



Karamoja

A literature review



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SAFERWORLD

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Saferworld

Saferworld is an independent non-governmental organisation that works to prevent and reduce violent conflict and promote co-operative approaches to security.

Saferworld works with governments, international organisations and civil society to encourage and support effective policies and practices through advocacy, research and policy development and through supporting the actions of others. Saferworld works in Africa, South Asia, and Europe and Central Asia and has offices in London, Nairobi, Juba, Brussels, Pristina, Colombo, Kathmandu and Kampala, as well as staff based in Bangladesh and Vienna.

Saferworld has a regional conflict prevention programme in East Africa and well-established programmes in Uganda, Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. Saferworld has been working in Uganda since 1997, and established an office in Kampala in 2006. Saferworld's work in Uganda has been supported by a variety of donors, including the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the BIG Lottery and Comic Relief.

Saferworld's work in Uganda focuses on three linked thematic areas:

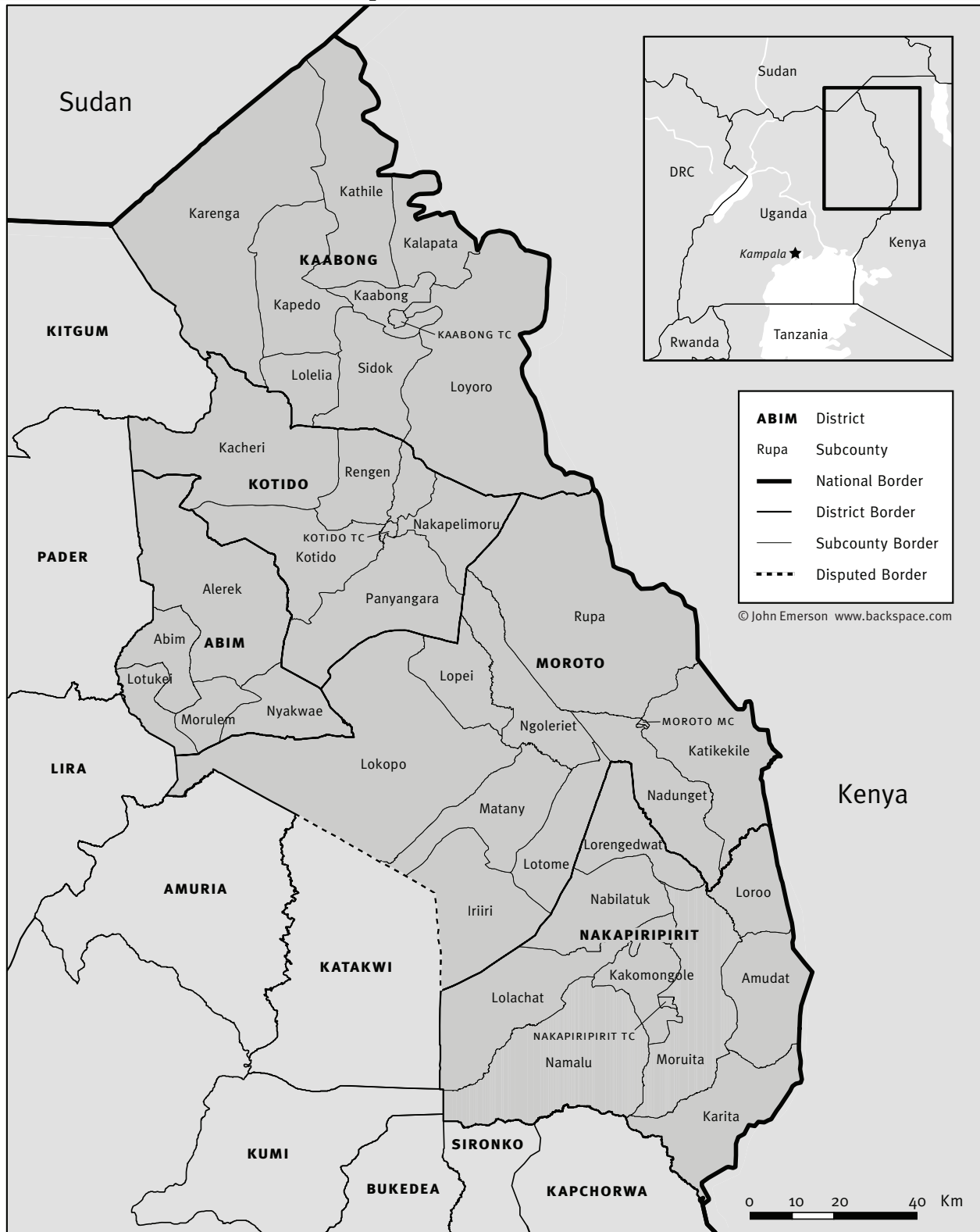
- conflict-sensitive approaches to development
- security and justice sector development
- small arms and light weapons control.

