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News and Resources

Dealing with the Mombasa Republican Council

The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) is a socio-political and secessionist movement, based in Kenya's coastal region. Founded in 1999, the group is pushing forward the ambition to establish self-governance through secession from the rest of the country. Their claim is that the Kenyan coast is legally no longer part of Kenya ('*Pwani si Kenya*' in Swahili). This argument is based on an agreement supposed to have been signed in 1963 by Kenya's first Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta and his Zanzibari counterpart, Mohamed Shante, to put the Coastal Region under Nairobi's governance for 50 years, hence until 2013. However, not only does the MRC fail to provide evidence of this document, but its existence is also denied by Kenya.

MRC's justification for their land claims dates back to the time of the Sultanate of Oman/Zanzibar which possessed lands between the coastline and the city of Sultan Hamud and Garissa County¹, which is up to 400 kilometres off the coast, and hence by far exceeding the provincial border.

The Council stipulates to be fighting for the rights of the indigenous population in the region, namely "the Mijikendas, Taitas, Pokomos, Bajunis, Arabs, Hindus and other Coastal tribes."²

Mentioning also non-ethnic Kenyans, such as Arabs and Hindus, which are generally accepted as being part of the indigenous population, enlarges not only the sample group the MRC proclaims to speak for, but also avoids supporting the lack of cooperation between the different ethnicities, which can be witnessed in daily politics. This is stated not only in the Council's manifesto, saying that "all worshipping centres i.e. churches, mosques, Kayas, Hindu temples and other recognized centres" would be safeguarded under a MRC government, but was confirmed by MRC's Secretary General Randu Nzai Ruwa saying that "Religion is not of importance for us."³ The overarching approach facilitates overcoming the normally dividing factors in Kenya's society, which is one of the reasons for the huge support MRC has amongst the coastal population. However, the fact that the Council lacks proof of a register of its members makes it difficult to assess the actual support the organisation has.

The basis of complaints

Even though most MRC supporters are not necessarily in favour of full secession, they do agree with the Council's complaints to be neglected and deprived of the

chance to participate equally in the region's economic wealth generation, particularly with regard to tourism in the region and the port of Mombasa.⁴ Three facts support these complaints:

- Official data show that among Kenya's poorest counties, four are in Coast Province.⁵
- The number of people in the region living below the poverty line is considered to range between 70% and 80%.⁶
- The Coast Land Study of 2011 proves that the relation of land-ownership is unproportional, with 82% of non-Coastal inhabitants having land title deeds while only 38% Coastal-born people possess the same; whereas among those with no land title deeds, only 18% are non-Coastal-born and 62% are Coastal-born.⁷ The last fact is rooted historically, as the 'Lands Ordinance' of 1915 gave the state control over all unused crown land, hence the right for legal confiscation of formerly family-cultivated lands. The government is well aware of the problem as even an official report, issued in 2007, describes the land situation in the Coastal Region as "potentially explosive"⁸.

The Chairman of the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM), Abdul Ghafur El-Busaidy, believes that the existing legal imbalance with regard to land-ownership is connected to post-independence actions in Kenya, especially when the first Kenyan government contributed to dispossession of the local population by settlement of outsiders from up-country in Coast Province through settlement schemes.⁹ Another factor that concerns social imbalances, as mentioned by Robert Charo Tukwatuwa, the Council's National Coordinator, was provision of employment in the coastal area particularly for members of the Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya, Akamba and Kalenjin tribes. In his perception, coastal people were deliberately ruled out of influential positions.¹⁰ The imbalance in jobs also legally contradicts the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the Sultan of Zanzibar and Jomo Kenyatta, which guaranteed rights for the (indigenous) local population, such as that of hiring them in administrative positions in government, which has never been the case.¹¹ All this contributes to the feeling of being intentionally left behind, especially with regard to the efforts all governments since independence have undertaken to improve infrastructure and economy in their central "homelands".

Legal background and accusations

Since its foundation, the MRC was considered a manifestation of the feeling of stigmatisation and backwardness in Kenya's coastal region, according to statements provided by inhabitants when asked about the Council's agenda.¹² MRC's agitation was often assessed as anti-constitutional and considered a threat to national peace, as the group's legal ban in 2008 (together with more than 30 others) has shown, leave alone the government's efforts in July 2012 to appeal against Mombasa's High Court, who had ruled earlier that the Gazette Notice which declared the MRC 'illegal' was unconstitutional.¹³ Statements made by leading politicians who affirmed that "Kenya is one nation and any attempts or calls for secession [...] shall not be tolerated. Specifically the Coast region [...] will remain part of the Republic of Kenya."¹⁴ Despite the court's decision, the MRC was again declared illegal by the government in October 2012¹⁵, leading to the arrest of several of its leaders and assumed followers on various charges, without directly linking any of them to their MRC-affiliation. The government's justification for its actions against the Council has so far never touched on its concerns. A late example was seen when MRC's regional spokesman was arrested on 20 March 2013, and charged for allegedly having entered Kenya from Tanzania through an 'unauthorised route'¹⁶, an accusation that was later changed to "engaging [in an] oath to disturb the public peace"¹⁷, obviously not linked to the MRC, but aiming to intimidate others.

