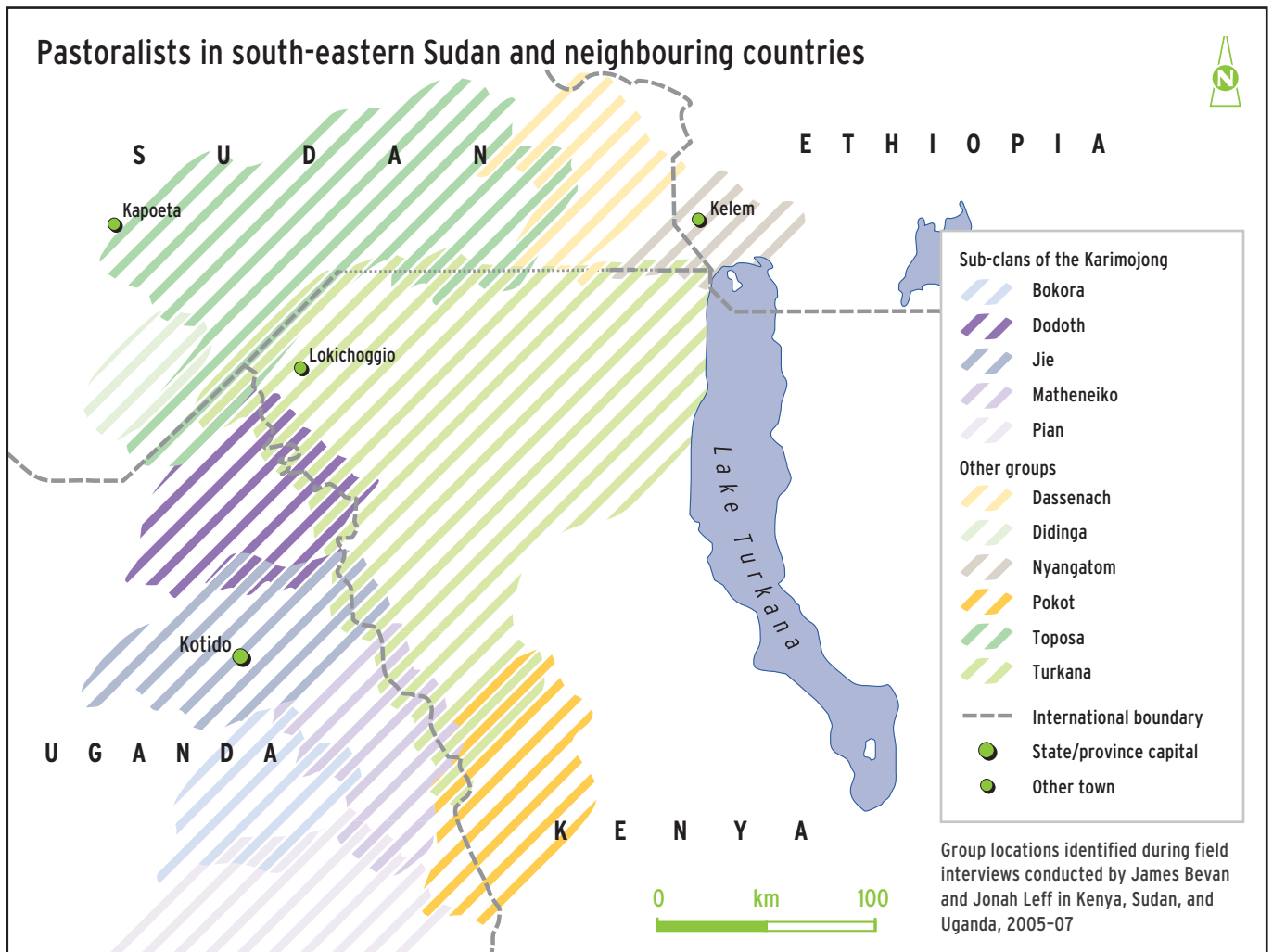
ginalization from central authorities.⁸ At the same time, they have a history of rejecting the authority of the state, which they view as threatening to their distinct nomadic way of life.

