

CONFLICT TRENDS

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Cover: Youths protest for action against climate change outside Parliament in Cape Town, South Africa (15 March 2019). Photo: Ashraf Hendricks/ GroundUp.



EDITORIAL

BY VASU GOUNDEN

Between 2020 and 2021, there have been numerous completed and attempted coups in Africa, including two coups in Mali that took place within nine months of each other. This was followed by another successful coup in Guinea, which saw long-term president, Alpha Conde, deposed by the Commander of Guinea's elite Special Forces Unit. In addition to the traditional military coup, we have seen the proliferation of constitutional coups, which are defined as the changing of a constitution to eliminate term and/or age limits to allow an incumbent president to extend their mandate. Constitutional coups, much like traditional military coups, are often underpinned by poor governance, weak institutions, and the absence of a culture of democracy.

Since 2011, Africa has witnessed various forms of popular uprisings leading to the ousting of ruling Heads of States. These occurred in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia in 2011; Burkina Faso in 2014; Zimbabwe in 2017; Nigeria in 2020; and Algeria and Sudan in 2019. Historically, the justification for coups has generally been rooted in citizens' abhorrence of corruption, weak governance, poverty, and inequality. In 2021, the same issues seem to drive people to remove their governments. In the recent Guinea coup, the leader of the coup affirmed these factors, citing poverty and endemic corruption as reasons for overthrowing President Conde. In the 2020 Mali coup, the soldiers who led the coup cited theft and bad governance as their motivation for toppling the government. This was echoed in Sudan in 2019 during the Sudanese Revolution when Sudanese students and activists cited similar grievances with former President Omar al-Bashir and his government.

The triple threat of poverty, unemployment, and inequality continues to drive conflict, which have all been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. One in three people are now unemployed in Nigeria,¹ Africa's largest economy. The same applies to South Africa, the most industrialised nation in Africa. It is now estimated that the number of people living below the poverty line in sub-Saharan Africa has exceeded 500 million,² which accounts for roughly half the population of Africa. Consequently, increased poverty and unemployment are

widening inequality across Africa, creating conditions conducive to coups and unconstitutional changes in government.

Westphalian sovereignty is a principle in international law which dictates that each nation-state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs to the exclusion of all external powers. The principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states is also a key tenet of the African Union (AU). However, the AU may intervene in a Member State. Article 4 of the AU's *Constitutive Act* mandates the AU to intervene in Member States under some circumstances, such as war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity, and to prevent a repeat of previous events, such as the 1994 Rwandan genocide perpetrated without timely and effective intervention by the mandated multi-lateral agency.

The circumstances under which the AU may intervene are governed by certain thresholds which may not be reached for several years while a country is in a state of civil conflict. This continues to be the case in a number of countries across Africa, where the circumstances under which external interference to resolve the conflict that may lead to a coup, are very limited. If Africa is to curtail the practice of unconstitutional changes of government through military coups, creative solutions for the deep structural challenges that drive conflict must be found. The recent rise in coups must, therefore, be seen as an early warning sign that Africa needs capable and responsive States, political will, a patriotic and committed citizenry, and visionary, people-centred leadership to reverse the deep structural challenges faced. **A**

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THE JULY 2021 PROTESTS AND SOCIO-POLITICAL UNREST IN SOUTH AFRICA: REFLECTING ON THE CAUSES, CONSEQUENCES AND FUTURE LESSONS

BY CLAYTON HAZVINEI VHUMBUNU



REUTERS/SIPHWE SIBEKO

Introduction

During the period 9 to 17 July 2021, South Africa experienced violent protests and socio-political unrest characterised by widespread looting of shops and businesses, as well as burning and destruction of public facilities and private properties, mostly in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and Gauteng. The socio-political unrest and violence were largely sparked by initial low-intensity and sporadic protests in parts of KZN against the arrest and imprisonment of former President Jacob Zuma. The Constitutional Court of South Africa sentenced the former president to 15 months imprisonment for defying its order to comply with the summons to appear before the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture,

Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State, and for undermining the authority of the Court through his casual and scandalous attacks. There has been wide-ranging debate across the country on whether the 'Free Zuma' protests, looting and socio-political unrest was caused by the imprisonment of Zuma or not. However, what stands out is not only the undeniable fact that the developments resulted in colossal socio-economic damage countrywide at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc on national economic growth and people's lives and livelihoods,

Above: Protesters march through the streets following the jailing of former South African President Jacob Zuma (July 2021).



Map No. 3768 Rev. 6 UNITED NATIONS
February 2007

Department of Peacekeeping Operations
Cartographic Section

but also the valuable lessons for sustainable future prevention, management and resolution of conflict, violence and socio-political unrest in South Africa. This article deepens the analysis into the causes and consequences of the Free Zuma socio-political unrest while reflecting on the possible valuable lessons that can be drawn from the events to avoid the recurrence of such and to manage and resolve similar conflicts in the future sustainably.

Background to the ‘Free Zuma’ Protests and Socio-Political Unrest in South Africa

Political and social tensions, mostly in KZN province, started to intensify when the former president started appearing before the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State between 15 and 19 July 2019 to provide evidence and testimony on allegations of corruption and state capture-related issues. The Commission was established in January 2018 by the then-President Jacob Zuma, with Deputy-Chief Justice Raymond Zondo appointed by the Chief Justice as the Chairperson, in accordance with Section 84(2) of the Constitution, pursuant to investigation and remedial action of the Public Protector with regards to complaints and allegations of State Capture.¹



PHOTO: GCIS

Justice Raymond Zondo was appointed as the Chairperson of the Judicial Commission of Inquiry into Allegations of State Capture, Corruption and Fraud in the Public Sector including Organs of State.



Supporters of former South African president, Jacob Zuma, gather at his home in Nkandla, following the Constitutional Court's decision to sentence Zuma (July 2021).

Initially, Zuma made a court application to interdict the Public Protector Report on State Capture, but the North Gauteng High Court ruled on 14 December 2017 that the remedial actions of the State Capture Report were 'wise, necessary, rational and appropriate'.²

In December 2020, the Chairperson of the Commission summoned Zuma to reappear before the Commission to respond to 'critical questions' on 'various issues arising out of evidence given by various witnesses', specifically his role 'in regards to various transactions and matters'.³ Zuma was summoned to appear before the Commission between 18 and 22 January 2021, but continuously expressed reluctance to appear before the Commission, citing his treatment as an accused rather than as a witness, health concerns, and later he unsuccessfully appealed for the recusal of the Chairperson of the Commission. Even after the Constitutional Court passed a judgement on 28 January 2021 that compelled him to appear before the Commission between 15 and 19 February 2021, Zuma continued to be defiant, stating that he was prepared to be arrested and incarcerated.⁴

The Commission launched contempt of court proceedings at the Constitutional Court. On 29 June 2021, the Constitutional Court sentenced Zuma to 15 months in prison on the grounds that by failing to comply with the court order to testify before the Commission, his conduct

constituted a 'reprehensible attack on the rule of law' and his contempt of court 'posed a serious risk that it would inspire others to undermine the administration of justice'.⁵ In its judgement, the Court ordered Zuma to submit himself to the South African Police Service (SAPS) in Nkandla or at Johannesburg Central Police Station within five days, failure of which would result in his arrest.⁶ Protesters gathered at Zuma's homestead in Nkandla to protect him from being arrested. His two court appeals at the Pietermaritzburg High Court and at the Constitutional Court to stay the execution of his arrest were unsuccessful. When Zuma handed himself over at Estcourt Correctional Service Centre in KZN on 7 July 2021, there were widespread violent protests, rioting and looting of shops and businesses, and destruction of public facilities and private property in parts of KZN. This spread to parts of Gauteng province from 9 to 17 July 2021. The 'Free

THE 'FREE ZUMA' PROTESTS RESULTED IN EXTENSIVE DAMAGE TO THE ECONOMY AND BUSINESSES, WHILE THREATENING THE LIVES AND LIVELIHOODS OF THE PEOPLE WHO WERE ALREADY REELING UNDER THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

Zuma' protests resulted in extensive damage to the economy and businesses, while threatening the lives and livelihoods of the people who were already reeling under the effects of COVID-19.

Quantifying the Socio-economic Losses and Consequences of the Riots and Destruction

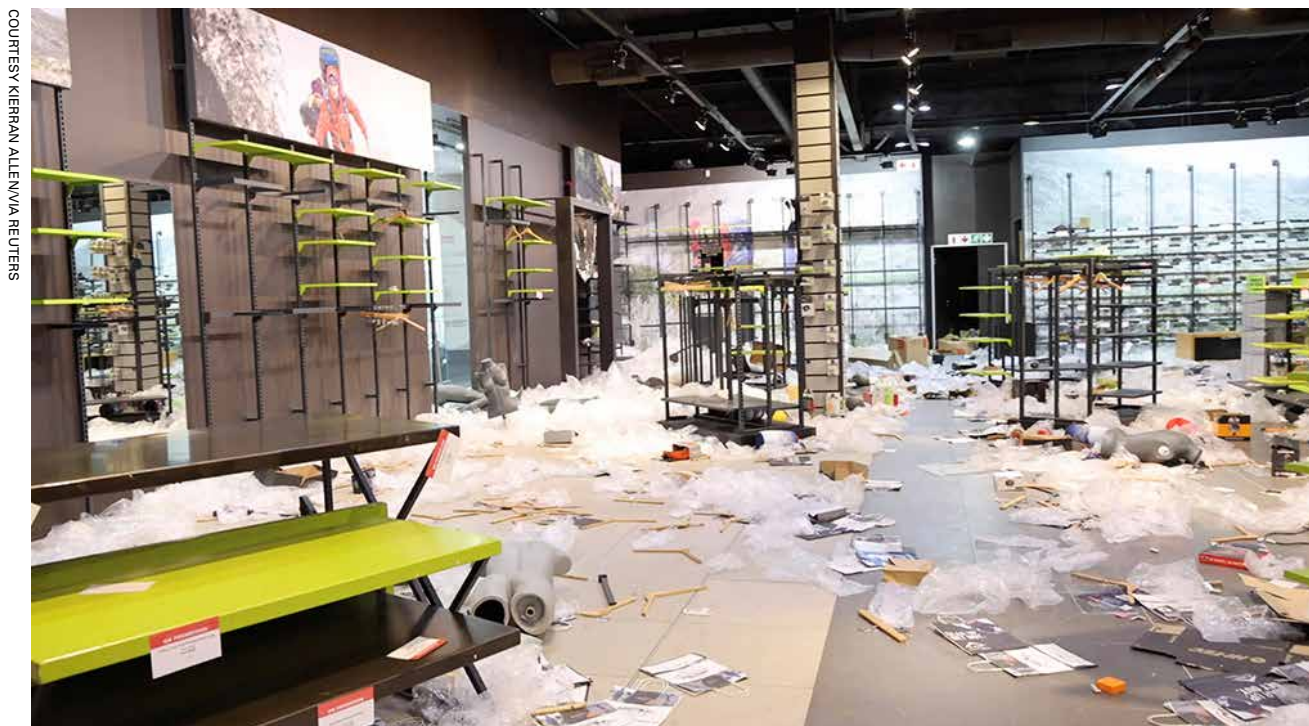
While assessments to determine the extent of the damage that occurred during the nine days of protest and unrest are ongoing, it is clear that the effects have been tremendous in both scale and intensity. The protests resulted in the loss of properties, business stock, employment, livelihoods, and essential services, such as medical and pharmaceutical supplies (in hospitals and clinics), farming, financial services facilities, telecommunication facilities, food distribution centres, and seaports. The protests also disrupted critical government programmes, such as the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Hence it has been considered unprecedented and 'the worst unrest since Apartheid'.⁷

By disrupting businesses through looting and arson and damaging business premises and properties, the protests caused significant financial and infrastructural losses. The South African Property Owners' Association (SAPOA) reported that a total of 3000 stores were looted, and 1199 retail stores were damaged during the protests, including large outlets and businesses.⁸ A total of 161 malls were damaged countrywide, while 161 liquor outlets and distributors, 11 warehouses, and eight factories were

extensively damaged.⁹ Banking services were affected, as most banks in KZN and Gauteng closed their branches.¹⁰ In total, an estimated 40000 businesses and 50000 informal traders were affected, with 150000 jobs put at risk, mostly due to business closures and the possibilities of delayed re-stocking and re-opening.¹¹

BY DISRUPTING BUSINESSES THROUGH LOOTING AND ARSON AND DAMAGING BUSINESS PREMISES AND PROPERTIES, THE PROTESTS CAUSED SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURAL LOSSES

On a national scale, SAPOA estimated that the extent of damage was worth R50 billion. The KZN province lost R20 billion, and in Durban alone, R1.5 billion of stock was lost by businesses.¹² Large supermarket groups and wholesalers were mainly targeted and affected. For example, Shoprite Group Stores reported that out of its 1189 supermarkets trading under different names, a total of 200 Shoprite Group Stores were looted, vandalised and/or burnt in KZN and Gauteng, including 69 Shoprite supermarkets, 54 Shoprite Liquor Shop outlets, 44 Usave stores, 35 furniture stores, six Checkers supermarkets, one Checkers Hyper, and one Freshmark Distribution Centre.¹³ Massmart Holdings



COURTESY KIERRAN ALLEN VIA REUTERS

Extensive damage inside a shopping mall in Durban, following the July 2021 rioting and looting.



Supporters of Jacob Zuma block the freeway with burning tyres during a protest in Peacevale, South Africa (9 July 2021).

Limited reported that 41 of its stores had been looted in KZN and Gauteng, with four facilities burnt and damaged.¹⁴ All this consequently led to food shortages and under-supply of basic commodities in the affected provinces.

The protesters blockaded and damaged parts of the main national highways, thereby disrupting commercial traffic along the routes which serve as strategic logistics arteries nationally and regionally. More than 35 trucks were burnt and looted, mostly at Mooi River Town in KZN. The 2255 km national (N2) highway connects Cape Town with Durban, while the 579 km national (N3) highway connects Gauteng with KZN. The latter is a strategic route in Southern Africa along the North-South corridor as it facilitates road transit freight and commercial cargo traffic from landlocked countries, such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, carrying imports and exports to and from the strategic seaports of Durban (which is Africa's busiest port) and Richards Bay as well as King Shaka International Airport. Over and above this supply chain disruption, essential services were suspended. This included the Passenger Rail Agency of South Africa (PRASA), which delivers commuter metro-rail train services in metropolitan areas, and the South African Petroleum Refineries (SAPREF)

oil refinery, which suspended services citing force majeure.¹⁵ SAPREF is the largest refinery in Southern Africa, accounting for 35% of South Africa's fuel supply. eThekweni Municipality suspended its municipal bus services and its electricity call centre,¹⁶ while the electricity utility (Eskom) suspended its service calls in parts of KZN and Gauteng.¹⁷ Telecommunications infrastructure was destroyed, with the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa (ICASA) reporting that 113 networks had been vandalised, which disrupted network services and community radio stations.¹⁸ In addition, there was looting and destruction of radio stations and community radio equipment,¹⁹ which infringed on citizens' rights to access information, entertainment and news.