Leaders in government seemed to urge the movement to denounce some of their claims as a strategy to engage in some form of dialogue in order to resolve issues being raised by the group¹⁸, which can be considered – despite its destabilising execution – a constructive approach. On the other hand, the two amnesties granted in April 2013 and October 2012 have supposedly attracted 20 members each in the city of Kwale¹⁹ and Kilifi²⁰. Those having surrendered never included MRC leaders, which shows the little impact, if at all, the offer had strategically. Tactics to divide the Council's members seems to have vanished and is unlikely to be repeated a third time, as past governments refused constantly to address the real issues of the movement, which remained unchanged, and do still stipulate grievances in Coast Province.

Self-perception and media portrayal

The group has reiterated that its modus operandi was non-violent and contained only legal actions, except for the unconstitutional call for secession. This is supported by the court's ruling which dismissed charges accusing the MRC of being connected to violent actions.²¹ However, regional and national mass media have repeatedly named the MRC as 'militia', hence an armed group, without providing any evidence.²² A typical example of blatant incitement is found in a media article, stating that the "ruling that made MRC legal has made it difficult for police to arrest them."²³ The author's implication to arrest members of a group that had just been declared legal makes no sense, but represents typical and widespread anti-movement propaganda. As the government refuses to take a mediating position between exaggerated accusations on the one hand (media) and exaggerated demands on the other hand (MRC), the risk to lose credibility and impartiality is rising over time.

As the Council has never used consistent phraseology about using violent means or not, they deny themselves credibility and reliability, which makes it easy for their opponents to continue discrediting them. As the Council's National Coordinator stated during an interview "if we [MRC] had left the matter to them [youth/supporters], they would have gone to fight. They are ready to die!" Additionally, he said that "if our cries are not heard at the international courts, I think there will be chaos."²⁴

On the other hand, the Council's Secretary General, Randu Nzai Ruwa, was cited in February 2013 as saying that the MRC would use "peaceful channels to resolve disputes"²⁵ – a viewpoint that was echoed by a branch chairman, who said in the same month that the MRC was advocating for peace and was "not ready to cause any disturbance."²⁶ The last well-balanced statement reflects on the Council's awareness to play with fire when continuing using belligerent wording, as the executive authority is just waiting for these sentences to carry out more arrests.

Conclusion and recommendations

Accusations against the MRC, which lack evidence, should cease in the first place.²⁷ On the other side, MRC must stop refusing to accept the central government as the legal bearer of constitutional sovereignty. Otherwise, it is unlikely to reach face-to-face negotiations, which are fundamental for sustainable and satisfying results for both sides.

For the MRC, asking for independence of a region whose population is not supporting the demand is not useful. Hence, the MRC should reduce its claims with regard to autonomy to more realistic goals. For instance, asking for equal distribution of generated tax income through the port of Mombasa, to expect a higher percentage of local employees in (state-run) decision-taking bodies, increased investments into education for the benefit of the local population, and improvement of regional infrastructure, would better reflect local sentiments.

To have higher chances of being respected as a serious political movement, adaption of tone and style in wording and publications is necessary to create broader acceptance also amongst those people not being directly concerned by the Council's calls. Statements such as "shifting non-locals and employing locals into influential positions"²⁸ must cease to be postulated.

A more realistic option for the Council to progress with their demands is to lower their claims and to utilize the benefits of the country's constitution in force since 4 March 2013, that provides for decentralisation and county governorship. For instance, the provisions made possible by the constitution, such as through the codification of Kenya's National Land Policy, can be used as an entrance gate to re-negotiate the distribution of title-deeds.²⁹ Finally, even though the constitution does not contemplate the possibility of secession, it allows alteration of boundaries through a constitutional amendment.³⁰ Nevertheless, the lack of support from all other provinces makes this highly unlikely to become reality, but remains a possibility that should be kept in mind when negotiating on the political level.

From the government's side, the will to take concerns of the Coastal population seriously is essential to calm down the heated debate. To insist on Kenya's constitutional unity is correct. As the ban against the MRC as an illegal group in 2012 by the previous government is vividly remembered in Coast Province, the new president and his government have the unique chance to appease the conflict by following a more sensitive approach. The combination of threats to prosecute not only members of the organisation, but also politicians who sympathise with the MRC³¹, does not work. Therefore, the first step should be to recognise MRC's claims – not necessarily the Council itself. Otherwise, the government's standpoint will continue to be perceived by large parts of the indigenous Coastal inhabitants as arrogant and neglecting demands of broad parts of the population in one of the – theoretically – wealthiest regions of the country.

Upholding the amnesty for MRC-members to 'surrender' is in this regard not only contradicting any effort to establish a confidential basis for negotiations, but also stigmatises the movement and its legitimate request for improvement in Coast Province's socio-economic conditions.