Saferworld is currently undertaking a programme entitled 'Promoting Peace and Security in Karamoja'. The objectives of the programme are to:

- influence peacebuilding, security and development actors to make their work more sensitive to the conflict and security needs
- promote greater investment of resources into conflict prevention, security and development in Karamoja
- inform the design and evaluation of Saferworld's Uganda programme strategy.

This literature review has been produced as part of the above programme, to provide Saferworld and other actors with an overview of existing thinking about and information on the Karamoja region. Saferworld is currently undertaking a major participatory conflict and security assessment in the Moroto and Kotido districts of Karamoja. This assessment provides a means through which the people of Karamoja can voice their problems and priorities in relation to conflict and insecurity. It aims to assist the Government of Uganda, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), other agencies and the people of Karamoja in working together to create a more peaceful future.

Map of Karamoja'



1 In December 2009, subsequent to the writing of this review, a new district, Amudat, was created within Karamoja. Amudat consists of the sub-counties of Loroo, Amudat and Karita, previously part of Nakapiripirit District.

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Acronyms

ABEK	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja	MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries
ACTED	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development	MFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development
AU	African Union	MP	Member of Parliament
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act	NGO	non-governmental organisation
ASTU	Anti-Stock Theft Unit	NRM	National Resistance Movement
CBO	community-based organisation	NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
CBPP	Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia	NUYUP	Northern Uganda Youth Rehabilitation Project
CEWARN	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
CMCC	Civil-Military Co-ordination Centre	OPM	Office of the Prime Minister
CSDG	Conflict, Security and Development Group, King's College London	PCHI	Pastoral Community Harmonization Initiative
DFID	Department for International Development	PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
FEWS NET	Famine Early Warning Systems Network	PRDP	Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (for Northern Uganda)
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition	RELOKA	Re-establishment of Law and Order in Karamoja
GBV	gender-based violence	SPC	Special Police Constable
GoU	Government of Uganda	SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
HDI	Human Development Index	UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
IBAR	Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources	UHRC	Uganda Human Rights Commission
IDP	internally displaced person	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
JLOS	Justice, Law and Order Sector	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
KIDDP	Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme	UN OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
KOPEIN	Kotido Peace Initiative	UN OHCHR	United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
KPSDPC	Karamoja Private Sector Development Promotion Centre	UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Forces
LC	Local Council	UPE	Universal Primary Education
LDU	Local Defence Unit	WFP	World Food Programme
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army		

A Karamojong glossary

akiriket	Sacred assembly
amatida	Locally-made Karamojong gun
ameto	Process of bringing wrongdoers for punishment
karachuna	Young male warrior
kraal	Mobile, often fortified, cattle camps (also known as <i>alomar</i> or <i>adakar</i>)
manyatta	Traditional semi-permanent habitat of the Karamojong, consisting of huts and granaries.

1

Introduction

THE KARAMOJA REGION of North Eastern Uganda is predominantly populated by pastoralist groups. It suffers from chronic poverty and has the worst development indicators in the country. Protracted inter- and intra-clan conflicts over cattle and access to pasture and resources, cross-border incursions by groups from neighbouring Kenya and Southern Sudan and a high level of small arms proliferation and violence have all negatively affected the region's socio-economic development. The situation in Karamoja has been further complicated by ongoing debates about the economic viability (and desirability) of pastoralism as a livelihood option, tensions between traditional and state security and justice processes, and sometimes heavy handed approaches to disarmament, provoking resentment amongst communities towards the army and government more generally.