Pastoralist violence must be situated, then, in terms of these forces of mutual opposition and exclusion as well as the struggle for control of resources. Growing population pressure in relation

to a declining resource base, coupled with increasing environmental pressures such as droughts, have reduced pastoral access to water and other resources. In a context where land ownership and resources are structured according to individual tenure, rather than by regulated communal systems, relations can easily break down.⁹

Ultimately, pastoralists do not partake of a nation's so-called 'public goods'. They are often denied government services and since formal legal and police services are usually non-existent in pastoralist communities, the state seldom plays a role in guaranteeing their security. When they do become an object of state interest and intervention, it often involves forced settlement and other coercive efforts to make nomads conform to sedentary life, which only strengthens their impulse to remain apart. Furthermore, in the case of security promotion, state actions tend to be authoritarian and heavy-handed.

Under such conditions, the demand for small arms—mediated by prefer-



ences for self-defence and acquisition of resources—increases (see Box 2). The influx of military-style weaponry and ammunition to pastoralist communities due to the civil wars in Sudan and Uganda has lowered relative prices, dramatically increasing the firepower of these groups. Meanwhile, the perseverance of vibrant migratory and trade networks has enabled pastoralists to procure firearms by drawing on existing social contacts.¹⁰

There are many other ways in which military hardware finds its way to pastoral areas. A primary vector is Sudan: the legacy of Khartoum's financial and military support for southern militias—and the counter-arming by rebel forces—ensured that neighbouring communities were inundated with weapons and munitions. Likewise, the cross-border movement of armed groups has resulted in the wide diffusion of weapons. One recent example is the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), whose regular movements between northern Uganda and southern Sudan led to frequent trading with locals, often in exchange for information about the strategic positions of the LRA's enemies.¹¹ Pastoralists also acquire arms through raiding, whether from neighbouring tribes or state security forces during military engagements, through sales and leakage from government arsenals and rebel forces, or through long-distance trade and barter—which is especially significant in Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei (South Sudan).

Affected communities have little capacity to lobby their governments to address the symptoms or underlying causes of conflicts in their region—nor do they generally care to seek such assistance. When governments do intervene, they often exacerbate the situation. Their efforts to quell pastoral conflicts tend to be intermittent, politicized, and reactive. This ad hoc 'crisis management' approach is necessarily short-sighted and tends to favour repression over reconciliation. When state resources are brought to bear on settling disputes, the formal justice system rarely provides for effective resolution. Though largely unsuccessful, governments in Uganda and Kenya have sometimes sought to address conflicts by resettling and re-

Box 2 Understanding small arms demand in border areas

Despite the relatively high asking prices for small arms in Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya, the demand for weapons remains robust among civilians, including Ateker pastoralists. The Small Arms Survey recently administered field research in South Sudan to identify the social factors fuelling the civilian demand for small arms.¹² Initial findings suggest the following factors may play an exacerbating role:

Protection of livestock from rustling: Owing to the relatively high concentration of rural populations living in volatile border areas and their singular reliance on livestock as a source of livelihood, arms are widely considered indispensable for protecting cattle.

Protection from crime for individuals, their households, and their communities: Given the inability or unwillingness of regional governments to provide police protection and enforce rule of law in border areas, households frequently acquire one or more assault rifles as a means of protecting themselves from violent crime. Likewise, in more urbanized areas, informal neighbourhood-watch systems involving armed militia are common.

Communal self-defence and deterrence: Pastoral wars—usually over pasture, farmland, and wells, but also arising from political and commercial rivalries played out between elites—are endemic in the region. Communities unable to protect and defend their communal resources risk losing them to better-armed rivals. As a result of these and other security dilemmas, tribes seek to maximize their firepower as a form of deterrence.

Anticipation of renewed political violence/civil war: There is widespread belief among civilians in South Sudan that the current North–South peace is insecure, and that a new phase of the civil war is likely. Local residents are adamant that they need to shore-up their arsenals for the next round of fighting as the mandated referendum on Southern self-determination approaches.

Cross-border insecurity from armed groups: Many of South Sudan's border areas are plagued by cross-border insecurity owing to armed groups. Currently, the most pressing concern in the region is along the borders between Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo and between Sudan and Uganda. The Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) have pursued the LRA into this region, while the latter have been accused of killings, kidnapping, and highway banditry inside Sudan.