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- 1 MRC Manifesto
 - 2 Ibid
 - 3 Interview held in Mombasa on 20 February 2012 with MRC Secretary General Randu Nzai Ruwa. Except for the MRC's Secretary General Randu Nzai Ruwa and the National Coordinator Robert Charo Tukwatkwa, none of the mentioned interviewees has stated to be member of or active supporter of the MRC.
 - 4 Goldsmith: Conflict Assessment. Threats and Opportunities for Engagement. 2011, Kenya Community Support Centre
 - 5 Kenya Open Data District Poverty Data KIHBS, 2005/6
 - 6 Agha Khan Foundation (2007)
 - 7 Goldsmith (2011)
 - 8 (Kenyan) Ministry of Land: National Land Policy (2007, 184).
 - 9 Interview held in Mombasa on 21 February 2012 with El-Busaidy
 - 10 Interview held in Mombasa on 20 February 2012 with Tukwatkwa
 - 11 Goldsmith (2011)
 - 12 Ibid
 - 13 The State could not prove that the MRC was a "threat to security and national stability"; Nation (25 July 2012)
 - 14 Kenyan Parliament: National Assembly Official Report, Tenth Parliament – Fourth Session, 24 April 2012
 - 15 On 19 October 2012, the Kenyan Government declared the MRC "an illegal group".
 - 16 Standard Media (21 March 2013)
 - 17 Standard Media (22 March 2012)
 - 18 Standard Media (16 January 2013)
 - 19 News24.co.ke (10 April 2013)

- 20 english.sina.com (31 October 2012)
- 21 Standard Media (26 July 2012)
- 22 According to US State Department officials “there was no evidence in 2012 to link the MRC to violent extremist elements on the coast.” US Congressional Research Service (26 February 2013). ‘The Star’ stereotyped the MRC as being ‘a gang’ and to have “amassed guns and grenades” (19 October 2012); the same newspaper ridiculed the organisation’s aims in another article shortly after (27 October 2012). Several other articles tend to connect the organisation with criminality. Goldsmith states (2011, p. 6) “poorly researched press reports and editorials”, had a negative impact on MRC’s reputation, particularly amongst non-Coastal Kenyans. For a list of accusations, see: Paul Goldsmith, “It’s time to stop demonising Mombasa Republican Council and look at real issues.” In: The EastAfrican, 01 December 2012) and McGregor, “Kenya’s Coast Province and the Mombasa Republican Council: Islamists, Separatists or Political Pawns?”, 02.11.2012).
- 23 Mwakilishi.com (15 October 2012)
- 24 Interview held in Mombasa on 20 February 2012 with Tukwatumwa
- 25 All Africa (03 February 2013)
- 26 Voice of America (25 February 2013)
- 27 Police had accused MRC of being behind the attacks, even though the bodies of the killed attackers had not yet been identified, not to speak of the pending results of a proper investigation. The Star (11 March 2013)
- 28 Interview held in Mombasa on 20 February 2012 with Tukwatumwa
- 29 Ministry of Land: National Land Policy (2007)
- 30 Standard Media (26 July 2012)
- 31 In October 2012, MP Mohammed Dor was accused of being willing to support the MRC financially, if asked.

Conflict early warning and early response: space, practice and viability in Kenya

The concept of conflict early warning and early response (CEWER) has been extensively researched and analysed. Scholars and practitioners alike have ably defined this concept and its incidental terms¹. This article adopts the components of this concept as espoused by Sussane Schmeidl². She identifies four critical components of this concept: the collection of information, analysis of information, formulation of scenarios and finally communication to decision makers or those referred to in this article as appropriate respondents.

From the stated components it is safe to conclude that the first two components entail the gathering of some specific information related to conflicts and from a definite geographical sphere. The last two then carry the aspect of response, but not response in its simple sense but rather early response premised on microscopic analysis and dissection of the information and its implication and most importantly communication to appropriate respondents.

Conflict early warning and early response is not an entirely new concept in Kenya and traditional African communities. Communities, especially those practicing the pastoral way of life, have been known to forecast occurrences such as cattle raids based on some indicators such as weather patterns. The Pokot community of Kenya, for instance, used to have select elders study the goat entrails on the basis of which they would anticipate future occurrences. Similarly, sounds from certain birds would signify eminent droughts which would in turn lead to conflicts in the bid to control scarce resources.

While acknowledging that the mode of collecting information then was not as sophisticated as it is now, the most important underlying components are similar. The information served to warn communities about impending occurrences, whether natural or man-made and just like in the modern era, this information would be passed to appropriate respondents. If, for instance, after analysis the elders came to the conclusion that a raid was eminent, then the Morans would be prepared to defend their community’s heads of cattle.

Background

The establishment of conflict early warning as a system of conflict prevention by the UN in 1992 after the then Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali's report, 'an Agenda for Peace'³ arguably, marked the paradigm shift of early warning. Two schools of thought have been fronted on the genesis of early warning.⁴ There are those who attribute its genesis to military intelligence while others associate it with the humanitarian perspective. The report served to open up the scope of early warning to not only the military and humanitarian spheres but also to peace processes. Since then, regional mechanisms such as the African Union and IGAD have created early warning mechanisms including the Continental Early Warning System for the African Union and IGAD's CEWARN Mechanism. While the end results of this form of conflict prevention serves the same purpose as the security oriented intelligence gathering systems, the approach taken by the two is different. Based on their information gathering approaches, the early warning and intelligence have been defined as soft and hard, respectively⁵.