Karamoja has been the focus of numerous government programmes and interventions by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and the subject of much academic and policy research. The purpose of this paper is to present a synthesis of the existing literature on the region. It does not aim to provide a comprehensive history of Karamoja, or to present original analysis of the issues that confront the region. Rather, it aims to provide an objective overview of the literature and to present contrasting opinions where these occur. This literature review was written in February 2009 and reviewed more than 60 papers written and/or published by academics, research institutes, NGOs and government institutions – see the list of sources at the end of this paper.

The review does not attempt to provide an exhaustive catalogue of all available literature. Rather it provides an introduction and overview to the region and its literature, through examining key sources. The review does not attempt to corroborate or update statistics or other findings or opinions presented in the literature, neither does it set out to provide a chronology of events in Karamoja, or trace the evolution of debates about the region in chronological order. Instead, the review synthesises information and opinions from the literature on a thematic basis, under the following headings: the development situation and livelihoods opportunities/vulnerabilities; small arms control, supply and demand; governance, security, rule of law and access to justice; levels and forms of armed violence; society and culture; and capacities for conflict prevention and resolution.

Referencing

This literature review presents selected information and analysis from the source papers it reviews, in summarised form. Saferworld has sought to ensure that it presents an accurate representation of the content of these source papers, and any errors are the responsibility of Saferworld alone. Readers are encouraged to cite from the original source documents, rather than this literature review.

Within the text of this review, sources are referenced by author, date and page number. Readers should refer to the list of sources at the end of the review for full bibliographical details. Direct quotations are marked with inverted commas.

Definitions

For the purpose of this review the term 'Karamoja' is used to refer to the five districts of Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit, which cover approximately 27,200 km² of North Eastern Uganda². The term 'Karamoja cluster' is used to describe a larger, cross-border area of land which covers the Karamoja area of North Eastern Uganda plus parts of South Eastern Sudan, South Western Ethiopia and North Western Kenya.

The term 'Karamojong' is used to refer to the inhabitants of the districts of Uganda listed above. It includes the ethnic groups (or sub-tribes) of the Dodoth (north); Jie (central); Pokot (Kenyan border) and Bokora, Matheniko and Pian (south). Smaller ethnic groupings that also come under the generic term 'Karamojong' include the Tepeth, Nyakwe, Iik, Ngipore and Ethur. Documents reviewed may also use the spelling 'Karimojong' or 'Karamajong' but in the interests of consistency this review will only use 'Karamojong'.

² In December 2009, subsequent to the writing of this review, a new district, Amudat, was created within Karamoja. Amudat consists of the sub-counties of Loroo, Amudat and Karita, previously part of Nakapiripirit District.

2

The development situation and livelihoods opportunities/vulnerabilities

Statistical indicators

A UNITED NATIONS OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS (OCHA) report from 18 April 2008 put the total population of the five districts that make up Karamoja (Abim, Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit) at 1,107,308. An estimated 82% of this population live in poverty. 46% have access to safe drinking water, and 8% have access to sanitation units. The global acute malnutrition (GAM) rate across the region is 10.9%, compared to a national percentage of 6%, and an international emergency threshold of 10%. 8.3% of HIV/AIDS patients are on antiretroviral medicine (compared to 45% nationally), and 51% of district health posts remain unfilled. There are an estimated 1,100,000 cattle and 2,070,000 sheep and goats, with rinderpest thought to account for a loss rate of 9% (OCHA 2008a).

50% of the Karamoja population is under 18 (Knaute and Kagan, 2008:10). There are 247 functioning primary schools in Karamoja, and the percentage enrolment of school-age girls in these schools is 35% (OCHA 2008a). Figures taken from the 2004 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) survey by Irish Aid (2007a) show that literacy rates in the region are 21% compared to a national average of 68%, and 60.3% of 6–25 year olds have never been to school compared to 13.8% nationally. Infant mortality rates are 178 per 1,000 compared to 88 per 1,000 Uganda-wide. 44.8% of children live in households that only eat one meal a day. The prevalence rate for stunting is 35.5%, wasting 10.9% and severe malnutrition 1.6%.