The violent protests impacted the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out and disrupted the transportation of medical supplies and delivery of healthcare services.²⁰ The South African Department of Health reported that about 25 000 vaccine doses were lost during protest action through acts of looting and arson. The target of vaccinating 300 000 people per day was impeded²¹ at a time when the government sought to vaccinate 67% of the population by the end of 2021 to reach herd immunity. The closure of over 90 pharmacies in KZN



Armed community members gather at a road block in the Phoenix community, to prevent looters from reaching the community (15 July 2021).

and Gauteng affected the collection of essential medicines by people living with chronic illnesses.²²

Communal violence and racial tensions were sparked as a result of vigilantism. Business owners and armed civilians resorted to self-defence, self-protection, and community citizen policing. In the Phoenix community in Durban, the official death toll reached 36 people, with allegations of racial profiling and ‘race-targeted’ attacks on suspected looters and pillagers.²³ Overall, the July 2021 protests resulted in the deaths of 337 people in KZN and Gauteng as of 22 July 2021, with over 3 400 people arrested on allegations of inciting public violence, murder, arson, and looting.²⁴

The protests impacted farming, mining, and manufacturing in the two provinces. For example, Tongaat Hulett sugar cane plantations in KZN were burnt, resulting in losses of approximately 300 000 tons.²⁵ Trucks transporting cane to the sugar mills for processing were hijacked, resulting in the closure of the mills.²⁶ Coal mining in KZN was disrupted due to protest-induced absenteeism among workers.²⁷ This affected the productivity of mining firms, with companies like MC Mining Uitkomst colliery announcing that the three and half days of temporary closure resulted in 5600 tons of forfeited coal production, which translated into export losses.²⁸ There could be long-term economic implications, which may affect investment decisions.

For example, companies such as Toyota, which has a car manufacturing plant in KZN, have raised serious concerns about the conduciveness of the province’s business environment.²⁹

Significant costs were incurred by business owners in the repair and rehabilitation of buildings and the re-stocking of shelves. For example, Montclair Mall in Durban will cost between R30 and R50 million to repair.³⁰ The South African Department of Trade, Industry and Competition, in conjunction with the Industrial Development Corporation and the National Empowerment Fund, commendably announced a R3.75 billion funding package as part of the ‘economic recovery support interventions’ to assist businesses, including small and informal enterprises in townships, rural areas and small towns affected by the protests, as well as an additional R400 million under the Manufacturing Competitiveness Enhancement Programme Economic Stabilisation Fund to support affected manufacturing firms.³¹ However, this remains insufficient considering the significant losses incurred by businesses.

THE PROTESTS IMPACTED FARMING, MINING, AND MANUFACTURING IN THE TWO PROVINCES

Causes of the July 2021 Protests and Socio-political Unrest

There has been fierce debate in academia, political circles, and public spaces on the real causes of the July 2021 protests and socio-political unrest. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, in his address on 16 July 2021, described the protests as ‘nothing less than a deliberate, coordinated, and well-planned attack on [South Africa’s] democracy’, and further stated that ‘the Constitutional order of [South Africa’s] democracy was under threat’.³² The president declared:

The actions are intended to cripple the economy, cause social stability and severely weaken – or even dislodge – the democratic state. Using pretext of a political grievance, those behind these acts have sought to provoke a popular insurrection. They sought to exploit the social and economic conditions under which many South Africans live [...] to provoke ordinary citizens and criminal networks to engage in opportunistic acts of looting. The ensuing chaos is used as a smokescreen to carry out economic sabotage.³³

The president’s sentiments that the protests and civil unrest were ‘an attempted coup’ and ‘insurrection’ may be validated once the ongoing investigations to identify the architects and instigators of the ‘economic sabotage’ and ‘attempted regime change’ by the Crime Intelligence Division of the SAPS and the State Security Agency (SSA) is

completed. While the involvement of a ‘third force’ may be a possibility, it is the continued existence of enabling factors for social unrest that contributed significantly to the situation that unfolded.

The enabling factors, which may qualify as the root causes of the July 2021 protests and looting, centre around challenges faced by the state to address the problems of poverty, unemployment, and inequality as these often create portions of communities that are economically disenfranchised, desperate and marginalised. Therefore, they identify common grievances and shared bonds as they engage in survivalist-motivated violence and frustration-instigated social unrest or are prone to manipulation by elites to fight political battles on their behalf. The World Bank ranks South Africa as the most unequal society in the world, with 90% of the country’s wealth being owned by only 10% of the population.³⁴ The United Nations Human Development Report of 2020 reports that 55.5% of South Africans (approximately 30.3 million) are living below the poverty line.³⁵ Job losses have increased since the onset of COVID-19. The Statistics South Africa (StatsSA) Quarterly

USING PRETEXT OF A POLITICAL GRIEVANCE, THOSE BEHIND THESE ACTS HAVE SOUGHT TO PROVOKE A POPULAR INSURRECTION



NIKO KNIGGE

The challenges of poverty, unemployment and inequality were significant enabling factors for the July 2021 protests and riots.



PHOTO: GCIS

The South African government managed to restore calm following the deployment of the South African National Defence Force.

Labour Force Survey (QLFS) of 2021 puts unemployment in South Africa at 32.5%, and even higher at 46.3% among young people (15 to 34 years of age), while the graduate unemployment rate for those between 15 to 24 years of age stands at 40.3%.³⁶ In the first quarter of 2021, total employment in the formal non-agriculture sector was reduced by 5.4% compared to March 2020 levels, equating to 552 000 job losses.³⁷ The government must be commended for introducing a raft of social safety net interventions and social protection measures to cushion citizens from the socio-economic effects of COVID-19, such as the South African Social Security Agency Relief grants and Social Relief of Distress (SRD) grants and food parcels; adjusting pensions for the elderly and grants for child support, foster children, war veterans, and those with disabilities; and the use of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, among others. However, they have had limited reach. A substantial section of society remains in socio-economic distress.

Citizens were frustrated by worsening poverty, unemployment, food insecurity, and inequality due to the COVID-19-induced national lockdown measures. South Africa remains the hardest hit by the pandemic on the continent, with a total of 2 919 632 cumulative confirmed cases and 88 925 cumulative deaths as of 25 October 2021.³⁸ Exacerbated by the pandemic and falling living standards,

life expectancy for males has declined from 62.4 years in 2020 to 59.3 years in 2021 and for females from 68.4 years in 2020 to 64.6 years in 2021.³⁹ Economic growth has been very minimal, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth of a mere 1.1% in the first quarter of 2021, making the economy 2.7% smaller than it was in the first quarter of 2020.⁴⁰ Therefore, although the July 2021 protests may have been politically motivated, they were fueled by deep-rooted and acute socio-economic challenges facing poor, hungry and frustrated citizens, mostly in the townships, which provided fertile ground for social unrest.

Key Lessons in Preventing, Managing, and Resolving Future Socio-political Unrest in South Africa

The government finally managed to restore calm following the deployment of the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) to KZN and Gauteng between 12 and 14 July 2021, as part of 'Operation Prosper' in response to a request made by the National Joint Operational and Intelligence Structure (NATJOINTS). There are key lessons that emerge from the July 2021 protests that the government, businesses, communities and society must consider for future prevention, management, and resolution of such socio-political unrest.

First, it is incumbent upon the government to invest in strategically readjusting its socio-economic policies to allow for transformational, inclusive and equitable economic growth that benefits the poor and vulnerable in society, instead of perpetuating the legacy of exclusion and entrenching inequality. Existing national plans, programmes and policies have to be implemented in such a way that facilitates the equitable distribution and redistribution of socio-economic development benefits to all members of the society. Prudent and strategic economic policies have to be complemented by social welfare, social security and social protection programmes that cater for the vulnerable members of society in order to create peaceful communities. This addresses some of the root causes of unrest and discontent, as it becomes difficult for any criminal elements to manipulate, incite or negatively influence empowered citizens.

To reinforce the previous point, the government is encouraged to invest in civic infrastructure and community engagement to foster community development and promote social cohesion. A culture of looting, violence, and arson continues to characterise protests, as witnessed during the waves of service delivery protests and xenophobia in recent years. South Africa is currently ranked among the 35 most dangerous countries in the world on the Global Peace Index of 2021 in terms of safety and security considerations.⁴¹ A lesson that can be drawn from the July 2021 protests is the need for strict enforcement of laws against pillaging, arson, and destruction of property through effective sentencing of convicts and upholding the rule of law. As envisaged in the National Crime Prevention Strategy of South Africa, the government may need to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system such that reported crimes are expeditiously and successfully investigated and prosecuted, and convicts receive punishment for serious crimes committed. This will deter similar future cases of criminality and violence. It should be coupled with enhanced police-community relations to nurture a culture that shuns violence and criminality as well as public attitudes, norms, and beliefs geared towards peaceful co-existence of those with similarities and differences in society. In the process, community members may also need to develop a culture of safeguarding public facilities and shared public spaces from vandals, criminals and pillagers. All this is achievable through structured, massive civic education that targets children, young people and adults to promote the values of civility, peace, responsible citizenship, collective sense of identity and belonging, respect for the sanctity of life and property, and good neighbourliness.

Another lesson that emerged from the protests is the salience of community race relations. Other than implementing nation-building and social cohesion programmes, as provided for in the National Strategy for Social Cohesion of 2012, the SAPS may need to execute

civilian police programmes effectively to ensure that community policing and neighbourhood watch programmes are conducted by trained, competent and professional individuals who are in a position to manage and resolve conflicts without provoking community tensions, as opposed to the illegal practice of setting up community checkpoints and aggressive vigilantism.

Proactive policing is needed as a preventive measure to manage violence and unrest. There were reports that firearms, ammunition, and assault rifles were looted during the protests in Johannesburg.⁴² This may have been avoided if timeous proactive measures were taken. The government should continuously enhance the capacity and competencies of the security services sector by improving their ability to understand, assess and analyse trends and patterns in conflict, violence and instability so as to be able to intervene systematically, strategically and tactically for public safety. In addition, exemplary leadership is recommended, especially at the political leadership level, through nurturing productive and constructive political relationships, political tolerance, and ethical conduct such that political leaders can maintain a moral high ground when they condemn incidences of violence, looting, impunity and anarchy.

A CULTURE OF LOOTING, VIOLENCE, AND ARSON CONTINUES TO CHARACTERISE PROTESTS, AS WITNESSED DURING THE WAVES OF SERVICE DELIVERY PROTESTS AND XENOPHOBIA IN RECENT YEARS

Conclusion

The cause of the July 2021 socio-political unrest was a combination of political, social and economic factors. While the protests and unrest left deep wounds on the country's political, economic, social and legal system, it also presents an opportunity for the country to draw on lessons that are essential for future prevention and management of various forms of conflict and violence. As Kenneth Cloke and Joan Goldsmith once remarked:

Every conflict we face is rich with positive and negative potential; it can be a source of inspiration, enlightenment, learning, transformation and growth, rage, fear, shame, entrapment, and resistance. The choice is not up to our opponents, but to us, and our willingness to face and work through them.⁴³

What then remains fundamental is the ability of the South African government, communities and businesses to reflect on the lessons learnt retrospectively and collectively make efforts to prevent the recurrence of similar situations. This will better position South Africa to manage and resolve

future conflicts sustainably, peacefully and in a manner that limits the severity, intensity and scale of socio-economic and political damage. **A**

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THE RISK OF VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM IN THE COASTAL STATES OF WEST AFRICA: ASSESSING GHANA'S VULNERABILITIES, RESILIENCE AND RESPONSES

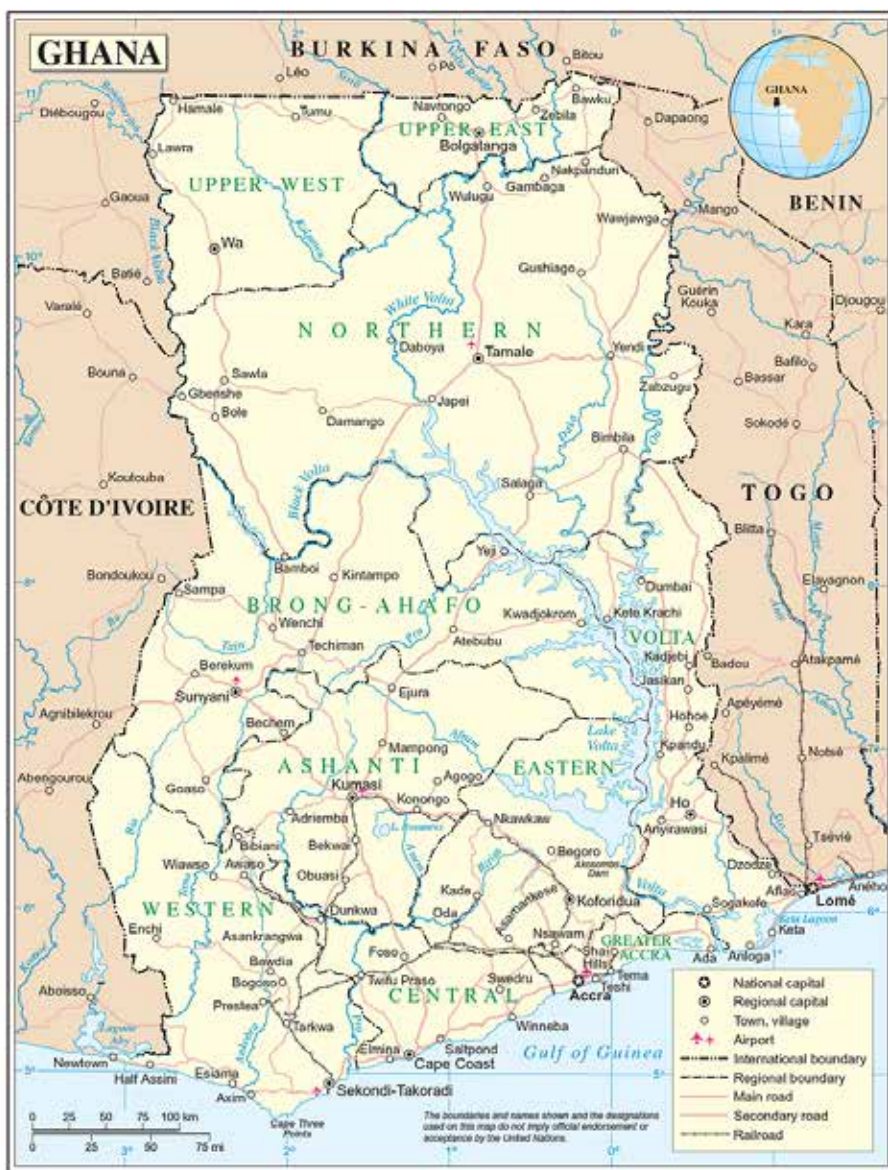
BY **FESTUS KOFI AUBYN**

Introduction

The activities of violent extremist and terrorist groups in West Africa have been on the rise since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Since January 2021, high-profile attacks by groups affiliated with the Islamic State (ISIS) and Al-Qaeda have been recorded in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. Although the Sahel region of West Africa is currently the epicentre of violent extremism and terrorism (VET), the

threat is gradually spilling over into the littoral States along the Gulf of Guinea (GoG).¹ Several coastal States along the GoG have recently either witnessed attacks or identified the presence of terrorist groups in parts of their territory.² Ghana provides a clear example of the contagion effects of

Above: The Sahel region of West Africa is at the epicentre of violent extremism and terrorism.