The early warning system in Kenya

In the modern day Kenya CEWER has evolved with time and gathered huge prominence. Immediately prior to and during the general elections of March 2013, conflict early warning was the main focus of peace actors in the country. This was not the case in the previous elections. Its popularity can be attributed to the extensive and successful use of the national early warning system by the Uwiano Platform for Peace⁶ during the peaceful August 2010 constitutional referendum⁷. Before then, this concept was mainly practised by the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC). The committee was the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Unit (CEWERU) under IGAD's CEWARN Mechanism⁸.

As an entry point the CEWARN Mechanism chose to address the pastoral conflicts along the common borders with the IGAD member states.⁹ With the relative peace experienced after the post-election violence of 2007/8 in the regions under the CEWARN coverage, the NSC was mandated to domesticate the mechanism and customize it to cover the entire country. It is with this hindsight that the NSC came up with the National Conflict Early Warning and Early Response System, a web-based system for gathering and reporting of early warning information from not only the general public but also through structured channels using Peace Monitors and with pre-determined conflict indicators.

Prior to its launch in late November 2010, one of its main components of information collection, crowd sourcing, was used by the Uwiano platform to collect information from the general public on potential causes of conflicts. Using a mobile phone, citizens were able to pass information on violent incidences or events that had the capacity to generate violence. The information was relayed to the situation room at the NSC. The information was then verified, analyzed and then acted upon. The success of this electronic mode of early warning demonstrated that the Kenyan population was eager to share and report information in situations that could disrupt the peace of the country but either could not do so directly to the law enforcement personnel for a myriad of reasons. This therefore marked the advent and the blossoming institutionalization of the CEWER concept among peace builders in the country.

The space and niche of CEWER

In its post-independence history, Kenya has experienced conflicts ranging from inter-community conflicts, election-related conflicts and resource based conflicts. Various initiatives including security interventions, political mediation and peace building initiatives have been undertaken to forestall, resolve or prevent escalation of these conflicts. These initiatives have enjoyed varying degrees of success.

The military, National Intelligence Service and National Police Service possess the mandate to collect intelligence as they undertake their duties. Traditionally, this has been the formal and accepted way of gathering information for conflict prevention in the country. This method portends a challenge to CEWER at two levels. First, law enforcement agencies, who have traditionally considered this an integral part of their core mandate, consider external intelligence and information gathering an encroachment into their territory. From the state security perspective, information related to peace and security is, in the eyes of the security personnel, considered 'secret' and thus only to be handled by trained officers and vetted personnel.

Secondly, the citizenry expect certain services in return for taxes paid to the government. Peace and security are part of the deliverables of the state to its citizenry and therefore, there are those who argue that having paid tax to the state, the latter should deliver services enhancing peace and security by hiring competent persons to gather information and act on it accordingly. This argument is reinforced by the fact that the government has extensive infrastructure for this very purpose. Additionally, early warning information has huge potential of exposing one to risks such as physical harm as well emotional of which the practitioner may not have the capacity to deal with but of which state officers are trained to cope with.

That said, the extensive application of this concept in the country in the recent past indicates its acceptability in Kenyan society. The technology based early warning used during the 2010 referendum was adopted during the 2013 elections period. A large number of messages were voluntarily submitted to the Uwiano Platform. The quick responses initiated by the police and other administrative agencies to such information also indicate that the government and the majority of its key personnel in this field acknowledge the importance of the CEWER concept.

Sustainability

Early warning involves the setup of extensive infrastructure aimed at collecting, analyzing and disseminating information. The geographical coverage is wide and in many instances there is poor or even non-existent communication infrastructure. The capital required to set-up the system, which is mainly technology based, as well as the human resource required to run the system, is, to say the least, an expensive affair. The running costs, which involve maintenance of the communication infrastructure (mainly the telephone service providers and the internet service providers), can be huge. To sustain this initiative an organisation needs to have consistent and adequate sources of finances whether these would be coming from the government, donors or both.

Related to the preceding paragraph is the ability to make use of the information gathered. Is the information meant to complement other government institutions and infrastructures in their bid to ensure peace? Warn local communities and actors of impending conflicts? Scholarly work or attract donor funding among other uses? These are critical questions as they seek to examine the capacity of an organisation to handle and share information considering that early warning is time oriented. It is human nature to expect quick tangible results. When members of the public share information, they expect to see results or at least some form of intervention and when this is not forthcoming then the public tends to withhold the information. This is one the reasons the country is likely to see a reduction in the number of organisations meaningfully engaging in this field after the March 2013 elections.

The general public shares information in good faith. With some of the information shared being sensitive, maintaining the confidentiality of the source is critical not only for the purposes of ensuring that the source keeps the information flowing but more importantly for the safety of the source. Where organisations fail to guard this faith then with time, information relayed reduces eventually losing its significance.

Conclusion

The importance of conflict early warning and early response cannot be gainsaid. The peaceful outcome of the August 2010 constitutional referendum and the March 2013 general elections clearly attest to this. It is common knowledge that violence and other actions that disrupt the peace of the citizenry emanate from within the members of the community. It would therefore be grave for peace actors to fail to tap into this critical constituency if sustainable peace is to be achieved and maintained.

Whereas the national intelligence agencies and the police have the primary role in gathering intelligence and detecting any indications of conflict and violence, there is a need to complement and support them. In some instances the public may be apprehensive of the police for various reasons and may fail to share with them vital information which they alternatively would comfortably share with organisations and entities with which they have mutual faith. Depending on the link between the recipient organisation and the key respondents to conflicts, this information will serve its purpose regardless of its first point of deposit.