Expected DDR benefits: Despite their aim of building confidence and a sense of safety, international and domestic security reform interventions have generated an incentive to retain arms. Many adult males keep their firearms in order to claim entitlements flowing from their association with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and other armed groups. These entitlements include salary payments and potential benefits associated with disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR).

Brideswealth and dowry: In some border areas, for example in Kapoeta, young men regularly steal livestock in order to pay brideswealth. The dictates of marriage rites and local customs, therefore, indirectly stimulate a strong demand for small arms in order to facilitate cattle raiding.

Offensive (revenge) attacks: Many pastoralist community members benefit from the spoils of conflict. These include cattle, children, weapons, and stolen household goods. While some pastoralists publicly deplore the violence—especially when it impacts them directly—many of them, in private, benefit from it materially.

grouping pastoralists, which has done little to redress conflict dynamics or the requirements of development.¹³ Moreover, there are reports of politicians arming one ethnic group over another in order to curry political support, or to undercut support for a rival.¹⁴

Pastoralist disarmament in Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya

To address pastoral wars, governments often deploy their militaries and police to carry out aggressive cordon and search, and seizure operations.¹⁵ Such

crackdowns can collect significant numbers of weapons, but generally intensify insecurity for specific groups and routinely fail to address the underlying dynamics of conflict. Even 'voluntary' disarmament exercises, which provoke less resistance, tend to be implemented unilaterally. Examples of recent 'disarmament alone' initiatives among pastoralists in South Sudan, north-eastern Uganda, and north-western Kenya—without mediation, conflict resolution, or development components—illustrate the many challenges and limitations to this approach.

State efforts to quell pastoral conflicts tend to be intermittent, politicized, and reactive.

The pastoralists of Jonglei State, South Sudan

Between December 2005 and May 2006 the SPLA administered a coercive civilian disarmament campaign in northern Jonglei State. The campaign was initiated at the request of communities who needed to negotiate access to cattle camps. It sought to remove weapons from local pastoralist groups, primarily the Lou Nuer, many of whom perceived it as a political crackdown. The history of animosity between the Nuer and the Dinka, who have dominated the ranks of the SPLA, may have compounded this suspicion.¹⁶

From the beginning, the initiative encountered resistance from the Lou Nuer 'White Army' militias—semi-organized groupings of armed young men who protect cattle and conduct raids on neighbouring tribes.¹⁷ In the course of the disarmament programme more than 3,000 weapons were collected, and an estimated 1,600 White Army and SPLA soldiers were killed—approximately one death for every two weapons seized.¹⁸ The bloodshed was attributed to poor planning and implementation, and limited buy-in from local chiefs and communities. Preliminary results from a household survey conducted in Jonglei in January 2007 show that weapons carrying declined and perceptions of public safety improved in the wake of the disarmament campaign.¹⁹ But it is widely agreed that the loss of hundreds of lives was an unacceptably heavy price to pay. Furthermore, there are indications that these benefits may have been short-lived given the subsequent armed violence that has taken place among the disarmed communities.

In light of the mounting casualties under the SPLA-led arms recovery effort, the UN acted quickly to promote peaceful disarmament elsewhere in the state. A Lou–Murle peace agreement, based on an April 2006 ceasefire, provided a starting point. The UN, with limited resources, focused initially on Akobo County. Its initiative benefited

significantly from mediation by a local CSO that had a strong presence in the region and was able to engage local tribal chiefs. The intervention was then implemented via county, *payam* (state administrative unit), and community-level 'disarmament committees'. The campaign netted some 1,200–1,400 functioning assault rifles, machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and mortars by the end of August 2006. Although the disarmament could not be described as 'voluntary', no lives were lost as a direct result of the exercise.

The UN subsequently undertook a third disarmament exercise in Jonglei to reduce weapons stocks among the Murle, a tribe that had hitherto not participated in the arms recovery campaigns and that is particularly feared locally.²⁰ The UN launched a pilot project in four *payams* of Pibor County (Fertait, Gumuruk, Lekongole, and Pibor). Local authorities administered the recovery effort with inputs from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) DDR Unit, and the South Sudan DDR Commission (SSDDRC). At least 1,126 weapons (the majority of them in good working condition) were retrieved between January and May 2007 (see Table 1).²¹ This initiative was also conducted peacefully.