Ghana’s Vulnerability to Violent Extremism and Terrorism

The factors that make Ghana vulnerable to terrorist attacks are complex and wide-ranging. However, for the purpose of this discussion, six factors are briefly explained.

Proximity to Countries Affected by Violent Extremism and Terrorism

The first obvious factor is Ghana’s proximity to countries where groups such as the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam waal Muslimeen (JNIM), and Ansarul Islam operate. Burkina Faso, for instance, is a strategic location for terrorist groups because it is situated at the junction of the Sahel and the GoG, sharing borders with Ghana, Côte d’Ivoire, Benin, and Togo. The strong historical, cultural, trading, and political links between Burkina Faso and these coastal countries make each of them vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The 2016 Grand-Bassam attack in Côte d’Ivoire by Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) is an example of how violent extremist groups could strike a coastal

State beyond their haven in the Sahel. The leaders of JNIM (Iyad Ag Ghali, Djamel Okacha, and Amadou Koufa) have on countless occasions called on militants and Fulani people in West Africa to mobilise for the Jihadist cause not only in Mali, but also in Burkina Faso, Niger, Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea, Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, and Cameroon.⁴ In line with this grand agenda, many Salafi-Jihadist groups have migrated southwards, exploiting the fragility of some coastal States. For example, extremist elements have been reported in north Benin, Togo, and Ghana following the Otapuanu Military Operation⁵ in south-eastern Burkina Faso in March 2019.⁶

VET in the coastal States, although the country has not witnessed any direct terrorist attacks. In July 2021, the Minister of Information, Kojo Opong Nkrumah, affirmed this and noted that ‘terrorist groups operating in West Africa have managed to recruit some Ghanaians to aid their cause.’³ Unlike its neighbouring countries, like Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire that are experiencing terrorist attacks, Ghana has managed so far to prevent attacks despite its vulnerabilities. This raises critical questions about Ghana’s seeming resilience against the risk of VET and how it is responding to the scourge. This article probes these questions by examining the factors that render Ghana vulnerable to, and at the same time resilient to, VET. It also assesses Ghana’s response to the threat and concludes with some policy recommendations.

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The Threat of Home-grown Terrorism

The second factor is the threat of home-grown terrorism by Ghanaian foreign terrorist fighters who have or will in

future return home.⁷ The recruitment of Ghanaians by ISIS through social media propaganda and violent extremist groups operating in Burkina Faso is not a secret. In 2015, a 25-year-old Ghanaian university graduate, Mohammad Nazir Nortei Alema, was recruited by ISIS but later died in Syria.⁸ In October 2017, there were reports that about 100 Ghanaian migrants joined ISIS in Libya, with some forcefully conscripted and others joining voluntarily for financial rewards and safety.⁹ Anecdotal reports suggest that most of the surviving Ghanaian foreign terrorist fighters are returning home. The risk of home-grown terrorism is currently low. However, the danger is that ISIS can direct some of these Ghanaian returnees to carry out attacks in Ghana when they face difficulty gaining access. Furthermore, ISIS can use them and their local agents to create terrorist cells, recruit more people, and launch surprise attacks in the future.

Growing Influx of Irregular and Labour Migrants

The third factor is the growing influx of irregular and labour migrants into the country from Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and the Middle East. The presence of Burkinabe migrant labourers in the Upper West Region of Ghana has, for instance, exacerbated chieftaincy and intercommunal violence related to land access and the migration of farmers and herders. Communities such as the Doba and Kandega, Kologo and Navrongo, and Bavungnia and Wusungu along the borders with Burkina Faso have all experienced disputes. Due to the tribal links between the border communities, local conflicts in Ghana have often affected neighbouring communities in Burkina Faso. The concern is that JNIM, ISGS, and their affiliates can exploit these localised conflicts by either supporting and aligning themselves with marginalised communities or manipulating identity affiliations to develop support.

Participation of Suspected Terrorists in Artisanal Gold Mining

Reports suggest that suspected terrorists participate in artisanal gold mining in the northern part of the country. Examples of where this occurs are in the forest between Wuru in the Sissala East District of Ghana and across the border in Kunu in Burkina Faso. The presence of migrant labourers has sometimes caused renewed intercommunal tensions due to the racist rhetoric against Burkinabe and other Sahelian migrants. While the mining sector in Burkina Faso and other parts of the Sahel has been targeted by JNIM and ISGS for revenue mobilisation and recruitment, the link between artisanal gold mining in Ghana and terrorism is weak. Nonetheless, mining communities in the border regions where the State lacks authority could become a source for terrorist recruitment due to local grievances over



Gold mining communities in the border regions of Ghana, where the state lacks authority, could become a source of terrorist recruitment due to local grievances over the government's offensive operations against illegal miners.

government's offensive operations against illegal miners, known locally as *galamsey*, which has left many young people unemployed. Drawing from the experiences in the Sahel region, the increased local awareness of resource predation by local and foreign mining companies as the economic gap widens could serve as an entry point for violent extremist groups to manipulate local grievances by encouraging those affected to attack the symbols of exploitation.

Multi-layered Issues

The fifth factor which lies at the core of VET in West Africa is the multi-layered issues of unresolved localised conflicts, poverty, unemployment, injustice, political and social marginalisation, poor governance, lack of the rule-of-law, weak border controls, and limited State presence in peripheral communities. Others include weak State institutions, endemic corruption, arms proliferation, and transnational organised crime, such as drug trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, and maritime piracy. At present, there are some unresolved intercommunal conflicts in communities such as Saboba and Chereponi, the Kussasi-Mamprusi ethnic violence in Bawku, the separatist rebellion in the Volta region, and the farmer-herder conflicts. There are

THE PRESENCE OF MIGRANT LABOURERS HAS SOMETIMES CAUSED RENEWED INTERCOMMUNAL TENSIONS DUE TO THE RACIST RHETORIC AGAINST BURKINABE AND OTHER SAHELIAN MIGRANTS

concerns that the Zongo communities (settlements of Hausa-speaking traders) could devolve into hotbeds of radicalisation and VET due to their intrinsic ties to Islam in the Sahel, their perceived marginalisation, poverty, and high unemployment. Hausa is also a language they have in common with Sahel-based jihadist groups. Due to their predominant immigrant status and insufficient integration into Ghanaian society, there are concerns that these communities could serve as entry points for more extremist Muslim rhetoric and anti-State sentiment. Most often, violent extremist groups take advantage of the structural vulnerabilities and public discontent to present themselves as an alternative to the State by providing humanitarian services and socioeconomic interventions, such as providing boreholes, food and jobs, and building schools and clinics in remote areas. By doing so, they can gain local support, and communities often accept them as a means of survival, even when their ideology is not approved of.

Ignorance and Limited Public Awareness

VET thrives on ignorance and a lack of awareness among the population. In Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, Jihadist groups exploit the ignorance of the populace and use subtle

strategies to recruit people, radicalise them, and then carry out attacks. In Ghana, public knowledge about the causes, recruitment strategies and implications of terrorism is very low. A research report on the 'Risk or Threat Analysis of Violent Extremism in Ten Border Regions of Ghana' published by the National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE) in June 2021 revealed a lack of citizen understanding and appreciation of risk factors underpinning violent extremism.¹⁰ This poses a danger to the country.

Ghana's Resilience to Violent Extremism and Terrorism

Despite its vulnerabilities, Ghana has so far warded off terrorist attacks. The 2021 Global Peace Index Report, therefore, ranked Ghana as the second-most peaceful country in Africa.¹¹ In this article, it is argued that Ghana's resilience to VET can be attributed to the country's democratic and good governance credentials, robust security sector with several years of international peacekeeping experience, vibrant media, active civil society, strong traditional system, religious and ethnic tolerance, and general culture of peace among Ghanaians. Four of these factors are examined further.



BY PER-ANDERS PETERSSON/GETTYIMAGES

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The Ghana National Peace Council represents religious harmony in Ghana. Interventions by the Council helped reduce tensions and violence during the contested presidential elections in 2012 and 2020.

Interfaith Tolerance and Cooperation

Ghana has an enviable tradition of interfaith tolerance and cooperation, especially between Christians and Muslims. Admittedly, while sentiments of religious discrimination against Muslims in Christian missionary schools exist, it has rarely translated into actual interfaith conflict. Christians and Muslims host their counterparts for major festivals like Easter, Christmas, and Eid al-Adha. In 2019, for instance, the National Chief Imam, Sheikh Osman Sharubutu, attended the Christ the King Catholic Church in Accra for Easter service as part of his 100-year birthday celebrations.¹² Moreover, churches and mosques offer social services to people of all faiths. The ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) has adhered to a tradition of having a Muslim running-mate alongside a Christian presidential candidate for over two decades. All these actions have promoted peaceful coexistence and religious harmony, despite the sentiments of some minority religious groups.

The Ghana National Peace Council (NPC) is the embodiment of the religious harmony in the country. The NPC, which facilitates and develops mechanisms for conflict prevention, management, and resolution to build sustainable peace, has a membership that cuts across the key religions in the country – Tijahaniya Muslims, Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Al-hasuna Muslims, Ghana Christian Council,

Catholic Bishops Conference, Ghana Pentecostal Council, Ghana Charismatic Council, and the African traditional religion. Through mediation and dialogue, advocacy, networking, and peace education, the NPC has promoted peaceful coexistence among Ghanaians and resolved conflicts with the potential to plunge the country into civil war. For example, NPC interventions helped reduce tensions and violence during the contested presidential elections in 2012 and 2020.

Ethnic Tolerance and a Culture of Peace

Ghana is a heterogeneous society with diverse ethnicities that include the Akan, Ewe, Ga- Adangbe, Mole-Dagbani, Guan, and Gurma. Although there are some intra- and inter-ethnic disputes, the tensions have rarely caused major national political or social problems. The multi-ethnic composition of society and a general culture of peace has been a key determinant of harmony and national cohesion due to the consciousness of ‘one nation, one people, and one common destiny’ among Ghanaians. Thus, most Ghanaians generally express tolerance for people of different ethnicities. There is intermarriage among different ethnic groups, and as the 2015 Afrobarometer report rightly points out, ‘in each of the country’s regions, one can identify residents of different religious and ethnic backgrounds, and in some cases, small

ethnic groups have their own traditional heads who are well-recognised by the traditional leaders in the host regions.¹³ The implication of this level of tolerance is that it has made it difficult for violent extremists who fan ethnic and religious intolerance to pursue their agenda.

Active Civil Society

Ghana has an active civil society with thousands of registered civil society organisations (CSOs) operating in many sectors, including the security, humanitarian, peacebuilding, governance, development, education, and health sectors. CSOs largely operate in a free and open civic space and do not suffer from persistent State interference or harassment. The likes of the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Centre for Democratic Development (CDD), and Institute for Democratic Governance (IDEG) are worth mentioning. Most of these CSOs work on programmes that promote peaceful and inclusive societies and mitigate structural conditions conducive to the spread of VET through peacebuilding, early warning and response, good governance and human rights, addressing gender issues, interfaith dialogue, and youth engagement. Some CSOs like WANEP work with marginalised groups in periphery areas to promote political participation and provide outlets for addressing community

grievances. Through service delivery, advocacy, and watchdog roles, CSOs have contributed to deepening Ghana's democracy, government effectiveness and accountability. The active role of CSOs has generally helped to safeguard peace in the country.

Vibrant Media

Ghana's public and private media (both conventional and new media) has been a critical pillar in the democratisation and governance processes. It has continually set the agenda on critical governance and development matters, sustained the discourse with the active participation of citizens, and brought pressure to bear on government to effect change and act on critical national issues. The Ghanaian media has been a custodian of the freedom of speech, the right to information, and the representation of different opinions in political discourse. While admitting that some media houses have been politicised and irresponsible in their reportage, they have largely not been used as a tool to spread hate speech and incite hatred and violence against ethnic or religious groups. The vibrancy of the media has been possible due to constitutional provisions in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana ensuring a free and independent press, including laws against censorship, government interference, and harassment.



PHOTO: JONATHAN ERNST / WORLD BANK

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Ghana's Response to Violent Extremism and Terrorism

Ghana's response to VET can be categorised according to legal, operational, and multilateral responses.

Legal Response

Ghana has adopted several legal frameworks in line with regional and international conventions and protocols. Key among these are the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2008 (Act 762), the 2014 amendment to the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2008 (Act 749), and the Organized Crime Act of 2010. These Acts include provisions against the financing, recruitment, and support of terrorist activities. To complement these Acts, the government adopted the National Framework for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and Terrorism (NAFPCVET) in 2019. The NAFPCVET aims at preventing terrorism and minimising the threat to Ghana and its interests. It operates through four mutually reinforcing pillars, namely:

1. Prevention measures to counter violent extremist and terrorist attacks by addressing the root causes, minimising vulnerability, and building resilience.
2. Pre-empting activities to detect and deter violent extremist and terrorist threats.
3. Protection measures to safeguard vulnerable infrastructure and spaces.
4. Response activities to mitigate the impact and recover from violent extremist activities and terrorist incidents.

The operationalisation of the NAFPCVET has resulted in coordination across ministries, departments, and agencies to prevent VET.

THESE OPERATIONS HAVE LED TO THE ARREST OF SUSPECTED MILITANTS AND TEMPORARILY HALTED TERROR GROUPS' ACTIVITIES AND MOVEMENTS

Operational Response

At the operational level, the Ministry of National Security, Ghana Police Service, Ghana Armed Forces, and other allied security agencies have conducted several capacity-building programmes and counterterrorism simulation exercises to test their preparedness in the event of any terrorist attacks. Additionally, the government has occasionally deployed 'Operation Conquered Fist', a counterterrorism operation, to the border areas to combat transnational crimes and deter possible terrorist attacks. This operation has contributed to maintaining a resolute, robust front that has arguably deterred potential attacks. Nonetheless, Ghana's response has so far been overly security-oriented. Socioeconomic and political measures to address the root causes of VET have been insufficient. CSOs, media and citizen participation in

the implementation of government's counterterrorism initiatives are also limited. Overall, this has affected local ownership and citizen engagement in the NAFPCVET implementation.