The space for conflict early warning in Kenya is vast. Different organisations have different strengths in terms of acceptability and geographical coverage in the country but as mentioned earlier on, the key is the ability to make meaning of the information through analysis and prompt response before any outbreak of violence. This space can only be appreciated when the actors undertake this exercise in mutual understanding and complementarity by avoiding unnecessary competition and duplication. This will also aid the sustainability of early warning as there will be strategic partnerships with each organisation contributing within its strengths and hence a wider and better quality coverage by the mechanism.

Recommendations

Entrench CEWER in conflict prevention, management and resolution

From the above literature it is evident that conflict early warning and early response has indeed contributed greatly to conflict prevention management and resolution. To realize its full potential however, CEWER as a proactive conflict prevention mechanism needs institutionalization from the national level all the way to the local level. With the National Conflict Early Warning and Early Response system in place, the NSC should be supported to build its capacity as well as setting up county level response centres for quick response measures. Also measures be undertaken to create and strengthen its linkages with the state organs mandated with peace and security affairs as well as the policy makers.

Streamline funding

CEWER serves to complement the government infrastructures to ensure peace and security prevails. This means that most, if not all, of the information in the long run should end up with the various government agencies and policy makers. Structured, coordinated and results oriented system of funding will tremendously enhance the outcomes. Actors should demonstrate the end use and value addition of the information given to their organisations and agencies. This will guard against waste of resources through duplication and unnecessary competition. Further, this will encourage strategic partnership among the peace actors.

Entrench gender

Men and women play different but equally critical roles in conflicts. An all-inclusive gender sensitive approach to conflict indicators and modalities of gathering information will enhance information gathering and timely responses to anticipated violent conflicts.

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- 1 Sussane Schmeidl and Craig J. Jenkins, "Early Warning Indicators of Forced Migration." Gurr, 1996: Adelman, 1998, Sharon Rusu, "Early Warning and Information: The Role of Relief Web." Preventive Measures: Building Risk Assessment and Crisis Early Warning Systems (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998). FEWER, FEWER Conflict and Peace Analysis and Response Manual (London: FEWER, 1999).
- 2 Sussane Schmeidl, Conflict Early Warning and Prevention: Toward a Coherent Terminology: 72
- 3 See Boutros Boutros – Ghali's report on An Agenda for Peace, 1992. Para. 23
- 4 Birikit Terefe Tiruneh, Establishing an Early Warning System in the African Peace and Security Architecture: Challenges and Prospects. KAIPTC Occasional Paper No. 29, 2010.
- 5 Susanne Schmeidl, Ciru Mwaura and Howard Adelman, Early Warning and Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa: Principals of the CEWARN Module. 169 – 174.
- 6 The UWIANO Platform for Peace was an initiative for peace aimed at forestalling conflicts during the referendum process in 2010. It brought together four strategic partners namely; the National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management (NSC), the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Peace and Development Network Kenya (PeaceNet). The platform is still in place and as the country approached the general elections of March 2013, was expanded to also include the United Nations Entity for Women (UNWOMEN) and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC).
- 7 The UWIANO Platform for Peace: experiences and lessons learned, 2012.
- 8 See Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism for IGAD Member States.
- 9 Ciru Mwaura, Peter Adwok Nyaba, Peter Otim and Seyoum Gebreselassie, Early Warning and Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa: Building CEWARN around entry points. 147 – 156.

Beyond security: Assessing the role of IGAD

At a time when the Horn of Africa region is facing deteriorating security, rise of armed insurgents, bad governance, inter-state tensions and chronic corruption, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) has gradually but steadily lost grip on its regional mandate, degenerating into a perpetual service to vested interests in the guise of global interdependence and multilateralism. Equally, it has ignored the sources of those challenges, *viz* the widespread unemployment, the economic disintegration and the pervasive illiteracy. Its policy towards shared goals of the region remains incoherent.

The role of IGAD – a body of eight member states who came around to improve their wellbeing through regional integration – is increasingly deviating from its goals and from expected standards of operations.

Since the revitalisation of what was initially Inter-Governmental Authority against Drought and Desertification (IGADD), the regional body has not only neglected its initial role confined to addressing environmental crises through coordination on environmental protection, generating food security strategies and natural resource management; but also dismally executed its new mandate as far as peace and security, and enhancing economic cooperation and integration are concerned.

Too often, IGAD operates as merely a mediator organisation rather than a regional alliance that ought to build regional equilibrium, letting the region become more volatile than ever. It has failed to build itself a firm ground and allowed member states to permeate and direct its activities in their own interests. This trend has compromised its impartiality as a worthy mechanism for conflict resolution.

Though not entirely its fault, efforts to develop IGAD's institutional capacity have been greatly impeded by meagre funding, laced with dire understaffing, exposing it to machinations in the interest of its donors. The region also lacks a formidable

powerhouse to offer leadership to IGAD. While Kenya, alongside Uganda, is too embroiled in the developments of the East Africa Community (EAC), efforts by Ethiopia to take up the leading role has only aggravated regional tensions undermining its legitimacy in solving conflicts, especially in Somalia.