Despite the thousands of weapons recovered, security remains elusive for many who participated in the Jonglei disarmament campaigns. Raiding did not diminish at any time during the disarmament exercise. Splinter groups and opportunistic individuals acted as spoilers, and disarmed residents of neighbouring Akobo County were explicitly targeted during the campaign. The SPLA, which had committed to providing buffer zones to protect disarmed communities during the arms recovery process, did not deploy any troops until the end of the dry season in May. More problematic still, under the assumption that the Murle community still has a large stockpile of small arms, the SPLA continues to threaten a forcible disarmament campaign.²²

Meanwhile, in early May 2007, a confidence-building meeting was held in Bor town to bring together county commissioners and state chiefs.²³ They issued 22 resolutions, including a commitment to an immediate cessation of hostilities and the 'peaceful' (but not always voluntary) disarmament of all of Jonglei's communities by July. A crucial connection was made to the security sector with a commitment to deploy SPLA forces and increase the numbers of police in each county.²⁴ The proposals also included a meeting between the Jonglei State government and Murle chiefs to convince them to disarm and to stop raiding, and the establishment of 'security posts' complete with communications equipment and transport to protect county borders.²⁵

Table 1 Types and numbers of small arms collected in the Pibor campaign

| Weapons Type | Payam | | | | Total | Type by % of Total |
|--------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|--------------------|
| | Fertait | Gumuruk | Lekongole | Pibor | | |
| AKM | 39 | 412 | 171 | 31 | 653 | 58% |
| G3 | 7 | 125 | 28 | 10 | 170 | 15% |
| FAL | 1 | 25 | 14 | 3 | 43 | 4% |
| SKS | 19 | 58 | 20 | 15 | 112 | 10% |
| M-21 | 0* | 17 | 0* | 0* | 17 | 2% |
| Nagant | 13 | 20 | 31 | 41 | 105 | 9% |
| Lee Enfield | 5 | 5 | 8 | 8 | 26 | 2% |
| TOTAL | 84 | 662 | 272 | 108 | 1,126 | 100% |

*Note: It is believed that M-21s were accidentally 'mixed' into the count of SKS and Nagant rifles for Fertait, Lekongole, and Pibor payams when set in storage. Source: Fergusson (2007)

These resolutions could have eventually formed the basis of a state-level policy on disarmament, but state authorities instead rejected them and the SPLA has not deployed as promised. The resolutions also have potential loopholes: for example, one of them explicitly authorizes forcible disarmament in the event that voluntary efforts fail.²⁶ In the meantime, government officials with support from the SSDDRC and South Sudan Peace Commission are said to be developing another strategy. However, until a credible, voluntary, and reciprocal disarmament strategy is elaborated, the necessity to guard against raids from neighbouring tribes will persist.²⁷

This series of disarmament approaches in Jonglei State shows the risks involved in the 'disarmament alone' approach, whether coercive or voluntary. Despite the involvement of state, county, and local bodies, as well as the various supporting or implementing international agencies, the security of local communities has not been adequately preserved. Disarmament alone is likely to produce only short-term gains, especially when promised state security is not provided during and after the campaign, or when disarmament proceeds without systematic efforts to address the root causes of conflict. Moreover, if UN disarmament initiatives billed as 'voluntary' are followed by coercive measures, which in turn lead to armed violence, then the UN will rightly face opprobrium and its role in arms recovery efforts elsewhere will be severely undermined.

The Karimojong of North-eastern Uganda

Uganda has periodically engaged in coercive disarmament of its pastoral populations, including in the Karamoja region, home to the Karimojong, Pokot, and Turkana. Early campaigns in 2001 and 2002 led to the recovery of at least 10,000 weapons, though many (about 8,000) were reportedly reissued to warriors who had been recruited into Local Defense Units and Anti-Stock Theft coalitions.²⁸ By 2006, many of these groups were no longer active, and a good number of their weapons and ammunition were back in general circulation.