Multilateral Response through the Accra Initiative

Ghana is a leading member of the Accra Initiative which was launched in 2017 as a multilateral cooperative and collaborative security mechanism. The Accra Initiative, which includes Ghana, Burkina Faso, Togo, Benin, and Cote D'Ivoire, with Mali and Niger as observers, seeks to prevent the spillover of terrorism from the Sahel and to address transnational organised crime and violent extremism in the border areas. It operates with a central coordinator and permanent secretariat in Ghana's national security secretariat, and focal points in each member country. Since its establishment, the Accra Initiative has facilitated periodic meetings of ministers in charge of security, heads of security and intelligence agencies, as well as information and



PHOTO: US ARMY AFRICA

Ghana's Armed Forces, and other allied security agencies have conducted several capacity-building programmes and counterterrorism simulation exercises to test their preparedness in the event of any terrorist attacks.

intelligence sharing on VET and transnational organised crime among member countries.¹⁴

There has been a series of cross-border security operations among Member States as well. In May 2018, Operation Koudanlou I was jointly conducted by Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Togo in their border areas. Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana also conducted Operation Koudanlou II in November 2018. A year later, Togo and Ghana jointly conducted Operation Koudanlou III. These operations have led to the arrest of suspected militants and temporarily halted terror groups' activities and movements. But it has been ad hoc, limited in duration (usually four to five days' deployment) and geographic reach. Moreover, the language barrier between English-speaking Ghana and its Francophone counterparts has occasionally hindered effective communication. The Accra Initiative is also predominantly military-oriented with limited attention to socioeconomic, political and governance challenges.¹⁵

Conclusion and Recommendations

Ghana has managed to maintain its long history of peace and stability in a generally turbulent region characterised by political crises, armed conflicts, and VET. Apart from the lessons that Ghana's experience presents to other countries in the region, it demonstrates how proactive responses could deter potential terrorist attacks, at least in the short to medium term. Nonetheless, the activities of violent extremist groups in Ghana's immediate neighbouring countries serve as a continued reminder of the potential threat terrorism poses to the country. To strengthen the country's resilience against the threat, the following recommendations are made:

- The government should adopt a balanced approach, combining both military and non-military interventions and addressing the socioeconomic, political and governance challenges at the root of VET.
- Citizens, communities, civil society, the media, and religious and traditional authorities should be actively engaged in the implementation of the NAFPCVET through a whole-society approach to promote local ownership and participation.
- Increase education and awareness of the causes, motivations, modus operandi, and implications of VET to individuals and communities to safeguard and protect the unity of the State.
- Enhance tracking and intelligence-gathering on Ghanaian foreign terrorists to prevent the growth of home-grown terrorism.

In conclusion, Ghana cannot be complacent with its relative stability. The durability and risk of VET in West African coastal States call for increased local resilience and enduring national responses. **A**

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CONFLICT DYNAMICS IN MOZAMBIQUE'S CABO DELGADO PROVINCE: THE CONSEQUENCES OF LIMITED STATEHOOD

BY THEO NEETHLING

Introduction

The ongoing militant insurgency and conflict in the upper north-eastern Cabo Delgado province in Mozambique has been brewing since 2017. However, it only gained the attention of the international community in mid-August 2020 when the Islamist extremist movement, Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah (or Ansar al-Sunna), captured the port town of Mocimboa da Praia in the north-eastern part of the country. This was not the first capturing of the town, as the insurgents – many of whom reportedly are originally from Mocimboa da

Praia – earlier also briefly took control of the town in March 2020. At the same time, the town of Quissanga, approximately 180 km further south, then became the most targeted area in 2020, although the insurgents focused attacks on several other towns and districts. The insurgents

Above: The heavy handed response by the Mozambican Defence and Security Forces to Islamist extremist attacks have heightened distrust among local residents and are alleged to have enhanced recruitment by the insurgents.



north-eastern parts of Mozambique and certainly poses a threat to foreign direct investment pertaining to large-scale infrastructure, mining, exploration (especially natural gas), and other projects in Mozambique and the region.⁴

The Geopolitical Context

The conflict dynamics in Mozambique is playing out against the backdrop of a historically north-south divide in the country, which is rooted in the colonial history of Portuguese Mozambique. Pre-colonial and colonial Mozambique effectively developed as two separate entities, divided by the Zambezi River, until the first bridge over the river was constructed in 1934. Historically and pre-colonially, the south was ruled by successive large kingdoms, which based their economy on gold trade, while the north developed an economy largely based on cash-crop

further specifically targeted military and police forces, while the population in Cabo Delgado experienced horrific brutality in the form of killings, including beheadings, and other forms of violence that led to internal displacements and food shortages in the affected areas.¹

What followed were harsh security responses from the Forças Armadas de Defesa de Moçambique (Mozambican Defence and Security Forces) (FDS),² similar to indiscriminate responses elsewhere in conflict zones in Somalia, the Lake Chad Basin, the Sahel, and the Maghreb. The escalating attacks and heavy-handed responses have only heightened distrust among local residents and are alleged to have enhanced recruitment by the insurgents.³ Currently, Cabo Delgado province is caught up in a security challenge with national, regional and international implications. The situation not only endangers the lives of tens of thousands of Mozambicans, but is also destabilising the upper

farming. Unlike the southern parts, the north-eastern parts – and especially the north-eastern coastal areas – were strongly influenced by the Swahili culture of east Africa and also home to a sizable Muslim population⁵ linked to the historical Arab Muslim trade of several centuries between the Middle East and East African coastal communities.

Today, the different historical trajectories of the north and the south are still prevalent in the country's geopolitical landscape. The capital city, Maputo, is located in the extreme south, while Pemba, the capital of conflict-ridden Cabo Delgado is located in the north-eastern parts and 1666 km away from the capital city. The north-south divide was entrenched when the original colonial capital, Ilha de Moçambique in the Nampula province, was relocated to Lourenço Marques (now Maputo) in 1889. Since independence in 1975, the country's top political leaders were mainly from the south, although the current president,

Filipe Nyusi, is the first president with a northern background and originally from Cabo Delgado. The location of Maputo and the strong political focus on the south is, according to Vines, the 'single most important cause of the imbalances in the social and economic development of Mozambique'.⁶ This north-south divide is arguably the most important factor to consider in any understanding of the current conflict dynamics in Mozambique and will be under review in the sections that follow.

Areas of Limited Statehood

From the previous discussion, the question arises: which scholarly explanations help to understand or explain the conflict in north-eastern Mozambique? Researchers can certainly take more than one approach to study the insurgency, but this article argues that the scholarly notion of limited statehood, or specifically areas of limited statehood, is of particular significance and relevance to the case of Mozambique and the conflict in Cabo Delgado.⁷

In brief, areas of limited statehood are areas where the ability of the state in question to implement or enforce political decisions and/or to maintain a monopoly on the use of force is simply incomplete. Put differently, areas of limited statehood apply to countries and parts thereof where

the central authority (or government) lacks the ability to implement rules and decisions. This means that the central authority falls short of exercising a legitimate monopoly over the means of violence, sometimes temporarily. Limited statehood further applies to a part or parts of a country, such as a province far away from the national capital, but can also pertain to policy implementation limitations, specifically an inability on the part of the central authority to enforce laws.⁸

In the Cabo Delgado province, the exercise of state authority is obviously problematic and a pressing political issue involving numerous governance challenges, not only at the national level, but also on a wider regional or trans-border level. After all, Mozambique clearly suffers from weak State institutions and is, therefore, a country that lacks strong and effective governance, largely due to a lack of institutional capacity and related gaps in legitimacy. Matsinhe and Valoi strikingly refer to the problem of authority or control in Mozambique as 'half-mast sovereignty'.⁹ In practical terms, Cabo Delgado is an area that the central government in Maputo in the south is unable to control or govern effectively. The central government is thus incapable of exercising its authority across the lengths and within the bounds of the country.



PAUL KAGAME

Filipe Nyusi is the first president of Mozambique with a northern background and originally from Cabo Delgado.



Unemployment and poverty is rife in Cabo Delgado.

Implications of Limited Statehood

Limited statehood (or 'half-mast sovereignty') in Mozambique has a negative effect on the north-eastern parts in more than one way. First, the wellbeing of the population is badly affected. From a socioeconomic perspective, feelings of marginalisation and exclusion are prevalent in Cabo Delgado. The poorest health and sanitation facilities and the poorest schools are found in Cabo Delgado, while unemployment is rife, notably among youths. According to most social and economic indicators, this forgotten province fares very poorly, often ranking at the bottom of the Mozambican provinces.¹⁰ In view of this, some observers argue that the conditions or roots of the insurgency and conflict in Cabo Delgado should be linked to endemic unemployment in the province, which became worse with the devastating effects of natural disasters in recent years.¹¹ Against this background, it is no coincidence that many members and supporters of Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah are socioeconomically marginalised young people, among whom a lack of proper education and formal employment has facilitated insurgent recruitment.¹²

Second, limited statehood applies to countries where state actors are not always visible and functional, and this results in non-state actors often moving into such spaces and becoming self-regulating private actors and even de facto governments or rulers.¹³ In the case of Mozambique, limited

statehood created opportunities for Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah as a non-state actor to enter the political landscape, which has resulted in many deaths, destruction of property and infrastructure, and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Mozambicans from Cabo Delgado. Although it is difficult to verify the death toll and number of human displacements in Cabo Delgado, reports indicate that insurgent attacks resulted in the deaths of about 1500 locals towards the end of 2020, while about two million Mozambicans have been uprooted or negatively affected by the conflict dynamics.¹⁴

It could be argued that the Islamist insurgency in Cabo Delgado is driven by both international and domestic factors. Campbell rightly argues that Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah draws inspiration and legitimisation from international Islamist forces, which is evident in the fact that the movement has pledged allegiance to the Islamic State, with its ideal of establishing a caliphate. At the same time, the insurgency was unquestionably facilitated by issues related to limited statehood, specifically in relation to the domestic factors of marginalisation, neglect, exploitation, and government corruption.¹⁵

Weak Security Forces

As mentioned previously, limited statehood relates to countries where central authorities lack a legitimate

monopoly over the means of violence. This is relevant in north-eastern Mozambique, where Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah attacked police and army installations. The FDS have experienced decades of neglect and the grave consequences of long-term underfunding, leaving them, especially the military, without the required capacity and competency to conduct operations that would sufficiently counter the threat posed by Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah. There are even reports of persistent leaks of information from inside the military by unmotivated soldiers on operational matters relating to logistics and conditions on the ground,¹⁶ thus casting a shadow over the professionalism of the military.

The FDS – of which the special police forces, specifically the Rapid Intervention Unit and the Special Operations Group, have largely been deployed against the insurgents – are simply not up to the task of countering the insurgents on their own.¹⁷ Until 2020, the Mozambican government thus increasingly relied on foreign security contractors,¹⁸ mainly in the form of the South African-based Dyck Advisory Group and the Russian Wagner Group, to counter militant attacks. The inability of the FDS to protect communities in Cabo Delgado also coincided with reports of serious human rights violations in Cabo Delgado's communities committed by the

FDS,¹⁹ casting a further shadow over the professionalism of both police and army officers.²⁰

The use of mercenaries in support of the Mozambican armed forces has, however, not stopped attacks from Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah in north-eastern Mozambique. In fact, in November 2020, many locals were reportedly beheaded by the insurgents, which urged the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Michelle Bachelet, to appeal for urgent measures to protect civilians in what observers described as an increasingly dangerous and chaotic situation.²¹ Appeals by various actors have also been made for intervention by the Southern African Development Community (SADC), specifically involving a multinational military force, as well as regional intelligence gathering and border management.²² On 23 June 2021, a decision was made by SADC Heads of State and the government in Maputo to deploy a regional force to Cabo Delgado, while forces from Rwanda were deployed a few weeks prior to the arrival of the SADC force in July 2021.

Organised Crime Networks

The dilemma of limited statehood and related loss of control over parts of Mozambique is also linked to the prevalence of organised crime and criminal networks that are



PHOTO: GCIS

On 23 June 2021, a decision was made by the Southern African Development Community Heads of State and the government in Maputo to deploy a regional force to Cabo Delgado.



From a coastal perspective, the Mozambican Navy is not in a position to prevent insurgents from entering the country by sea.

economically and politically entrenched in the Cabo Delgado region.²³ Cabo Delgado and nearby provinces have become a major conduit for the smuggling of drugs and other contraband. High-ranking figures in the ruling party, the Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO), are reportedly involved, and drug cartels have profited from insecurity and instability in the province, even more so than the Islamist insurgents. Heroin trafficking has flourished in Cabo Delgado since the end of the Mozambican Civil War in 1974. In the past decade or even longer, many other illicit activities in the region, such as the smuggling of drugs, timber, ivory, rubies and other gemstones, and human trafficking, have also become commonplace.²⁴ These illicit activities play out in a political landscape where insecurity

THE DILEMMA OF LIMITED STATEHOOD AND RELATED LOSS OF CONTROL OVER PARTS OF MOZAMBIQUE IS ALSO LINKED TO THE PREVALENCE OF ORGANISED CRIME AND CRIMINAL NETWORKS THAT ARE ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY ENTRENCHED IN THE CABO DELGADO REGION

and violent extremism are the main markers in the absence of law enforcement and good governance.

It should be specifically noted that large volumes of heroin are produced in Afghanistan and then transported from there along international shipping routes to East and Southern Africa, including Mozambique. The bulk of these shipments are destined for western markets, but portions are also smuggled into Mozambique and South Africa.²⁵ Thus, the insurgency and related conflict dynamics in Cabo Delgado make law enforcement in the province and the policing of illicit activities even more challenging and complex.

As previously stated, neglect and a lack of funding have left the military without the capacity and competency to counter the threat posed by insurgents. From a coastal perspective, the Mozambican Navy is not in a position to prevent insurgents from entering the country by sea and plundering the districts along the coastal areas of the province.²⁶ Moreover, there are many allegations that elements of the State, including some police, are involved in illegal trafficking.²⁷ This supports the argument that corruption may be entrenched in the activities of the FRELIMO government.²⁸ Cabo Delgado is an important drug corridor in East Africa, especially since authorities in Tanzania and Kenya clamped down on trafficking networks in their territories, which effectively channelled the networks



DARRIN STEWART/GALLO IMAGES VIA GETTY IMAGES

People gather under a makeshift displacement shelter at a beach in Pemba, after fleeing from violence wreaked by Islamist insurgents (22 May 2021).

AL SUNNAH WA JAMA'AH EVEN GAINED THE ATTENTION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WHEN IT MANAGED TO CAPTURE AND OCCUPY THE NORTH-EASTERN STRATEGIC TOWN OF MOCIMBOA DE PRAIA BRIEFLY

towards Mozambique. As such, there are numerous entry points into Mozambique and also many warehouses that link the producers to consumers.²⁹

Conclusion

As a country of limited statehood, Mozambique suffers from weak State institutions, poor governance, and resultant insecurity. Cabo Delgado, as the most northern province, is an area that the central government in Maputo is unable to control or govern effectively. To put it differently, Cabo Delgado is under-governed, misgoverned, contested, and exploitable. Cabo Delgado is also a province

where economic and related social exclusion exists with high unemployment as a main marker, notably youth unemployment. Cabo Delgado is thus often referred to as a 'forgotten province', one that fares very poorly socioeconomically, and which is often ranked at the bottom of Mozambican provinces from a comparative perspective.