In order to address these problems, there is a need for an urgent reassessment of the organisation's mandate, reinvigorating its agenda in the region and strengthening its institutional capacity by, among other measures, increased financial and material resources pledged over the long term to fulfil its mandate while enabling it to undertake other roles beyond security. This short analysis aims at defining the new momentum for the regional body. Along the way, it wishes to highlight IGAD's few successes while suggesting lessons it could borrow from its peer organisations.

Background

IGAD is a regional body that is built to address some of the thorniest challenges the region is facing including maintaining regional stability and economic integration. It now has eight state members, diverse culturally and ethnically and with deep-seated historical discontent among each other. This has contributed to make the region one of the most unstable and acutely impoverished spaces in the world. It was against this backdrop that IGAD was established, and officially launched in March 1996. It is one of the African Union's (AU) recognized Regional Economic Communities (RECs), with a population of over 200 million and covering an area of 5,222,520 square kilometres.

IGAD was established to supersede with a widened mandate what was formerly known as IGADD. IGADD had been formed in 1986 to consolidate efforts by both regional members and the international community to curb the environmental menace that was causing havoc in the largely semi-arid areas in the Horn of Africa. UN agencies had been instrumental in its formation, hoping to promote a regional coordination agency that could better address the problems of famine and drought that had devastated Somalia and Ethiopia in 1985 and 1984.¹ Its goals then had been limited to prevention of drought and desertification in the region. But environmental concerns were being overtaken by rising insecurity and instability in the region demonstrated in violent take-overs of governments in member countries and internationalisation of conflicts in the region.

The strongest impetus for the rejuvenation of IGAD was therefore the urge to lay down regional strategies for the resolution of the numerous inter- and intra-state conflicts through dialogue. This was evident in the resolve by member states to, inter alia, take effective collective measures to eliminate threats to regional cooperation, peace and stability and establish an effective mechanism of consultation and cooperation for the pacific settlement of differences and disputes. Conversely, the mission of the new initiative was set on a three-point agenda: food security and environmental protection, promotion and maintenance of peace and security and humanitarian affairs, and economic cooperation and integration.²

It is also worth mentioning that though the new body was restructured to handle its new mandate, it remained largely under-capacitated. IGAD has slightly above 50 members of staff, half of whom are support staff. It also operates on a paltry budget of about \$3million annually, a figure too small compared to its enormous mandate. That notwithstanding, it has endeavoured in setting up institutional frameworks structures to tackle some malignant issues. It has established among others Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism, (CEWARN) and the IGAD Capacity Building Program against Terrorism (ICPAT), largely subsidised by donors including USAID, GTZ, EU and SIDA.

Success stories

IGAD inherited some of the worst conflicts in the continent. It was reborn at a peak of inter-state conflicts while intra-state troubles were exacerbated by international

actors. Notably, Sudan was drawing regional attention as the longstanding civil war between the North and South ensued. The war pitted Sudan against its neighbours who accused it of funding internal groups in Eritrea, Ethiopia and Uganda. The civil strife in Somalia had also reached fever pitch after the fall of President Siad Barre in 1991, which was to be the longest standing conflict in the region. The relationship between Somalia and Ethiopia also worsened over the Ogaden region.

IGAD nonetheless provided a platform on which to channel efforts to solve these conflicts among others. Its role in the quest for peace and stability has also been witnessed in the Sudan conflict that culminated in the cessation of South Sudan. It spearheaded efforts that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005 between the National Congress Party and the SPLM/A. Subsequent tensions between the two nations have proved to be too big for IGAD to handle and have been taken over by other international actors including the AU and UN.

IGAD has also been instrumental in creating forums for Somalia to try to work out sustainable arrangements for peace in Somalia. Under its auspices, several peace agreements were reached that saw calm restored in the country, albeit temporarily. It was supportive of the process that led to the creation of both Transnational Federal Governments and also in initiating peacekeeping missions in Somalia before they were taken over by AU through AMISOM. However, IGAD's military involvement in Somalia drew the ire of locals as perpetrating Ethiopian interest evoking widespread resentment.

Through the CEWARN mechanism IGAD has also provided an early warning system that would enable countries to share information regarding potential or actual trans-boundary conflicts. CEWARN boasts of a few success stories especially in Uganda and Ethiopia. Its programme IGAD Capacity Building Program Against Terrorism (ICPAT) has faced a harder task in combating piracy and terrorism in the region. Though terrorism and piracy remain most threatening in the region, ICPAT have registered a considerable amount of success especially in training and consolidation counter-terrorism initiatives.

Despite these successes, under IGAD there has been no minimal decline of conflict in the Horn of Africa neither has there be any significant 'signs of movement towards collective security arrangements'. And though it could take credit for these successes, it's neither had the capacity nor the authority to manage the peace processes that were carried out. In fact, Sally Healy observes "IGAD peace initiatives in Sudan and Somalia were political initiatives, conceived and largely executed by one or more member states while lead regional mediators were also interested parties".³

Furthermore, even the specialised units of IGAD are limited in capacity and authority to conduct their mandates. CEWARN can neither be referred to as an information house for the states nor claim the right to inspect records. These conditions strongly limit CEWARN's room for action, especially in the face of widespread secretiveness on all administrative levels in most IGAD countries.⁴

IGAD's successes are even murkier in areas this paper considers neglected. IGAD has a most baffling record in either predicting or mitigating drought or food insecurity even as the region faces dire environmental concerns. By the same token, IGAD has been obstinate towards creation of an economic zone in the region and has no record of forging any sort of cooperation.