The Ministry of Health's 2008 statistics show that the worst districts for malnutrition are Moroto and Nakapiripirit, which have GAM rates of 15.6% and 15.1% respectively, compared to 10.9% Karamoja-wide. The same study finds that for Karamoja as a whole GAM rates have dropped from 22% in 2003. However, the crude mortality rate of 1.12 people per 10,000 per day is at humanitarian emergency levels. This rate is attributed predominantly to malaria/fever, food insecurity and armed violence.

Factors affecting development and livelihoods

Pastoralism is the dominant economic livelihood for the Karamojong and its viability as both a way of life and a livelihood is dependent upon the availability of natural resources, access to land and environmental factors. Margaret Kakande (2007) reports that, despite specific development programmes targeting Karamoja, poverty amongst pastoralists has actually grown and cattle raiding has become more violent. She argues that explanations for this trend include the lack of community involvement in 'top down' policies and programmes, and an undue focus on efforts which apparently seek to reduce the mobility of the Karamojong. Drawing from a 2002 Department for International Development (DFID) report on pastoral poverty, Mwaura (2005:8) outlines a range of factors that have affected development and livelihoods in Karamoja, including poorly-planned new water points negatively affecting seasonal grazing patterns; an increase in the amount of land devoted to agriculture at the expense of grazing lands; the gazetting of 36% of the total Karamoja land area for a national park and wildlife and forest reserves, where grazing, settlement and cultivation are prohibited (although this is not widely enforced); inadequate access to services such as primary schools; and the lack of livelihood alternatives to pastoralism.

A Uganda Human Rights Commission (UHRC, 2007:2) workshop found that insecurity, water scarcity, illiteracy, economic backwardness and poor health were the primary development concerns. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2007:56) attributes the low Human Development Index (HDI) figures in Karamoja to insecurity, which forces people to relocate to areas where there is less opportunity to engage in economically productive activities.

In 2001, Oxfam found that most development initiatives in Kotido District had stagnated due to insecurity on the roads. Nangiro (2005:3) reports that people fear cultivating farmland away from settlements as it makes them vulnerable to raiders. Jabs (2007:1509) reports that focus groups say a 'build-up of anger' caused by poverty and thefts contribute to counter-raids. Longole (2007:1) suggests the root of food shortages in Karamoja comes from the decision to squeeze settlements together for security purposes in the wake of outside attacks in the 1960s. This resulted in the creation of large and over-crowded settlements such as Nakapelimoru internally displaced person (IDP) camp in Jie County. Longole concludes that the Karamojong in these camps should be included in government resettlement programmes, arguing 'They have continued to stay in the forgotten camps for so long. Are they not IDPs?' (ibid:1).

Stites et al (2007:24) suggest that in Bokora County, livelihood systems have been undermined due to insecurity and loss of livestock. This has meant that the Bokora can no longer cope with repeat shocks such as drought and crop failure. The paper argues that current interventions such as school feeding programmes and improved access to medical care will do little to prevent people leaving the region. A survey in the same paper highlights that armed violence has a direct effect on food distribution by international agencies. It cites the example of the World Food Programme (WFP) suspending its operation after one of its drivers was killed in May 2007 (ibid:44).

Limited livelihoods opportunities have also resulted in high levels of migration to Kampala. Kaduuli (2008:7) cites sources that claim that 90% of street children under 5 in Kampala are from Karamoja, and Kampala City Council estimates that 80% of all beggars in the city are from the region.

Climate and livelihoods

Rainfall is generally limited and unpredictable in Karamoja, with an annual average rainfall of 400 mm in the east of the region and 1,000 mm in the west (Irish Aid, 2007:1). The region is mostly arid and as agricultural production is reliant on rainfall, drought conditions generally cause failed harvests (ibid). The erratic and poorly distributed nature of the rainfall means that, in the view of the Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWS NET), pastoralism is the livelihood option best suited to the region (2005:9).