The UPDF adopted a more aggressive approach to disarmament in the region, beginning in April 2006 and continuing into 2007. A combination of heavy-mounted machine guns, assault rifles, and grenades were used during an offensive against civilians in Karamoja areas. Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch reported that these campaigns included mass beatings, unlawful killings, torture, arbitrary detention, and the destruction of property.²⁹ Not surprisingly, anti-government/UPDF sentiments flared among the Karimojong, resulting in a number of reprisal attacks. For example, in retaliation for the arbitrary killings associated with cordon and search operations near Kotido town, Jie warriors killed a number of soldiers in late October 2006, including the commanding officer of the UPDF 67th battalion.³⁰ Immediately following the UPDF-initiated disarmament campaigns, tribal groups in other areas of Uganda, Kenya, and Sudan began to raid Karimojong settlements. Unable to defend themselves, the latter rapidly rearmed.

The Turkana of North-western Kenya

In mid-2006, the government of Kenya also launched a series of military-led disarmament programmes among the Pokot and Turkana in seven districts of the North Rift region. The process proceeded in three phases: (1) Operation *Dumisha Amani* ('maintain peace'), a voluntary and non-coercive weapons collection initiative that promised increased security and amnesty from prosecution; (2) Operation *Okota I* ('collect phase I'), which entailed the forceful disarmament of communities that did not cooperate during the earlier phase; and (3) *Okota II* ('collect phase II'), a development intervention designed to improve economic conditions in previously armed areas in order to reduce incentives for arms possession.

The disarmament campaign generated certain visible returns. Approximately 1,710 firearms and 5,700 rounds of ammunition were collected from the Pokot and Turkana in Turkana District. As elsewhere, however, the disarmament campaign also increased the insecurity of some groups at the expense

of others. In southern Turkana, neighbouring Pokot and Karimojong sub-clans repeatedly attacked Turkana communities that had voluntarily disarmed—with assurances from the Kenyan government that they would receive protection.³¹ Many Pokot in this area then fled to Uganda in order to avoid having their weapons confiscated. The Turkana were unable to relocate, leaving them exposed to Pokot warriors returning, newly armed, from Uganda. Compounding the situation, Kenyan military personnel reportedly tortured and abused civilians when they refused to surrender their weapons voluntarily or divulge information concerning armed community members.³²

Although well intentioned, the Kenyan government's programme lacked clear objectives and genuine consent from community leaders and local populations. The campaign was rushed and did not make time for sensitizing participants. Civilian populations also rapidly lost confidence when they discovered that they would not be adequately compensated for their surrendered weapons. Pastoral populations, long used to repressive interventions from the state, interpreted the disarmament process as yet another repressive effort to undermine their communities and limit their freedom of movement.³³

Beyond disarmament: building peace among pastoralists

A growing body of evidence demonstrates that modest peace-building initiatives advanced by local CSOs can provide an essential complement to disarmament efforts, fostering longer-term reconciliation and security. Crucially, these initiatives seek to enhance security in pastoralist areas through locally-accountable 'peace committees' and other customary mechanisms, with the aim of anticipating, preventing, and resolving disputes before they flare into full-blown violence. These committees often fulfil limited policing and judicial functions and, in some areas, serve as a de facto framework for the provision of security and justice.³⁴ There is evidence that the use of these mechanisms in Kenya is revitalizing customary

approaches and the strength of local authorities, while also generating some recognition by the state.

Other peace-building efforts include a USAID-supported programme launched in Kenya and Uganda that aims to prevent the escalation of cross-border conflicts between neighbouring tribal groups. Together with its implementing partners, Development Alternatives Inc., Riam Riam (Kenya), and Kotido Peace Initiative (KOPEIN–Uganda), USAID have supported mediation processes between the Dodoth (Uganda) and Turkana (Kenya), following clashes between the two groups in early 2004. There were expectations on the ground that reprisal attacks would take place in early 2005. The fact that such attacks did not occur was attributed to the cross-border peace process. Building on these early gains, Riam Riam and KOPEIN enhanced their capacities and continue to support conflict mitigation and peace-building in the border region.