Towards new momentum

IGAD has calamitous institutional and capacity weaknesses that cannot be ignored. These deficiencies have made it susceptible to partisan interests in the region, including both the international community and regional powers notably Ethiopia and - to an extent - Kenya. It's quickly losing its legitimacy as a credible conflict resolution mechanism as evident in loss of membership of Eritrea and depreciating favour in Somalia.

Against this background, IGAD needs a complete reinvigoration or overhaul. The revamping must include strengthening its institutional capacity, consolidating its mandate to a realisable agenda while pledging over the long term financial and material resources commensurate to its enormous role. It is only through financial empowerment that the institution would gain independence and also to attend to its other roles.

IGAD needs to build on the few success stories it has attained in Somalia and Sudan to attract more funding and acquire more legitimacy. The regional body has no equal, and provided that member states appreciate its efficacy, it will be easier to mobilise resources and hence strengthening itself some more.

IGAD will also need to work extra hard to dissociate itself from partisan interests as perceived by interest groups in some conflict hotspots it is involved in. It needs to build itself into a strong institution aimed at a collective security arrangement to channel conflict resolution in the region.

In creating specialised bodies, IGAD has to work in achieving specific mandates as demonstrated by the accomplishments of CEWARN and ICPAT. There is need for a commitment by the body to establish such initiatives for other mandates, viz economic cooperation, environmental management and food security.

IGAD could take advantage of existing bilateral agreements in the region to further economic integration in the region. There exist strong ties between Kenya and Uganda, and Kenya and South Sudan and Ethiopia. Yet such projects as Lamu port-Southern Sudan-Ethiopia Transport among other opportunities present opportune entries to IGAD in to this role. Dual membership to both IGAD and EAC by both Kenya and Uganda will however provide considerable challenge to IGAD taking up this role.

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 - 2 IGAD Official Website: About Us - Our Mission and Vision http://igad.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=93&Itemid=124&limitstart=1
 - 3 Healy, Sally. 2009. Peacemaking in the Midst of War: An Assessment of IGAD's contribution to Regional Security. Crisis State Paper No 2. Available at <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/28482/1/WP59.2.pdf>
 - 4 Ulf Terlinden (2004), "IGAD – Paper Tiger facing Gigantic Tasks", Centre for Development Research (ZEF), Berlin, February 2004

Cooperation between the AU and African Council of Religious Leaders

In March, the Africa Council of Religious Leaders and the African Union Commission (AUC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation. The memorandum will help to facilitate the development and integration agenda of the AUC. The MoU details areas of cooperation between the Council and the Commission, and has been developed within the framework of the Abuja Declaration during the First Interfaith Dialogue Forum between the AUC and religious leaders in Africa held in Abuja, Nigeria in 2010.

The specific areas of cooperation agreed upon include conflict transformation and peacebuilding, sustainable human development and protecting the earth and developing the notion of shared security. The two parties agreed to information sharing and acknowledged the need to build partnerships between the AUC and religious leaders.

Source: Africa Council of Religious Leaders

World Council of Churches meet with the Sudanese government

In a recent meeting with the Sudanese Minister of Guidance and Endowment, Alfatih T Abdallah, World Council of Churches (WCC) General Secretary Rev Dr Olav Fykse Tveit stressed the important role of churches in rebuilding their nation after years of conflict, along with the assurance of their religious freedoms.

Tveit was in Khartoum from 23 to 24 April, visiting church leaders and government officials at the invitation of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC).

The visit is Tveit's first to Khartoum since the separation of Sudan and South Sudan in 2011, implementing their peace agreement of 2005.

"Sudanese churches belong genuinely to the country," said Tveit. "Christians here are citizens of Sudan and therefore have an important role in assisting the rebuilding of their nation.

"We support churches in their struggles and aspirations for peace. We affirm our hope in the government to accomplish its responsibility in protecting churches and Christians and ensuring their security," he added.

Minister Alfatih Abdallah affirmed this stance. "Sudan needs churches to rebuild the society after a long history of conflict. Their right to worship and conduct their activities is guaranteed in the constitution of the country," he said. The minister promised further interaction with the churches. "We hope to hold regular meetings with the churches to address the problems and building trust and dialogue," said Abdallah.

In Khartoum, Tveit was introduced to the issue of limited permits for building of churches, which he raised as a concern to be addressed during his meeting with Abdallah. Referring to the restructuring of the SCC across the Sudan and South Sudan borders, Tveit said that "This is an extremely important step and a sign towards the immense need of unity among Sudanese churches. On 25 April, Tveit was in Juba, South Sudan meeting with church and government leaders.

Source: World Council of Churches

Reconciliation committee established in South Sudan

The Republic of South Sudan has established a National Reconciliation Committee for healing, peace and reconciliation. The committee headed by Archbishop Dr Daniel Deng Bul represents various sections of South Sudanese society, including Christians and Muslims, women and youth organizations, as well as civil society at large. There will also be one member from each of the ten states of South Sudan.