As explained previously, limited statehood applies to countries where state actors are not always visible and functional. This often results in non-state actors moving into political spaces and becoming the de facto rulers. In Cabo Delgado, where poverty and unemployment are prevalent, Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah has been able to recruit members and press forward as a non-state actor since 2017 and until it was capable of attacking the FDS. This was followed by acts of brutality against the local population in major parts of the province, the destruction of property, and displacement of hundreds of thousands of people. Al Sunnah wa Jama'ah even gained the attention of the international community when it managed to capture and occupy the north-eastern strategic town of Mocimboa de Praia briefly.

There is little doubt that the Mozambican government lacks full control of the entire geographical territory that constitutes the country. The ability to control and govern

fully is arguably a basic element of territorial sovereignty. This reality underlies the many challenges that have been outlined in this analysis, specifically Islamic militancy, a weak FDS and poor security responses to the militant threats, high levels of insecurity, and criminal networks.

It also underlies the landscape of poverty, low socioeconomic development, and deprivation – conditions that facilitated Al Sunnah wa Jama’ah becoming a force in pursuit of a caliphate in a part of the country. Any long-term solution in north-eastern Mozambique will, among other things, have to address the problem of limited statehood and good governance, specifically relating to the imperative of controlling the Mozambican territory fully and developing the required institutional capacity to rule and govern the entire country. **A**

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CLIMATE-RELATED PEACE AND SECURITY RISKS IN AFRICA

BY **KHEIRA TARIF** AND **ANAB OVIDIE GRAND**

Introduction

The effects of climate change are felt globally in frequent and severe disasters, increasing temperatures, and changing rainfall, with significant implications for society. Climate security acknowledges that climate change can undermine peace and increase levels of violence by affecting the drivers of conflict.¹

Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali are all exposed to climate change, face complex security challenges, and host large peacekeeping forces. Increasing temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, droughts, and floods have disrupted livelihoods and forced migration in three African countries. Climate change contributes to farmer-herder

competition over land and water. Elites take advantage of climate-related disruptions by exploiting marginalised groups, as do armed groups seeking to recruit youth.

The relationship between climate change and insecurity has been recognised in multilateral organisations with a mandate in climate, peace and security (CPS) in Africa. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has included climate security-specific language in country situation and peacekeeping mission resolutions, which has led to the creation of an Environmental Security Advisor position

Above: Somali children wade through flood waters after heavy rain in Mogadishu, Somalia (21 October 2019).



The effects of climate change undermine human security.

in the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM).² The African Union (AU) is advancing analysis and responses to CPS across Africa, including in high-level fora and in coordination with Regional Economic Communities (RECs).³ The European Union (EU) is a global leader in development aid and climate finance, and several of its Member States have been instrumental in international climate diplomacy and CPS discussions.⁴

This article discusses climate change and conflict and describes a risk-based approach to investigating links between the two.⁵ It further outlines relevant climate data and context-specific climate vulnerabilities in Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali and analyses five themes in CPS in the three countries. The article concludes with recommendations for institutional responses. The research is based on a review of academic literature and institutional reports. Early versions of case studies formed the basis of consultations with government ministries, thematic experts, and CPS practitioners.⁶

Climate Change, Peace and Security

There is clear evidence that the effects of climate change undermine human security, but the relationship between

climate change, peace and security is contentious. Empirical studies on direct links between climate change and conflict have had mixed results, leading experts to caution against overstating the relationship between the two. Research presenting complex environmental, socioeconomic, and political processes as simple causality can mask the root causes of conflict, and depoliticise conflict analyses, resolution, and peacebuilding.⁷

Investigating climate-related security risks (CRSRs) is an alternative to relying on claims that climate change directly causes violent conflict. This approach analyses how the effects of climate change on human security can affect peace and security. CRSR focuses on when and under what circumstances climate change increases the risk of insecurity, drawing attention to contextual factors that define human security and the security outcomes of climate change.⁸

Research on CRSR in East and West Africa and South and South-East Asia has identified four interrelated pathways by which the physical effects of climate change can increase the risk of conflict: livelihood deterioration; changing migration and mobility; armed group tactics; and exploitation and mismanagement by elites.⁹

Local Climate Vulnerabilities

Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali are ranked among the countries most affected by climate change and disasters in measures that include physical exposure to hazards and resilience and coping capacity for managing climate-related threats.¹⁰ All three countries are also affected by complex conflict situations and host some of the largest peacekeeping forces worldwide.¹¹

This section examines how the physical effects of climate change interact with socioeconomic and political factors, combining current and projected climate data with context-specific socio-ecological vulnerabilities that accentuate the physical effects of climate change on peace and security.¹²

Somalia

Extreme weather events and disasters have occurred more frequently in Somalia in the past 25 years, while political instability and violent conflict have simultaneously undermined local and national capacities to respond. Somalia has experienced a 1°C to 1.5°C increase in median annual temperatures since 1991 and could warm by 2.5°C by 2050.¹³ A 3% increase in precipitation is projected by 2050, with more variable seasonal rainfall that may benefit agriculture in some regions but lead to flooding and soil erosion in others.¹⁴

High dependence on renewable natural resources makes much of the Somali population vulnerable to the impact of climate change on temperatures and rainfall. Conflict and disasters have displaced around 2.9 million people, negatively affecting their coping capacities.¹⁵ Relief operations and development programmes face challenges in accessing territory under the control of armed groups like Al Shabaab, while conflict between political factions in the federal government and federal member states undermines institutional capacities to respond to the effects of climate change.

South Sudan

South Sudan is vulnerable to climate change and disasters, worsening existing humanitarian crises and the fragile security environment. Mean annual temperatures vary between 26°C and 32°C and have increased by over 0.4°C every decade for the last 30 years.¹⁶ Average temperatures are projected to increase between 0.8°C and 1.7°C by 2060.¹⁷ Rainfall is becoming more erratic, with some regions experiencing more rainfall and flooding and others less rain and longer dry seasons.¹⁸ South Sudan is projected to become warmer and drier, with more frequent intense downpours, increasing the risk of flooding.



UNMISS/ERIC KANALSTEIN

Political and economic instability have undermined livelihoods and caused food insecurity in South Sudan.

Eleven million people depend on agriculture, fishing, and forest resources in South Sudan, which are heavily reliant on seasonal rainfall.¹⁹ Political and economic instability have undermined livelihoods and food security.²⁰ Oil extraction, deforestation, and charcoal production are driven by local energy needs and national dependency on oil revenues, but resulting environmental degradation and soil erosion increase the physical effects of climate change and disasters.²¹

Mali

The effects of climate change differ across Mali's ecological zones, while violent conflict is increasingly concentrated in the central Sahelian zone. Average national temperatures increased by 0.7°C between 1960 and 2015 to 28.3°C and are projected to increase by between 1.2°C and 3.6°C by 2060, particularly affecting the southwest, central, and northern areas.²² Precipitation is becoming more erratic, a trend that is expected to continue, increasing the risk of droughts and floods in exposed areas.²³

Mali's population is also heavily reliant on agriculture and agro-pastoralism and vulnerable to changing rainfall patterns and increasing temperatures. More than 300,000 people, of which 56% are women, have been displaced by violent conflict involving multiple Salafi Jihadist groups and community militias.²⁴ Land and water disputes between herders and farmers increasingly overlap with conflicts between ethnic communities, armed groups and the government, making local resource conflicts more complex and violent.

MALI'S POPULATION IS ALSO HEAVILY RELIANT ON AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-PASTORALISM AND VULNERABLE TO CHANGING RAINFALL PATTERNS AND INCREASING TEMPERATURES

Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali: Trends in Climate-Related Security Risks

The physical effects of climate change in Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali interact with context-specific vulnerabilities to increase the risk of insecurity. This section highlights five common themes, including livelihoods, migration, and farmer-herder conflict; overlapping conflict dynamics; the operations of Salafi Jihadist groups; the gendered impacts of CRSR; and the role of governance.

Livelihoods, Migration and Farmer-herder Conflicts

Livelihoods that depend on natural resources are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Agriculture, pastoralism, and fishing support over 80% of the population in the three countries.²⁵ Livelihood insecurity is accentuated by poverty, violent conflict, and weak governance, so the effects



UNDP SOMALIA

Livelihoods that depend on natural resources are most vulnerable to the effects of climate change.

of climate change on temperatures, rainfall, and disasters can leave people with limited income alternatives.

Affected groups sometimes cope with livelihood insecurity by migrating to areas with better resource availability. However, there is evidence that this can increase the risk of conflict, particularly when changing migration patterns intensify resource use and increase farmer-herder competition over access to land and water. Community leaders in Somalia report that droughts fuel conflict between settled farmers and migrant herders over access to natural resources.²⁶ In South Sudan, severe flooding in 2020 forced pastoralists in Jonglei, the Eastern Lakes, and Terekeka to migrate along new routes in Equatoria, increasing tensions with locals.²⁷ In Mali's Inner Niger Delta, intensive upstream water use and rainfall deficits have increased farmer-herder competition over water and pastures.²⁸

There is evidence that farmer-herder disputes are becoming more frequent and violent. Increasing temperatures and erratic rainfall have diminished natural resources needed for agriculture and pastoralism, and changing migration patterns have driven pastoralists into new regions and concentrated resource users into smaller areas. Iniquitous government policies have accentuated intra-group tensions, while political violence has undermined social cohesion and trust between clans in Somalia, ethnic groups in South Sudan, and ethnoreligious communities in Mali.

Intersecting Local and National Conflicts

The effects of climate change on resource users have sometimes increased the risk of local conflicts. However, climate change can also indirectly feed national and even regional conflicts when armed groups and powerful elites capitalise on local vulnerabilities. These cases are context-specific and reflect differing conflict dynamics in the three countries.

Poor rains, flash floods and water shortages displace thousands of people in Somalia annually.²⁹ In June 2019, several years of drought, widespread crop failure, and reduced livestock profitability displaced 53000 people.³⁰ In some cases, large-scale displacement changed the political balance of the host community and threatened the control of dominant groups, leading to tension and violence.³¹

In South Sudan, 74% of households own livestock.³² Climate change can exacerbate livestock-related tensions by affecting pasture and water resources, and increasing the risk of livestock raiding, looting and communal conflict.³³ CRSRs are salient in regions with varied grazing and water availability and existing ethnic tensions, such as in the Sudd wetland. They are also heightened by elites' exploitation of the livestock sector.³⁴ Elites have amassed large cattle herds and they play a role in livestock-related conflicts, for example, by mobilising armed herders in a show of power.³⁵ As elite involvement inflates livestock prices, young men increasingly join armed groups to obtain cattle as loot or through elite patronage.

In Mali, expanding violent conflict has led to an overlap between local resource disputes and national conflict dynamics. This has escalated levels of community violence and increased the involvement of armed groups in local resource disputes, making land and water conflicts more deadly and harder to resolve. In central Mali, self-defence militias in farming Dogon and herding Fulani communities have grown exponentially along with the availability of small arms, which have increased the levels of inter-communal violence.³⁶

Salafi Jihadist Groups

Salafi Jihadist groups like Al Shabaab and Katiba Macina/Macina Liberation Front (KM) in Somalia and Mali have used the effects of climate change to build support, boost recruitment, and advance their operations. Government absence creates a power vacuum where these groups have stepped in to provide support and alternative governance to local communities, including in cases where climate-related stress undermines livelihood security.

Studies in Somalia show that droughts and the resulting livelihood deterioration force pastoralists to sell off livestock, depressing prices and creating local economic shocks. Groups such as Al Shabaab offer economic support to communities who are negatively affected by climate-related livelihood shocks or people who have been displaced by droughts and conflict. Al Shabaab has also presented itself as a service and relief provider during droughts in areas outside of government control.³⁷

KM is active in central Mali, where they have used local vulnerabilities, including iniquitous land rights and the marginalisation of Fulani herders, to draw local support and recruits. KM and other groups that control territory in north and central Mali have established themselves as resource dispute mediators, provided protection and material support to farmers and herders, and managed seasonal livestock migration.³⁸

The Gendered Impacts of Climate-related Security Risks

Climate change and conflict have a significant effect on women and girls in Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali. Women's traditional roles in the household, childcare, and care for the



The Katiba Macina Salafi Jihadist group is active in central Mali, where they use local vulnerabilities to draw support and recruits.

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Women and girls who are displaced by disasters and conflict are more exposed to violence.

elderly can mean that their vulnerability has cascading effects on community resilience.

Male migration is an adaptation strategy that increases the vulnerability of female-headed households to poverty, exploitation and violence. In Somalia, men migrate for longer periods during droughts in search of water for livestock or alternative income sources, but female relatives usually stay behind. In South Sudan, women typically support their families with farming, relying heavily on natural resources, while men and boys manage livestock and can migrate or join cattle raids and armed groups when their livelihoods are jeopardised. Women and girls who are displaced by disasters and conflict are more exposed to violence.³⁹

Traditional gender roles and inequalities mediate the effects of climate change on men and women. Structural disadvantages include education gaps, child marriage, low social status, and restricted access to financial resources and assets, including land. In South Sudan, some 87% of female household heads have no formal education, compared to 65.7% of their male counterparts, which affects the resilience of female-headed households (for example, child malnourishment is more prevalent in female-led families).⁴⁰ Women comprise 40% of the agricultural workforce in Mali but represent less than 10% of landowners, even though national legislation protects and promotes female land ownership.⁴¹ Many women depend on small-scale agriculture and small

livestock for sale in local markets, making them vulnerable to the effects of climate change and conflict on natural resources and local economies.

The Importance of Good Governance

The presence and legitimacy of institutions (formal, informal or traditional) can mediate the effects of climate change and conflict on local communities. Conversely, elite exploitation or mismanagement accentuates vulnerabilities and inequalities and increases the risk that climate change feeds conflict.

In Somalia, local and national elites and clans use droughts, floods, and even locust infestations to strengthen control over resources at the expense of weaker groups.⁴² Elites also use climate impacts to gain support for their political agenda by fuelling inter-group grievances and resentment towards the Federal Government of Somalia and its allies.⁴³ The manipulation of clan relations and exploitation of clan grievances and marginalised groups increase the risk that local conflicts will interact with national politics and escalate further.