Likewise, Adakar Peace and Development Initiatives (APEDI) was initiated to promote peace and security in the Turkana and Toposa regions of north-western Kenya and southern Sudan.³⁵ APEDI's peace-building activities include identifying and resolving grievances at the local level and targeting the kraals (*adakar* in the Turkana language) for dialogue and conflict resolution. By reinforcing a combination of traditional and modern structures of authority, APEDI aims to broker peace settlements between warring tribes before raids begin and armed violence escalates. With the backing of local government authorities, elders, and chiefs, APEDI works with municipal governments and CSOs³⁶ in Narus, South Sudan, to pre-empt raiding across the border into Kenya. Where raids are unavoidable, leaders from both communities try to negotiate the safe return of cattle and compensation for lives lost.

APEDI mobilized its first intervention in February 2005, following attacks between Turkana and Toposa in which two prominent Turkana warriors were killed and 215 goats and sheep, along with the warriors' rifles, were taken. Joined by Turkana chiefs, elders, and a peace committee comprised of local leaders, APEDI visited Toposa chiefs and elders in Sudan. During this meeting they negotiated the safe return of the two rifles and livestock, and designed a sensitization framework for both communities. This intervention catalyzed an 18-month ceasefire that, for the first time in decades, allowed Turkana and Toposa to walk safely with their livestock across the border. Although the ceasefire came to an abrupt halt in January 2007 with an attack by Toposa raiders almost 50km outside of Lokichoggio, APEDI responded with further cross-border negotiations and played an instrumental role in the settlement of subsequent small-scale reprisals on both sides.³⁷

CSOs alone, however, cannot provide the solution to the problems of security in pastoralist areas. Such interventions tend to be narrowly focused, are necessarily time-limited, and are dependent on uncertain donor support. The turnover of CSO staff members may also translate into weak institutional learning and uneven expertise. Paradoxically, the good functioning of CSO peace-building initiatives may have the negative effect of distancing state engagement in pastoral issues further, if the latter perceive that the problem is already 'being taken care of' without the infusion of government resources and manpower. Ideally, governments should commit to supporting the creation of structures and institutions that receive regular funding, have a human rights-based approach, act independently, and provide long-term solutions. While CSOs and civil society groups may be ideally placed to inform and consult with governments on these

efforts, and should be encouraged to do so, they cannot lead them.

A growing awareness of the risks associated with disarmament has encouraged multilateral and bilateral agencies to explore alternative approaches to improving security on the ground. Regional organizations, bilateral donors, and host governments are increasingly conscious of the spillover effects of pastoral wars and the role of local security arrangements to keep the peace. Locally grounded peace-building initiatives are thus gaining more attention and resources from donor governments than in the past. One regional organization that is addressing aspects of armed pastoral violence is the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA).³⁸ RECSA acts as a forum to enhance cooperation among national focal points and relevant governmental agencies to prevent, reduce, and ultimately eliminate illegal trafficking in and stockpiling of small arms throughout the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. It should be supported to become a centre of excellence.

Similarly, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) established a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) in 2002 in order to enhance awareness of pastoral conflicts in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda.³⁹ Drawing on a vast monitoring network, CEWARN is able to survey and document violent incidents and to provide governments with guidance on responding effectively. The East African Police Chiefs Co-operation Organization (EAPCCO) also works closely with governments and CSOs to develop, strengthen, and enforce legislation aimed at reducing cattle rustling and associated armed violence. In 2005, EAPCCO introduced a *Protocol on the Prevention, Combating and Eradication of Cattle Rustling in Eastern Africa*.⁴⁰ EAPCCO member states are expected to adopt the protocol soon.

There are signs that governments in the greater Horn of Africa are increasingly prepared to coordinate with one another to address pastoralist issues, including pastoral wars. A high-level ministerial conference drawing parliamentarians from South Sudan, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia is planned for later this year in Juba, to be hosted by Government of South Sudan (GoSS)

In southern Turkana (Kenya), neighbouring Pokot and Karimojong sub-clans repeatedly attacked Turkana communities that had voluntarily disarmed.

vice-president Riek Machar. Ateker leaders and CSOs from all four countries are expected to participate. The conference agenda includes discussions of peace and security issues such as: small arms and disarmament; interdependence and co-existence; governance, development, and economic empowerment of pastoralist communities.⁴¹

Closing reflections

Pastoral violence has been transformed in recent years by a number of factors, including economic and political marginalization, active resistance by pastoralist communities to assimilation, resource depletion and demographic changes, and the growing availability of small arms and light weapons. What once could be characterized as low-level periodic violence has transformed into chronic, sometimes intensive, conflicts between pastoral communities.