A 2008 Oxfam report into climate change and pastoralism finds that a continuation of the current trends of 'successive poor rains, an increase in drought-related shocks, and more unpredictable and sometimes heavy rainfall' is likely. The report points to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change model which predicts an increase in temperature of 2–4°C in East Africa by the 2080s, with an increase in rain intensity during the short rains (October–December). This could result in more dry-season pasture and lengthier access to wet-season pasture, and less frequent drought (Oxfam, 2008:2). However, Oxfam also points to negative implications such as livestock succumbing to heat stress, agricultural encroachment on grazing land, increased flooding and the further spread of wet season diseases (both amongst humans and livestock). Oxfam concludes that the extent to which pastoralists will be able to adapt to a changing climate depends on the level of response from national governments and international donors, and the way in which they involve pastoralists in the process (ibid:4).

In 2008, the Ministry of Health (2008:6) highlighted access to clean water for both livestock and humans as critical and suggested that strategies should be designed to improve faecal disposal in the region. The central government has attempted to provide several valley water tanks (with a target of two per sub-county) to reduce the need to travel long distances to water animals. However, the tanks are often empty and are not geographically evenly distributed (ibid:49). In conflict-prone areas they have been least effective and, in general, high maintenance costs have seen many fall into disrepair. With regard to the provision of water for human consumption, Kagan et al (2008:21) argue that the drilling of boreholes is 'ill-advised' as it fixes grazing on specific locations and contributes to a loss of pastoral mobility, which they see as central to the 'Karamoja syndrome'. For example, overgrazing becomes more common around boreholes, which leads to soil erosion, loss of biodiversity, increased food insecurity and finally the destabilisation of Karamojong 'socio-cultural structures' (ibid:22). The boreholes are also blamed for a 'dramatic lowering' of the water table (ibid:35). Kagan et al (ibid:8) conclude that water development projects must be accompanied by land reform, grazing control and co-operation from pastoralists if they are to avoid having a negative effect.

Gray (2000:402) argues that subsistence pastoralism is dependent on access to scarce and unpredictable natural resources in a way that affects few other livelihoods. The failure of policy-makers to recognise the strength of this link, and to take an ecological perspective during various developmental interventions has had, Gray believes, disastrous consequences. Rainfall tends to vary between 'too much at the wrong time or too little in too short a time'. This means that agriculture is an unreliable livelihood and that migratory rearing of livestock makes sense, not out of 'irrational devotion to cattle' but as a technique compatible with ecological realities (ibid:402). This links to Knighton's thesis that the idea of the 'tragedy of the commons', according to which the Karamojong have caused major damage to their territory through lack of management, is inapplicable as communal grazing rights are actually ecologically sound in their pure form (2003:1).

Traditionally, raiding also had some ecological benefits, according to Gray (2000:405), as large herds would be broken up, resulting in a more even distribution of cattle and therefore less pressure on fragile grasslands. Raiding would also serve to reconfigure tribal boundaries and redistribute populations in what is an ever-changing physical landscape. Knighton (2005:20) also cites empirical research showing that pastoralist ecosystems are more efficient than wildlife ecosystems, and both are more efficient than commercial land use. He criticises the Ugandan government for ignoring ecologists' advice and instead accepting 'US-driven pressures to establish individual property rights in the middle of common pastures' (ibid). Knighton believes this is part of a developmental discourse on modernisation which is 'too often a cover for genocidal animosity' (ibid:21).

Government livelihoods and development programmes

The most comprehensive government development plan for the region is the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP). The KIDDP has broad aims including establishing law and order; supporting the provision and delivery of basic social services; supporting the development of alternative means of livelihoods; undertaking stakeholder mobilisation, sensitisation and education; and enhancing coordination, monitoring and evaluation of interventions (Office of the Prime Minister [OPM], 2008:xviii). The KIDDP is intended to enhance security for the Karamojong and create the conditions for development, through a disarmament strategy whereby the 'removal of illegal weapons is seen not as an end in itself but as a means to an end' (ibid:55). The programme is based on a set of principles including community ownership and participation; gender and generational integration; a rights-based approach; peaceful disarmament; labour-based approaches (using local residents in development interventions); transparency and accountability; and sustainability.