In South Sudan, human activities accelerate environmental degradation and accentuate the impact of climate change and the severity of disasters. While most livelihoods depend on natural resources, about 90% of government revenue comes from oil reserves.⁴⁴ Herders in oil-rich Unity state have lost



Oil production in Sudan's Unity state is contaminating water, spreading disease to humans and cattle and threatening the world's largest inland wetlands.

grazing lands to the operations of oil companies, and the environmental impacts of oil exploitation have degraded remaining pasture and water resources.⁴⁵ This increases the risk that climate change accentuates marginalisation, feeds grievances and fuels conflicts.

Weak governance has accentuated the effects of climate change in Mali. National agricultural policies have prioritised sedentary agriculture over migrant pastoralism, restricting herders' access to land and water and increasing resource competition in the Inner Niger Delta and Sikasso region.⁴⁶ Local government corruption has sometimes led farmers and herders to use self-defence rather than judicial courts in protecting their land and water access.⁴⁷

The projected effects of climate change on temperatures, rainfall, and the frequency and intensity of natural disasters in the three countries interact with a wealth of context-specific realities, institutions, and dynamics. This article highlights common trends, but also shows that climate security vulnerabilities differ across and within countries. It further shows that climate change amplifies existing vulnerabilities and accentuates prevailing inequalities, increasing the risk of violence and conflict, and undermining peacebuilding efforts.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The trends in climate security identified in Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali highlight three factors. First, CRSR does not affect all groups equally because of local differences in adaptive capacities. Marginalised groups bear the brunt of physical climate change and the direct and indirect violence it engenders. Second, conflict is not an inevitable consequence

of climate change and identifying context-specific social, political, and economic vulnerabilities and strengths is key to building resilience to CRSR.⁴⁸ Research can contribute to this by further examining how disasters can increase social cohesion and strengthen cooperation between conflict parties. Third, the context-specificity of CRSR poses a challenge to institutions with a mandate in CPS. These factors highlight areas where efforts to limit the effects of climate change on peace and security should be targeted in Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali. Four of these areas are described below.

Women should be at the centre of climate action.

Governments should work with local stakeholders, particularly women's organisations, to include women in decision-making on conflict-sensitive climate adaptation. Working with research institutions, including national universities, can support the aim of gathering data on how climate change and conflict affect women and girls.

Governance is central to the pathways from climate change to conflict.

Exploitation and mismanagement accentuate the effects of climate change on affected communities, reduce resilience, and increase the risk of conflict. To improve governance, governments and community leaders should work to understand the socio-ecological impacts of climate change better as well as the specific vulnerabilities of marginalised groups. Special attention should be paid to natural resource management and how existing practices and structures can be transformed to increase cooperation and strengthen livelihood security.

Early warning systems and data analysis capacities are critical to preventive action. Organisations should invest in new tools or improve existing tools for pre-empting CRSRs. Human resources, including environmental security advisors, can build the capacity of organisations like the UN, AU, and EU to analyse, report, and respond to CRSRs in climate-exposed and conflict-affected countries. They can also facilitate cross-organisation information-sharing, reinforcing the links between development, humanitarian and peacebuilding work, and thematic agendas such as countering violent extremism and the inclusion of women and youth.

Climate change and environmental degradation should be factored into conflict analyses and peacebuilding efforts. Climate-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach for conflict-affected regions. Climate-sensitive peacebuilding should be context-specific and consider the particular vulnerabilities of groups, including women and youth. An environmental advisor can support climate-sensitive conflict analyses and peacebuilding that factors in the effects of climate change and environmental degradation into the root causes of violence.

As climate change and conflict continues in Somalia, South Sudan, and Mali, new risks may emerge. Understanding current manifestations of CRSR and the range of possible responses can help policymakers to respond timeously to such risks. 🗨️

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FROM CATTLE RAIDS TO VIOLENCE: A PROCESSIONAL ANALYSIS OF THE BARAGOI MASSACRE IN NORTHERN KENYA

BY WILLIS OKUMU



TONY KARUMBA/AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

Introduction

In pre-colonial times, young men from pastoralist communities in Northern Kenya conducted cattle raids to enable their households or clans to replenish decimated herds after droughts or to acquire livestock for the payment of bridewealth.¹ Today, such raids are carried out mainly to solidify ethnic-based group identity for political competition or as resource scrambles.² Mobilisation for large cattle raids is carried out with ethno-nationalistic orientations that seek to entrench 'us' versus 'them' narratives as a prerequisite for the raids.³ Although cattle raids are carried out by warriors (circumcised young men between the age of 15 and 30), the violence that accompanies the raids is significantly fuelled by

ethnic identity politics and ethno-nationalistic mobilisation involving politicians and the educated elite.⁴ In the town of Baragoi in Kenya, major raids and massacres have occurred after periods of mobilisation based on ethnic identities. In this article, a massacre is described as the intentional, indiscriminate murder of a group of people due to their socio-political orientations, such as ethnic identity or political allegiance.

Above: Armed Turkana herders guard their livestock at a watering hole at Oropoyi, in Kenya's north western district of Turkana.



The Turkana and Samburu are pastoralist groups in Northern Kenya.

Unlike cattle raids of the pre-colonial era in which the aim of violence was to acquire cattle forcefully, recent massacres among pastoralists in Northern Kenya are intended to convey a message of incompatibility between two or more communities within a common geographical area (often in-land and in boundary zones). Disputes between communities may be aimed at forcefully evicting political opponents and their supporters from a common area in the run-up to a competitive political period, thus denying them a chance to cast their ballots. Massacres may arise out of such disputes and may be perpetrated to ensure a win for the organisers of the massacre. This article, therefore, examines the processes of violence escalation based on the assumption that the escalation of conflict into violence elucidates the contested relationships between two warring groups.⁵

Background to the Baragoi Massacre

The Baragoi massacre occurred in November 2012. Details of the massacre are drawn from an investigative report published by the Kenya Police, which provides a chronology of events before, during and after the massacre.⁶ It includes interviews with police officers who participated in the botched operation, priests from Baragoi Catholic Parish, young men from the age of 15 to 30 years who are responsible for providing community security and who are known as *morans*, elders and women from the Samburu and Turkana communities. The massacre was triggered by a Turkana raid of Samburu livestock at Lesirkan village in Ndoto location on 20 October 2012. The Turkana and

Samburu are pastoralist groups living in Northern Kenya. Raids between the Samburu and Turkana are common and often well-calculated missions. *Mashujaa* Day (from Swahili, meaning Heroes Day) is a public holiday held on 20 October each year in Kenya. The raiders chose this day as security personnel were engaged in holiday celebrations. Turkana raiders from Lomerok *manyatta* in Nachola location made off with 501 head of cattle from the Letipila family. According to the police reports, the raided animals belonged to the following people: Nkoyai Letipila (129 head of cattle); Nginguge Letipila (176 head of cattle); Zaire Letipila, a nominated councillor (116 head of cattle); and Eli Letipila (80 head of cattle).⁷

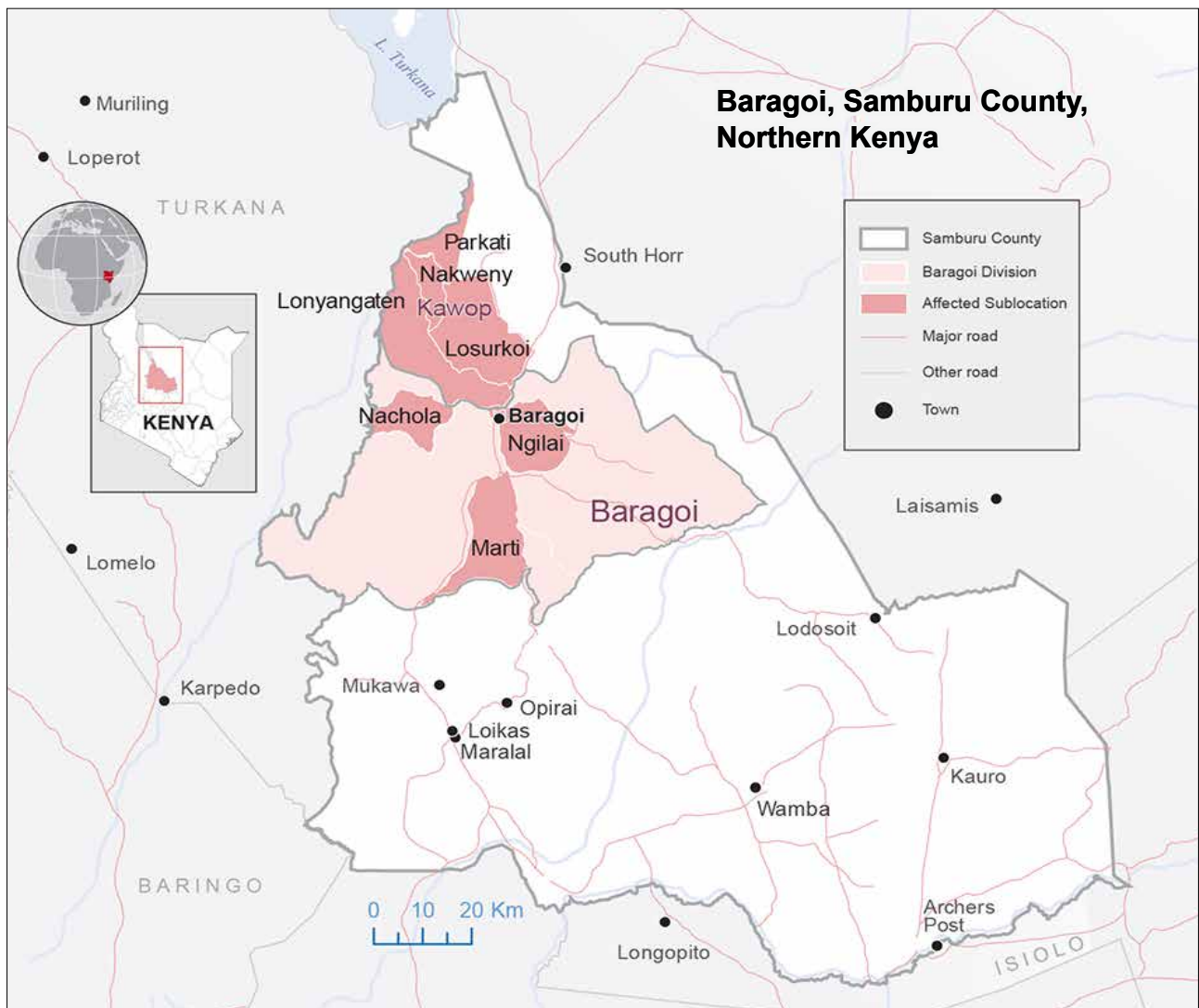
The police report noted that police officers from Baragoi were mobilised to track the stolen animals, and they caught up with the alleged raiders at Lomerok village, where there was an exchange of gunfire.⁸ The police were overpowered by the raiders and forced to withdraw. On 21 October 2012, the Baragoi police were reinforced by the Anti-Stock Theft Unit (ASTU), a specialised unit formed to track and recover stolen livestock. The police team then proceeded to Lomerok village, but they were again overpowered and forced to withdraw. In an interview with a police officer who participated in the botched operation that became the Baragoi massacre, I was informed that the failure of the police contingents to recover the raided livestock in two attempts forced the police and administrators to consider using community elders in a series of peacebuilding efforts.⁹

As a result of the dialogue intervention by the elders, the Turkana returned 20 head of cattle on 23 October 2012 and

another ten on 25 October 2012. According to the police report, by this time, 'about 400 armed Samburu *morans*' had been mobilised for retaliation against the Turkana.¹⁰ Samburu warrior-age sets from across Samburu County were mobilised by senior politicians in readiness for revenge raids. A Samburu *moran* shared how ammunition was distributed to them by Baragoi police officers in the presence of local politicians. Despite the mobilisation of *morans* for revenge, the efforts of elders to return the stolen animals continued. On 27 October 2012, Turkana elders brought back a further 14 head of cattle. However, the Samburu elders allegedly rejected eight of these animals on the grounds that they did not bear the Samburu clan branding. According to the police report, the delay in returning the remainder of the raided animals created tension in Baragoi town and 'the Samburus roamed Baragoi town with their firearms'. By 29 October 2012, there were about 600 Samburu warriors camped at the District Commissioner's office compound. These warriors invaded Lomerok village in an attempt to

capture livestock. The Samburu *morans* made off with 205 camels from Lomerok village, but 12 Samburu *morans* were killed while three Turkana *morans* were injured.

On 1 November 2012, senior police officers from the provincial headquarters based in Nakuru visited Baragoi and held meetings with Samburu North administrators, police officers, and elders from the Samburu and Turkana communities. In this meeting, Turkana elders were urged to ensure the return of the remaining Samburu cattle, while the issue of the raided Turkana camels was not raised. The police officers gave the Turkana elders the deadline of 5 November 2012 for returning the cattle. Failure would result in a paramilitary operation against raiders believed to be hidden in Lomerok village. In a meeting called by a senior police officer to assess the progress of inter-communal dialogue between Turkana and Samburu elders on 4 November 2012, only Turkana elders attended and informed the police of their willingness to return 12 more head of cattle.¹¹ On 5 November 2012, at a meeting arranged for the purpose of



SOURCE: OCHA MAP 29 NOVEMBER 2012



Turkana elders engaged in dialogue and attempted to return some of the cattle to the Samburu.

handing over the animals, the elders from both sides failed to return the stolen animals, and it was apparent that inter-communal dialogue had failed.

The Samburu County Commissioner declared that an operation to recover the stolen animals would be launched against the Turkana. The operation was named 'Rudisha Ngombe' (Return the Livestock). It targeted the Turkana village of Lomerok but ignored the Samburu raiders who had taken 205 Turkana camels on 29 October 2012. The mobilisation of Samburu *morans* and reinforcement of police contingents from other parts of the Rift Valley continued in Baragoi town in readiness for the paramilitary operation. According to the report, on 10 November 2012, a 'combined force of 132 police officers and hundreds of Kenya Police Reservists from the Samburu community' were assembled for the operation on Lomerok village.¹²

THE MASSACRE LED TO THE DISPLACEMENT OF PEOPLE FROM THE AREA AND THE LOSS OF LIVELIHOODS FROM PASTORALISM TO DEPENDENCY ON RELIEF SUPPLIES

The combined force was ambushed by Turkana *morans* and about 105 people were killed, among these 42 police officers.¹³ A further 14 police officers were injured, and a total of 29 firearms were taken by the Turkana *morans*. The massacre led to the displacement of people from the area and the loss of livelihoods from pastoralism to dependency on relief supplies.