The committee's responsibilities include developing objectives of national healing and reconciliation, to determine short term and mid-term activities, and research modern and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

According to a letter from the Sudan Council of Churches acting General Secretary Rev Mark Akec Ciien, "the general mood of the people in South Sudan and the Church is that the National Healing and Reconciliation Program has a gracious basis and has good intention but we are all afraid that such a noble initiative could be hijacked by vested interests."

Sources: Republic of Southern Sudan/Sudan Council of Churches

Somalia

UN Security Council resolution risk for humanitarian organizations

The UN Security Council recently passed Resolution 2093 that places all United Nations functions in Somalia under the political mandate of the new UN peacebuilding mission in Somalia. This decision will, according to international aid agencies, undermine their capacity to provide humanitarian aid and will also increase the risk of attacks on aid workers. It will in addition constrain humanitarian negotiations and "the neutrality, impartiality and independence of humanitarian action will be compromised."

Source: Charity & Security Network

RESOURCES

An Unwanted Truth?

Child sexual abuse in conflicts

This report warns that international governments are failing to take seriously the scale of sexual abuse against children in conflict. According to War Child, the G8 countries have a great responsibility to stop sexual violence against children. 600,000 children around the world are either raped or experience some form of sexual violence. In countries under civil war, 50% of children interviewed were victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. Even with this staggering revelation on sexual violation directed on children, international governments, including the G8 of leading nations, have overlooked child victims of abuse and instead focused on sexual violence as a women's issue and on more visible aspects of humanitarian disasters.

The report can be accessed at

<http://cdn.warchild.org.uk/sites/default/files/An-Unwanted-Truth-April-2013.pdf>

New research reveals dangers to humanitarian workers in conflict zones

Three new research reports document and analyse the dangers facing humanitarian aid staff working in conflict zones around the world. In recent years, the number of aid workers killed and injured by firearms, explosive weapons, bombs, and other forms of severe violence has risen to unprecedented levels. The three new reports are:

Operating in Insecurity: Shifting patterns of violence against humanitarian providers and their staff (1996-2010).

Humanitarian staff security in armed conflict: Policy implications for the international community from changes in the operating environment for humanitarian agencies.

Security Facts for Humanitarian Agencies. Shifting patterns in security incidents affecting humanitarian aid workers and agencies: An analysis of fifteen years of data (1996-2010).

Download the reports from <http://kroc.nd.edu/news-events/news/new-research-reveals-dangers-humanitarian-workers-conflict-zones-1506>

Eritrea: Scenarios for Future Transition

This report examines the regime's vulnerabilities, maps out six possible scenarios for a "post-Isaias" Eritrea and identifies the main risks and opportunities the country and the region would face. Concerned Western partners, neighbours and governments with special relations with Asmara could play a vital role in preventing a major humanitarian crisis or even the state's collapse.

The report is available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/horn-of-africa/ethiopia-eritrea/200-eritrea-scenarios-for-future-transition.pdf>

A women's guide to security sector reforms

The purpose of this guide is to engage women from civil society in transforming the security sector communities and countries. It encourages women to be part of dialogue and decision making, and to be involved in security sector reform. Ultimately, their participation will help to develop a security sector that is effective and accountable to the people.

This guide is written for women who have not formally studied security or worked with the security sector. Regardless of background, women understand their community's needs and desire to make the security sector serve them better. Women's experiences of security matters are often discounted or overlooked.

Find the report at

<http://www.inclusivesecurity.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/WGTSSR-Web.pdf>

New Wars Old Enemies Conflict Dynamics in South Kordofan

This paper provides a description of the first year of renewed conflict during the period June 2011-July 2012. The information is based on primary data collected in South Kordofan and South Sudan. The main focus is the conduct and dynamics of the conflict and the primary armed actors, shared weapons and ammunition possessions. It provides details of the materials seized, photographs and physical inspections. This paper reviews these border aspects of the conflict and its impacts on relations between Khartoum and Juba.

The full report can be accessed at <http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/fileadmin/docs/working-papers/HSBA-WP29-S.Kordofan.pdf>

Genocide Matters: Ongoing Issues and Emerging Perspectives

The book edited by Joyce Apsel and Ernesto Verdeja, assistant professor at the Kroc Institute, Notre Dame, examines four main areas: the current state of research on genocide; new thinking on the categories and methods of mass violence; developments in teaching about genocide; critical analyses of military humanitarian interventions and post-violence justice and reconciliation.

A review concludes: "In *Genocide Matters*, Apsel and Verdeja bring together a range of important authors and themes, including the perspectives of the next generation of genocide scholars. This is an important volume to understanding the field."

Find the book at: <http://www.routledge.com/books/details/9780415814966/>

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Editorial information

The media review Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) was published by the Life & Peace Institute between 1989 and 2006. The re-formatting of HAB as an e-bulletin 2007 was done in close collaboration with the Nairobi-based All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA).

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Editorial principles

The Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) is an international newsletter, compiling analyses, news and resources primarily in the Horn of Africa region. The material published in HAB represents a variety of sources and does not necessarily represent the views of the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) or the cooperating partners, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA). Writers and sources are normally referred to, although in exceptional cases, the editors of the HAB may choose not to reveal the real identity of a writer or publish the source.