Governments in the region seldom invest sufficiently in programmes that redress the structural causes of violence in pastoral regions. Focused development interventions, reciprocal security guarantees between conflicting parties, and support for customary conflict resolution mechanisms have rarely occurred due to prevailing stigmas and structural asymmetries. Instead, reactive, intrusive, and coercive disarmament campaigns are the norm. These approaches are often inequitable in the way they target specific groups, leaving disarmed communities vulnerable to predation by neighbouring tribes. Understandably, they provoke violent resistance and failure to comply.

The recent, largely voluntary disarmament of the Murle in Jonglei State, South Sudan, was the result of an appropriate and less violent approach, but it has raised a number of new questions and challenges. The inability or unwillingness of the SPLA and local administrators to secure the area from ongoing raids and routine intertribal violence greatly reduced its possible achievements. This, in addition to the lack of a coherent GoSS policy and the spectre of future forcible disarmament, threatens the stability of the entire region. It also raises fundamental questions about the nature of the UN's future involvement in civilian disarmament activities.

The lessons from these campaigns are still emerging, but it is clear that the GoSS and the SPLA should renounce future coercive operations and work with state authorities and the UN to develop a comprehensive voluntary disarmament and security approach.⁴² A process that includes joint conflict analysis, the development of a legal framework, peace-building, simultaneous disarmament, cross-border collaboration, and support for buffer zones, police capacity, and social development would mitigate security risks. Recent peace-building activities of CSOs in Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda have demonstrated ways of easing tensions and providing improvised but workable security arrangements that support traditional authority structures. These valuable contributions should be reference points for state planning that brings a more holistic approach to preventing, containing, and reducing pastoral conflicts in the region. ■

Notes

This Sudan Issue Brief was prepared with research from Jonah Leff as well as contributions from the HSBA team and Small Arms Survey researchers.

- 1 The term Ateker refers to primarily Itung'a-speaking Nilotic people whose ancestry can be traced back to the area between the Blue and White Niles in present-day Sudan. The Ateker include the Buya, Didinga, Jie, Murle, Nyangatom, Tenet, and Toposa of southern Sudan; the Dassenach and Nyangatom of Ethiopia; the Turkana of Kenya; and the Karimojong of Uganda.
- 2 According to ITDG (2004), more than 100,000 people have been displaced as a result of pastoralist conflicts in north-western Kenya.
- 3 Mkutu (2007).
- 4 Interviews with local leaders in Narus, Eastern Equatoria, Sudan, and in Lokichoggio Division, Kenya, May–June 2007.
- 5 Interview with Albert Locheria, coordinator of the Kapoeta East Native Development Association, 4 June 2007.
- 6 Among the 54 victims, 48 were women and children. The Toposa also seized 400 cattle and 400 goats. Email correspondence with UNMIS official, 13 July 2007.
- 7 Interview with an UNMIS official, 25 September 2007.
- 8 Mwaura (2005).
- 9 Oil exploration in South Sudan will be a major factor in defining the rights of communities versus companies. The newly created Land Commissions, as well as the Human Rights Commission, will be crucial in highlighting and protecting the rights of marginalized groups.