Pastoralist Violence and the Processual Approach

Conflicts and violence between pastoralists have been explained through structural perspectives. These have focused on resource scarcity,¹⁴ institutional weakness or failure,¹⁵ local politics, and the colonial history of violent conquest in pastoralist areas.¹⁶ Based on cases from Cameroon and Burkina Faso, Moritz argues that even though these structural factors can precipitate conflicts and violence among pastoralists, at times, violence does not occur in other pastoralist conflicts despite the presence of conflict conditions.¹⁷ In Kenya, there are examples of cooperation between the Samburu and Rendille who live side by side with limited raiding that rarely intensifies into massive raids and massacres.¹⁸ Citing cases from Ghana, Tonah explains that while conflicts between local farmers and Fulbe herders have, at times, led to inter-communal violence, many similar conflicts have been solved without escalation.¹⁹

Basset argues that conflicts involving herders are complicated by various dynamics.²⁰ Moritz views conflicts between herders and farmers in West Africa as involving structural and processual causes.²¹ He argues that explanations of violent conflicts involving pastoralists and agro-pastoralists often ignore the role of processes that proceed immediately after a dispute between herders. According to Moritz, structural factors, such as state weakness and environmental scarcity, can explain the triggers of conflicts 'while processual variables can explain conflict outcomes'.²² Sandole notes the existence of two levels of conflicts: conflict as a start-up and conflict as a process.²³ Conflict as a start-up means that there are underlying challenges that fuel contests between groups. These could be the inability of the state to police its borders, thus allowing the flow of small arms and light weapons into a territory. Conflict as a process refers to the series of events that propel a conflict situation towards a massacre. These could be the mobilisation of warriors by a political leader or the massive purchase of arms by elites from one community in the guise of 'protecting their people'. Kratli and Swift further capture the conflict processes that lead to violence in the following statement:

As the raided herds need to be restocked, professional raids – well equipped, organized, highly effective – may cause a shower of clan raids – smaller, less equipped, extemporaneous – easily generating a chain reaction of violence.²⁴

Processualists view conflicts according to complex phases of contests in efforts to establish their patterns and processes.²⁵ Based on Pruitt and Kim, one can analyse the escalation of pastoralist violence through five critical transformations, namely, shifts from small to large conflicts, light to heavy tactics, specific to general conflicts, and few to many actors, as well as shifts in the goals of the conflict.²⁶ This article analyses the Baragoi massacre using the framework of processual analysis of conflicts and the five critical conflict transformations as espoused by Moritz and Pruitt and Kim, respectively.²⁷

Escalation of raids into violence is a process affected by several factors. According to Spencer, raids escalate when the 'rules' of raiding are not adhered to.²⁸ The chances of escalation are determined by the number of livestock raided. In the event that a significant number of livestock is stolen, the possibility of revenge raiding is higher. Escalation also depends on police action. In situations where the police make successful recovery efforts after major raids, conflicts more readily dissipate. However, in situations such as the

Baragoi massacre where recovery efforts are thwarted by the raiders, impatience on the part of the raided *morans* led them to take the law into their own hands, thus adding to the tension and fear that already existed in the area. Kratli and Swift view the escalation of communal violence due to cattle raiding as the result of ethnic organisation and strategic decision-making involving actors who are not primarily involved in raiding.²⁹ They argue that the escalation of conflicts stemming from cattle raids may, in essence, be a guise for the pursuit of power by interested groups. The escalation of conflicts in Northern Kenya is, therefore, viewed as a means by which one group can gain political, economic, or socio-cultural power over another group through the use of violence. Kratli and Swift further argue that the violence used in raids can itself be viewed as a type of resource employed in the pursuit of power at individual, group, and communal levels.³⁰

From Raid to Massacre: A Processual Analysis of Violence

Using the Baragoi massacre as a case study, the article draws from Pruitt and Kim and Moritz, among others, to conduct a processual analysis of the violence escalation that led to the massacre. The following sections discuss the escalation of pastoralist violence through the lens of the five critical transformations identified by Pruitt and Kim.

Shift from Small to Large Conflict

Pruitt and Kim argue that conflicts escalate when the number of actors involved increases from those who have a primary interest in the dispute to actors who are not directly involved.³¹ They argue that the entry of other actors who are remotely involved in the conflict inhibits negotiation and conciliation efforts that would occur if the dispute was left to the primary group. In the case of the Baragoi massacre, the primary victims were four members of the same family. However, immediately after the raid and prior to the massacre, one of these individuals used his position as a political leader to mobilise Samburu *morans* as active participants in the search for the raided livestock.³² The involvement of Samburu *morans* increased tension in Baragoi. The hostility in the town was further exacerbated by the mobilisation of police officers from other districts, which signalled an impending paramilitary operation. This led the communities, especially the Turkana, to mobilise defensively to protect their livestock and villages. The conflict, which started as a raid by Turkana warriors on specific Samburu family herds, became a confrontation involving actors with divergent interests.



Samburu warriors invaded the Turkana village of Lomerok in an attempt to capture livestock.

Shift from Light to Heavy Tactics

Immediately after the raid, there were efforts at inter-communal negotiation using elders, as is the custom among many pastoralist societies.³³ The Turkana elders attempted to rescue the dire situation through the return of stolen livestock. However, their efforts were not helped by the revenge raid by Samburu *morans* from El Barta on Lomerok, which led to 12 deaths and three injuries. This raid ended the elders' efforts and solidified the hardline positions of the two groups. It further led to the massive mobilisation of Samburu warriors in Baragoi, while Turkana warriors mobilised for the defence of their villages, especially in Lomerok. Police officers from other parts of the province were also brought into Baragoi in readiness for a paramilitary intervention leading to the launch of Operation Rudisha Ngombe.

Shift from Specific to General Conflict

In the ensuing days after the raid in Lesirkan by the Turkana, the situation soon intensified with the mobilisation of up to 600 Samburu *morans* and Kenya Police Reservists (KPRs) who participated in the 29 October 2012 raid as well as the paramilitary Operation Rudisha Ngombe on 10 November 2012.³⁴ The participation of both armed Samburu warriors and KPRs in the paramilitary police exercise points to the level of mobilisation and political pressure that was

exerted on the police officers. Violence among the Samburu and Turkana of Baragoi, therefore, began to draw in a growing number of people from the broader communities, with KPRs employed to bolster firepower against enemy groups.

Shift from Few to Many Actors

Pruitt and Kim argue that at the beginning of a conflict, there are few people involved; escalation takes place if, for some reason, more people are drawn into the conflict.³⁵ In the case of the Baragoi massacre, the victims of the Turkana raid on 20 October 2012 included four Samburu households. The raiders were not specifically identified, but in the police record, it was noted that the Turkana raiders were tracked to Lomirok *manyatta*. The escalation of this conflict was propelled by the fact that one of the victims of the cattle theft was a local politician (a nominated councillor) who not only put the police under pressure but also mobilised Samburu KPRs in efforts to recover his animals. The role of this politician in the escalation of the Baragoi massacre was captured in the following words of one respondent:

We reached Lomerok and saw a police helicopter overhead. The police helicopter landed nearby and they informed us that they had seen the stolen animals not far away from where we were. It was now approaching 5:00 pm. In our vehicle, we carried the councillor whose



Kenyan police officers leave the site of mass killings of police, which occurred during an ambush by Turkana castle rustlers, in Baragoi.

cattle had been stolen. He was worried and he was pressuring us to get his animals. We were also accompanied by Samburu KPRs.³⁶

Shift in the Goals of the Conflict – From Raids to Ethnic Violence


According to Pruitt and Kim, conflicts intensify when the goals of the conflict change.³⁷ To shift the goals of the conflict, Kratli and Swift argue that there must be a major ‘ethnic fracture’ based on hate, fear and distrust, which closes the door on any form of dialogue and refocuses the communities on preparations for violence.³⁸ Before the Baragoi massacre, the initial goal of the police and the primary victims of the raid from the Samburu side was to recover the raided livestock. The goals started to shift when Samburu warriors were openly mobilised and camped at the District Commissioner’s compound, where they were fed and addressed by police officers, local politicians, and administrators. The subsequent revenge raid by the mobilised Samburu *morans*, which resulted in the theft of Turkana camels and the death of Samburu *morans*, further increased the reasons for retaliation by both sides. The participation of Samburu warriors and KPRs in the eventual Operation Rudisha Ngombe was viewed by Turkana respondents as an attempt by the police alongside their enemies, the Samburu, to ‘finish them’.³⁹ Thus, the conflict

over raided cattle transformed into inter-ethnic violence within a period of 21 days.

Conclusion

From the perspective of processual analysis, the escalation of a conflict into violence is viewed as subject to specific processes that increase the number of parties involved from the primary disputants. The intensification of conflict into violence and massacres can also be seen as subject to the inaction of the state through its security apparatus, which prompts citizens to take the law into their own hands. To understand why some conflicts become massacres while others do not, I have examined the events prior to the Baragoi massacre and established that the participation of politicians and security personnel in a very biased way contributed to the violence. Mobilisation for war requires a ‘war ideology’ that creates a clear boundary between the opposing groups. Among the Samburu and Turkana of Baragoi, mobilisation was carried out through an ethno-nationalist ideology which entrenched the perceived incompatibility of the two groups and the inevitability of attacking the ‘enemy’ for the benefit of one’s own community. Political leaders from both sides repeatedly use ethnic identities as a means to increase votes during election periods. This ensures the solidification of the ethnic vote for the politician, while at the same time entrenching ethnic hatred and prejudice among members of the two communities. The politics of ethnic identity is further seen

during times of conflict when the mobilisation of warriors occurs using ethnic exclusivity based on geographical area, such as in Baragoi. The Baragoi massacre in November 2012 can, therefore, be seen as a consequence of solidified ethnic hatred between the Samburu and Turkana of Baragoi. The role of local politicians in the escalation of violence in Baragoi is evident in their efforts to mobilise the youth and arm them.

Pastoralist violence, as witnessed in the Baragoi massacre is, therefore, a product of structural causes, such as the historical marginalisation and insecurity that prevails in Northern Kenya, coupled with processes that take place after inter-communal raids occur. In the case of the Baragoi massacre, there were significant mobilisations of Samburu and Turkana warriors for attack and defence purposes, respectively. These processes led to the abandonment of 'soft' approaches towards peacebuilding and the adoption of 'hard' solutions of planning for war. Therefore, extensive violence among pastoralists, as seen in such massacres, are products of processes in situations where the state institutional infrastructure is weak or easily manipulated by local elites. Processual analysis of violence enables our understanding of two key elements of collective violence: mobilisation and retaliation. Acts of revenge are used, firstly, to mobilise the warrior-age group based on their cultural duty to defend the community. Secondly, revenge acts are part of the patron-client relationships between the warriors and political leaders. Revenge in the Baragoi massacre case was, therefore, not only aimed at recovering the livestock raided earlier by the Turkana but also aimed at communicating a political message of power in terms of the skewed relationship between the Samburu and Turkana of Baragoi. Processual analysis of violence, therefore, sheds more light on the progression of conflicts and the convergence of culture and power as key variables in comprehending socio-cultural strife among distinct groups. 

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TOWARDS MULTI-LEVEL PARTNERSHIPS IN BUILDING SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN WEST AFRICA

BY OSEI BAFFOUR FRIMPONG



REUTERS/JOE PENNEY

Introduction

Despite the solid progress made in democratic consolidation, regional cooperation, and economic growth in recent years, West Africa has been in the global spotlight due to persistent insecurity and accompanying humanitarian crises. Indeed, the current peace and security climate in West Africa is replete with existing and emerging threats that are national, regional, and global in character. The threats are occasioned by incidents of terrorism, violent extremism, election violence, intercommunal violence, ethnic violence, farmer-herder conflicts, transnational organised crime, and climate change, among others. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic has also induced adverse effects on human security.

Efforts to assuage the varied threats to security in the region have prompted the development and activation of an array of frameworks and interventions by actors including the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), France, the United States (US), and civil society organisations (CSOs). Notwithstanding these interventions, the threats continue to be exacerbated and evolve, invoking critical questions about the effectiveness of existing responses.¹

Above: The multidimensional and complex nature of threats to security in West Africa renders the militarised approach that has dominated interventions inadequate.



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Youth and women, who are important agents in peace and security, continue to remain at the periphery of regional security interventions.

The volatile security climate coupled with escalating violence has sparked unprecedented humanitarian crises across the region. In 2019 alone, more than 4 000 deaths were recorded (compared to 770 in 2016) due to the resurgence of violence in certain countries, especially Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali.² Between 2019 and 2020, the fatality rate increased from 4 385 to 5 606, an annual increase of more than 1 200 fatalities.³

The multidimensional and complex nature of threats to security in the region renders the militarised approach that has dominated interventions inadequate. It is increasingly evident that sustaining peace requires multi-level partnerships that engage and foster robust relationships among critical actors at the local, national, regional, and international levels. While the multi-level partnership for peace in the region is encapsulated in existing frameworks for peace, in practice, it has not been adequately utilised despite its potential value for building sustainable peace. In fact, partnerships in regional peace interventions have mainly focused on engagement among states, regional organisations, and multilateral institutions, with limited space for the inclusive participation of other relevant actors. Notably, other critical stakeholders, especially local communities, the youth and women, who are important agents in peace and security, continue to remain at the

periphery of regional security interventions. This is despite the utility of a multi-level partnership in broadening the West African security community through the participation and inclusivity of multiple actors and agents to address the complex and multi-layered security challenges facing the region.

The challenge thus highlights the need to explore the utility and value of multi-level partnerships in building sustainable peace in West Africa. In doing so, the article highlights the current trends and dynamics in regional security. It also examines regional responses to threats, while highlighting critical gaps in the existing strategies. Furthermore, the article explores the potential dividends of multi-level partnerships for fostering sustainable peace in the sub-region.

Current Trends and Dynamics in Regional Peace and Security

Despite the scaling-up of military and counter-insurgency operations by national armies, regional and international interventions, the current security climate of the region remains volatile with multidimensional threats. Key among these are terrorist and violent extremist attacks which have intensified, with perpetrating groups expanding

exponentially, particularly in the last five years. While Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) insurgencies in North-East Nigeria have had a contagion effect on other states in riparian communities in the Lake Chad Basin (Cameroon, Chad, and Niger), Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) and a host of armed groups continue to increase instability in the Sahel region, especially in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso. Between 2020 and the first half of 2021, the region recorded over 700 terrorist attacks resulting in 2000 civilian and security force deaths.⁴ Emerging trends and dynamics in terrorist insurgencies in the region further reveal a southward spread of attacks, which indicates potential threats to littoral states, especially Ghana, Cote D'Ivoire, Togo, and Benin. Already, Cote D'Ivoire has recorded four attacks against its security personnel along the northern border with Burkina Faso.⁵

Transnational organised crimes, including human and drug trafficking, kidnapping for ransom, the influx of small arms and light weapons (SALW), and money laundering, also continue to fuel conflicts and violence in vulnerable communities. While drug trafficking and money laundering are resources to sustain the operations of terrorist groups, kidnapping for ransom has become a booming industry for

OTHER CAUSES FOR CONCERN ARE THE MARITIME AND CYBERSECURITY SPACES THAT HAVE BECOME VISIBLE SIGNPOSTS OF TERRORIST AND ARMED GROUPS OPERATIONS AND ATTACKS

unemployed youth bandits and militia to sustain their livelihoods. In Nigeria, in particular, the frequency of kidnapping increased exponentially within the first half of 2021, affecting more than 1 570 people, including 800 secondary school students, predominantly in Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, and Niger States. Similarly, bandits and terrorist groups operating in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger continue to use kidnapping for ransom and abduction of humanitarian workers, security personnel, foreign tourists, and civilians to sustain their operations, with over 20 incidents recorded in the first half of 2021 alone in the three countries.⁶

Other causes for concern are the maritime and cybersecurity spaces that have become visible signposts of terrorist and armed groups operations and attacks. The Gulf



MAGHARIBIA

Armed groups continue to increase instability in the Sahel region, especially in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso.