- 10 See Brauer and Muggah (2006) for a review of the interplay of preferences, prices, and resources in relation to demand for arms.
- 11 See Schomerus (2007) for more on the role of the LRA in Sudan.
- 12 See Menkhaus (forthcoming).
- 13 The Government of Uganda continues to implement resettlement programmes.
- 14 Written correspondence with Ochieng Adala, Senior Programme Officer, Africa Peace Forum, 27 September 2007.
- 15 Coercive disarmament is often pursued as part of crime reduction or peace support operations. It is usually administered exclusively by security structures, and carries the threat of punitive measures for non-compliance.
- 16 Young (2007a).
- 17 See Small Arms Survey (2007) and Young (2007a) for fuller accounts of the disarmament of the Lou Nuer.
- 18 Small Arms Survey (2007, p. 4). The UN has put the number of dead at 'at least 600'.
- 19 A forthcoming HSBA working paper will report the results of this survey.
- 20 During the second Sudanese civil war Khartoum supported armed elements among the Murle. In October 2006, Murle leader Ismael Konye—who maintained a heavily-armed force in Pibor of at least 200–300 men, known as the Pibor Defense Forces—declared his allegiance to the SPLA.
- 21 There is suspicion, however, that many of the armed youth who fled during the dry season have returned after the disarmament was completed.
- 22 There is no data available on the number of weapons held by the Murle community. The HSBA conducted a mini-household survey in Pibor County in January 2007, the results of which are forthcoming.
- 23 The meeting was supported by Pact Sudan.
- 24 From a force of 90 to 200 men.
- 25 Resolutions from the confidence-building meeting for Jonglei State, seen by the Small Arms Survey in August 2007.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 This point will be elaborated in the forthcoming HSBA working paper on the Jonglei household survey findings.
- 28 Government of Uganda (2007).
- 29 Human Rights Watch (2007) and Bevan (forthcoming).
- 30 Human Rights Watch (2007).
- 31 Riam Riam (2007).
- 32 Telephone interview with Alex Losikiria, coordinator of APEDI, 3 July 2007; and telephone interview with John Mark Edaan, coordinator of Riam Riam, 5 July 2007.
- 33 Riam Riam (2007).
- 34 Mwaura (2005).
- 35 When Operation Lifeline Sudan—which provided humanitarian assistance to South Sudan during the North–South conflict—was terminated, the ICRC, whose base was in Lokichoggio, donated its fixed assets to local CSOs and government bodies. APEDI was selected as the chief recipient.
- 36 The Toposa Development Association and the Kapoeta East Native Development Association are conducting similar conflict mitigation programmes in Eastern Equatoria, Sudan.
- 37 Telephone interview with Alex Losikiria, coordinator of APEDI, 3 July 2007.
- 38 RECSA, which began as the Nairobi Secretariat, includes Burundi, Democratic

- Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.
- 39 In May 2007, IGAD hosted a workshop on the disarmament of pastoralist communities in Entebbe (Uganda), which brought together representatives of governments and civil society to address the issue.
- 40 The objectives of the Protocol are: 1) to prevent, combat, and eradicate cattle rustling and related criminal activities in the East Africa region; 2) to systematically and comprehensively address cattle rustling in the region in order to ensure that its negative social and economic consequences are eradicated and that peoples' livelihoods are secured; 3) to enhance regional co-operation, joint operations, capacity-building, and exchange of information, and; 4) to promote peace, human security, and development in the region.
- 41 At the time of writing it is not clear whether the conference has been adequately financed.
- 42 Riek Machar publicly committed the GoSS to 'peaceful disarmament' in a press statement on 27 February 2007.

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HSBA project summary

The Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) is a three-year research programme (2005–08) administered by the Small Arms Survey.

It has been developed in cooperation with the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the UN Mission in Sudan, the UN Development Programme, and a wide array of international and Sudanese NGO partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely empirical research, the HSBA project works to support disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), security sector reform (SSR), and arms control interventions to promote security. The assessment is being carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of regional, security, and public health specialists. It reviews the spatial distribution of armed violence throughout Sudan and offers policy-relevant advice to redress insecurity.

Sudan Issue Briefs are designed to provide periodic snapshots of baseline information. Future briefs will focus on a variety of issues, including the demilitarization of the Other Armed Groups (OAGs), the Joint Integrated Units (JIUs), and local security arrangements governing the use of small arms. The HSBA also generates a series of timely and user-friendly working papers in English and Arabic, available at www.smallarmssurvey.org/sudan.

The HSBA project is supported by Canada, the UK Government Conflict Prevention Pool, and the Danish International Development Agency (Danida), and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Credits

Design and layout: Richard Jones (rick@studioexile.com)

Cartography: Jillie Luff, MAPgrafix

Contact details

For more information or to provide feedback, contact Claire Mc Evoy, HSBA project coordinator, at mcevoy@hei.unige.ch.

Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment
Small Arms Survey
47 Avenue Blanc, 1202 Geneva
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 908 5777

Fax: +41 22 732 2738

Visit www.smallarmssurvey.org/Sudan