A member of the Senegalese military is on guard, aboard a vessel in the Gulf of Guinea.

THIS WORRYING ENVIRONMENTAL SECURITY TREND HAS LED TO INCREASED COMPETITION OVER LIMITED RESOURCES, WHICH OFTEN TRIGGERS ETHNIC AND INTERCOMMUNAL VIOLENCE AND FARMER-HERDER CONFLICT IN COMMUNITIES

of Guinea remains a hotspot for increased piracy. A record of 135 crew members were kidnapped from their vessels in 22 incidents in the last quarter of 2020: an unprecedented rise in the number of crew kidnappings since 2019. In the first quarter of 2021, the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea recorded 20 incidents of piracy, compared with 45 incidents in the last quarter of 2020, including nine in the maritime space of ECOWAS, and 40 kidnappings.⁷ The activities of pirates in the territorial waters of coastal countries along the Gulf of Guinea are a conduit for arms and drugs to criminal networks, armed groups, and terrorist organisations fuelling insecurity in the ECOWAS region. While the proliferation of digital technology has provided platforms for amplification of citizens’ voices in governance processes, it has also

become a platform for the spread of fake news, violent communications, recruitment and radicalisation of vulnerable young people, and money laundering by violent extremist groups and criminal networks in the region to induce violence and conflicts. For example, during the 2020 elections in Ghana, Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Togo, the West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) National Early Warning System (NEWS) recorded incidents that emanated from violent communication and fake news in some hotspots before, during and after the elections.⁸

Moreover, the West Africa region is grappling with the multi-layered effects of rapid- and slow-onset disasters. Of particular concern is climate change and its adverse impact on the depletion of resources, including water, land, food, fisheries and biodiversity that support the livelihoods of millions of people across the region, and particularly in the Sahel sub-region. This worrying environmental security trend has led to increased competition over limited resources, which often triggers ethnic and intercommunal violence and farmer-herder conflict in communities.

Additionally, governance fault lines reflected in political exclusion, corruption, marginalisation, civil unrest, and election-related violence continue to generate tensions and instability, which further fragment the social structure of

states in the region. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has added another layer to the existing human security challenges in the region. The many restriction measures introduced by governments have adversely affected the economy of countries, particularly the informal sector, which engages most West African populations. The ripple effect of the pandemic is manifesting in layoffs, job cuts, and reduction in wages and unemployment, leading to increased poverty and inequality, social tension, labour agitation, and civil unrest.

The effect of the threats bedevilling the region is reflected in a cocktail of humanitarian crises evident in increased cases of fatalities, injuries, internally displaced persons (IDPs), irregular migration, perpetration of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and children, and food insecurity that continues to heighten the fragility of states and human security.

Responses and Gaps

As demonstrated previously, the threats facing the security landscape in West Africa are transnational and multidimensional. This has elicited varied national, regional, and multilateral responses.

THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC IS MANIFESTING IN LAYOFFS, JOB CUTS, AND REDUCTION IN WAGES AND UNEMPLOYMENT, LEADING TO INCREASED POVERTY AND INEQUALITY, SOCIAL TENSION, LABOUR AGITATION, AND CIVIL UNREST

National Responses

At the national level, countries have developed various response strategies to address security threats and ensure the safety and security of citizens as well as effective delivery of socioeconomic services. The government of Mali has implemented military operations; disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR); and initiatives to promote stability in the country.⁹ A notable example is the 2015 Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Algiers to promote development, peace and security in Mali. Similarly, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Nigeria have taken concrete measures, including the development of counterterrorism strategies and bilateral and multilateral security cooperation



PHOTO: JENNIFER A. PATTERSON/ILLO

The many restriction measures introduced by governments during the COVID-19 pandemic have adversely affected the economy of countries, particularly the informal sector.



Youth and women's participation in peace and decision-making processes is important.

to strengthen the operational capabilities of their defence and security forces to combat the threat of violent extremism, cross-border attacks, armed violence, and other criminal activities that undermine state stability. Aside from this, there are efforts by states, including the development of national action plans and youth and women policies to mainstream women and youth participation in peace and decision-making processes, in line with UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325 and 2250.

However, national responses are fraught with partnership challenges with critical actors. The state-centric nature of national responses has limited the space for partnership with grassroots actors in local communities that could ensure inclusive participation of critical actors, including traditional authorities and ethnic and religious leaders, in peace and security interventions. Local community peacebuilding infrastructure is largely ignored in national resilience efforts despite its utility in mitigating threats. While the need to centralise the role of women and youth in peace processes has become the focus of recent security policy conversations, in reality, partnerships with such critical groups in building peace remain at the periphery. This is largely due to entrenched patriarchy and the gerontocratic nature of West African societies and decision-making processes. Moreover,

WHILE THE NEED TO CENTRALISE THE ROLE OF WOMEN AND YOUTH IN PEACE PROCESSES HAS BECOME THE FOCUS OF RECENT SECURITY POLICY CONVERSATIONS, IN REALITY, PARTNERSHIPS WITH SUCH CRITICAL GROUPS IN BUILDING PEACE REMAIN AT THE PERIPHERY

state partnerships with the private sector in peacebuilding are a critical gap in national responses to threats to security, even though such partnerships have the potential to generate sustainable funding and support citizen education in peace and security, which would then bolster national resilience against threats.

Regional Responses and Ad Hoc Coalitions

At the regional level, the main organisations include the AU, ECOWAS, Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC), and G5 Sahel Force, among others. Through the AU Mission for Mali and Sahel (MISAHEL), the AU is supporting Sahel countries



The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA) is a multilateral intervention contributing to the implementation of peace and development programmes in Mali.

in their stabilisation and development efforts. Other ad hoc coalitions, such as the Multi-National Joint Task Force (MNJTF) was established by countries in the Lake Chad Basin (Chad, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Niger) and Benin to respond to the Boko Haram crisis. The G5 Sahel Joint Force is another ad hoc coalition made up of forces from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger that is engaged in counterterrorism operations in hard-to-reach areas and border zones. Additionally, ECOWAS and its partners developed and implemented the Sahel Strategy (2016–2020) focusing on major projects in the areas of infrastructure, resilience and food security, education, and peace and security support with the aim of consolidating regional responses to the long-term challenges in the Sahel Saharan zone.¹⁰ Despite these responses, a critical gap that limits their potency is the weak partnerships between regional actors and CSOs as key agents in regional peace and security.

Admittedly, some efforts have been made by ECOWAS to foster partnerships with CSOs, especially the WANEP, for example, in the operationalisation of conflict early warning systems in the region. However, such partnerships with non-state actors continue to be hindered by the state-centric nature of security in the region. The monopolisation of

security by states has hindered the decentralisation of security and involvement of citizens in the planning and implementation of policies and strategies. Another deficit in regional responses is the limited involvement of ECOWAS citizens in regional peacebuilding, which has led to inadequate knowledge of peace and conflict prevention programmes and a lack of inclusive participation in resilience efforts of regional actors. For this reason, the potential contributions and value of citizens to regional peacebuilding efforts has been relatively lopsided despite their utility as the fulcrum of human security.

Multilateral International Responses

At the core of multilateral responses is the implementation of the 2013 UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS), which was given renewed impetus in 2017 with the operationalisation of the UN Support Plan for the Sahel (UNSP). The UNSP spans the period 2018-2030, with a focus on six priority areas: cross border cooperation, climate action, crisis prevention, women and youth empowerment, economic revitalisation, and renewable energy.¹¹ The UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA) is another multilateral intervention contributing



French soldiers conduct a civil-military co-operation patrol during the regional anti-insurgent Operation Barkhane in Gao, Mali (14 October 2017).

to the implementation of peace and development programmes in Mali. Additionally, the EU provides support in the areas of development, enhancing government capacity through good governance, conflict resolution, security and rule-of-law, and the fight against violent extremism.¹² Such support includes electoral assistance to Election Management Bodies (EMBs), election observation missions to promote transparency and credibility in elections, and capacity building for the judiciary to strengthen justice delivery. Aside from this, other external actors, including France, the US, Germany, China, Norway, and Denmark, provide security assistance to countries in the Sahel. A notable example is France's Operation Barkhane Forces, which provide a broad range of support to Sahel countries to combat violent extremism and terrorism.

The aforementioned interventions are contributing to peace in the region. However, the increased level of violence in the face of such interventions invokes critical questions about the potency of multilateral and international peace interventions. At the heart of this is that most international interventions ignore local context and the utility of indigenous knowledge in West African security for fostering sustainable peace. These partnership deficits have led to the perception among local communities that international peace

THESE PARTNERSHIP DEFICITS HAVE LED TO THE PERCEPTION AMONG LOCAL COMMUNITIES THAT INTERNATIONAL PEACE INTERVENTIONS ARE AN IMPOSITION

interventions are an imposition. This undermines the cooperation of local communities, while increasing the gap between the West African knowledge community and international actors in peace operating in the region.

Towards Multi-level Partnerships for Peace

Conflict prevention can be addressed effectively through partnerships with many different groups, agencies and sectors and with a multitude of strategies at different levels.¹³ The multi-level partnership thus refers to engagement with critical stakeholders in the development and implementation of peacebuilding activities. Multi-level partners include the ECOWAS, AU, states, political parties, CSOs, non-governmental organisations, the mass media, youth and women groups, local influencers such as traditional and religious authorities, and citizens in local, national,

regional, and international communities. A notable example is the AU-led Country Structural Vulnerability and Resilience Assessment (CSVRA) and Country Structural Vulnerability Mitigation Strategy (CSVMS) currently being piloted in Ghana. The gaps highlighted in regional responses coupled with the multidimensional nature of threats to security point to the value of multi-level partnerships for fostering sustainable peace in the region.

Fostering a multi-level partnership to address the threats to regional security recognises the agency of grassroots actors in local communities. While a host of threats facing the region emanate from vulnerabilities in local communities, the local context, informal actors, and local initiatives are often ignored by national, regional, and international partners. This has contributed to the non-alignment of national, regional, and international strategies with the prevailing realities in local communities in the region. The multi-level partnership accommodates the initiatives of local authorities, religious leaders, and women and youth groups as critical agents in a bottom-up approach to building sustainable peace in communities. This is evident in the implementation of women and youth peace and security programmes that seek to enhance the capacity of women and young people at the local and national levels to increase their participation and amplify their voices in peace and security.

GIVEN THE RESOURCE POTENTIAL OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR, INCLUDING THE MINING, BANKING, MANUFACTURING, AND CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES, EXTENDING PARTNERSHIPS TO THEM TO EXPLORE THEIR POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION TO PEACE IS IMPERATIVE

Responding to a myriad of peace and development challenges co-creates multiple actors and thus requires robust collaboration with citizens as critical actors in building sustainable peace and security through multi-level partnerships. Importantly, the solution and agency to transform conflict lie primarily within the society and population experiencing it.¹⁴ This means that inclusive participation of communities and local ownership are essential in enhancing peace through conflict prevention. West African citizens are largely ignored by national, regional, and international actors in the development and implementation of responses to threats. For this reason, as part of a multi-level partnership to respond to the plethora of threats to security in the region, there is a need to recognise and foster robust partnerships through peace education and advocacy with West African citizens as key stakeholders who bear the consequences of rising insecurity.

Again, a critical agent that remains underutilised in regional peace and security is the private sector or the business community despite its potential for contributing to building sustainable peace. This, to a large extent, is a result of the state-centric approach to security and the deficits of trust between governments and the private sector. Given the resource potential of the private sector, including the mining, banking, manufacturing, and construction industries, extending partnerships to them to explore their potential contribution to peace is imperative.

Responses to threats to peace and security, particularly by international partners, have often been generalised without contextual analysis of vulnerabilities that provide the impetus for threats to flourish. This is a result of the existing gaps in peacebuilding practice and research knowledge. This calls for broadening regional peacebuilding partnerships to include academia and research think tanks that will provide contextual knowledge and analyses driven by empirical evidence and thus inform responses. The multi-level partnership thus recognises the agency of the knowledge community in generating scholarship and policy options for peace interventions.

The utility of CSOs and the media cannot be overlooked in responding to threats to security, given the limited capacity of weak states to respond to the complex, multi-layered security challenges facing West Africa. CSOs are important agents in complementing national, regional, and international efforts to address threats. However, the space for such critical actors to be engaged continues to be stifled, especially by government laws and other stringent measures, despite efforts by ECOWAS to improve relations with CSOs in building peace. The multi-level partnership seeks to strengthen relationships with CSOs and the media as essential actors in peace in communities within the region.

Utility and Potential Dividends of Multi-level Partnerships for Sustainable Regional Peace

The utility of the multi-level partnership is reflected in its capacity to broaden the West African security community through the inclusive participation of multiple actors, including local grassroots leadership communities, CSOs, the mass media, women's and youth groups, religious and traditional leaders, the knowledge community, and citizens. This allows peacebuilding in the region to be the collective responsibility of all agents and actors. When the conflict prevention process is participatory and inclusive of multiple actors across the various levels, it generates trust, confidence, ownership, and the necessary political will to engage different agents in addressing threats to security in communities in the region.

A potential dividend of the multi-level partnership to regional peace is its capacity to create space for multiple actors with varied positions, backgrounds, knowledge, ideas, skills, and resources to work together at different levels. This

allows different actors and their conflict prevention initiatives to be regarded as part of larger responses. It also ensures synergy among the various preventive actions of different actors at various levels as part of a comprehensive strategy to respond to complex threats.

Moreover, a multi-level partnership has the potential to strengthen coordination and articulation and avoid duplication of efforts that undermine coherence and synergy in regional responses to threats. Aside from this, it has the potential to enhance effective collaboration among various actors and initiatives to maximise the impact of interventions and ensure sustainable peace at various levels in the region.

Conclusion

West Africa's security climate is saddled with multidimensional security threats. This has prompted the development and activation of varied responses by different actors at the national, regional, and international levels. However, a critical gap that continues to undermine their potency is the lack of multi-level partnerships with the capacity to increase the regional security space to ensure inclusive participation and harness the agency of other critical actors, including local grassroots leadership, religious authorities, youth, women, CSOs, the media, and the knowledge community. Given its dividends for sustainable peace, disregarding the utility and value of multi-level partnerships has the potential to exacerbate the growing insecurity in West Africa. 🚩

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