The KIDDP was originally planned to run from 2007–10. However, it was not actually launched until 2009 and implementation will now run into 2012. The KIDDP went through several draft stages before reaching its current form, attracting some debate about whether it has the potential to address the long-term causes of insecurity and underdevelopment in Karamoja (Stites et al:74). Bevan (2008:72) describes what he believes was 'confusion around the nature and status of the KIDDP framework' and notes apparent disagreements between stakeholders involved in the drafting process, with the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) apparently drawing back from discussions in 2006 due to disagreements over voluntary versus forcible disarmament (ibid:74). Bevan also notes that some donors distanced themselves from the programme at one stage because the UPDF was apparently continuing to undertake forced disarmament, thus undermining the spirit and implementation of the KIDDP. The latest version of the KIDDP was approved by the cabinet in September 2007 and contained no mention of forcible disarmament, attributable, Bevan thinks, to 'widespread domestic and international criticism' (ibid:77).

Various other commentators have also put forward their views regarding the KIDDP. Bayne (2007:8) sees the KIDDP as having had the potential to be a step forward due to its integrated approach to insecurity and development, but ultimately finds it undermined by the tactics of the UPDF. Stites et al (2007b:67) report that one widespread criticism of the draft KIDDP was its failure to 'sequence development interventions with disarmament activities', thereby failing to give adequate time for development successes to be achieved and to serve as an incentive for people to hand over their weapons. In an analysis of an earlier draft (2007:25), Human Rights Watch reaches much the same conclusion.

Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP) provides the central national framework for development interventions. It counts ending cattle rustling as one of its specific objectives and states that the government will support peacebuilding initiatives towards that aim (Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development [MFPED] 2004:130). More generally, the PEAP seeks to restore security, promote sustainable growth, aid human development and use public resources effectively. The KIDDP directly draws on the PEAP through the use of two of its outcome indicators to measure progress: the number of cattle rustling incidents and the number of small arms decommissioned (OPM, 2008:53). The PEAP is currently being phased out and in 2010 will be replaced by a National Development Plan (NDP).

With respect to cattle rustling, Government forces have sometimes been blamed for failing to recover stolen livestock (FEWS NET, 2005:15). In 2002, the government attempted to introduce the compulsory branding of all livestock. FEWS NET views this as a good measure, in theory, to aid the recovery of stolen herds but notes that, due to suspicion from many Karamojong, and a lack of resources, it was not effective (ibid:49).

The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan for Northern Uganda (PRDP) was announced by the Government of Uganda in 2007 and envisages rapid development catch-up in Northern Uganda, including the Karamoja region. It aims to 'consolidate state authority' and revitalise the economy (MFPED, 2007:6). The PRDP is a three-year programme that identifies Karamoja as a region in a state of 'lawlessness and underdevelopment' (Government of Uganda [GoU], 2007:vii). After many delays it was officially launched in 2009 and implementation will now run into 2012. The PRDP lists fourteen priority programmes agreed by the districts' leadership for the region, including facilitation of peace agreement initiatives; police enhancement; prisons enhancement; rationalisation of auxiliary forces; judicial services enhancement; enhancing local government; emergency assistance; return and resettlement of IDPs; community empowerment and recovery; production and marketing; infrastructure rehabilitation; environment and natural resource management; public information, education and communication sensitisation; and counselling, amnesty, demobilisation and reintegration (ibid:viii).

The Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF) seeks to empower communities in the North of Uganda to catch up with the rest of the country in terms of their relative development. In Karamoja the fund, which comes largely from the World Bank, focuses on a Youth Opportunities Programme and the Water and Community Development Initiatives (OPM, 2008:45). NUSAF has now moved in to its second phase, NUSAF II.

Opinions vary regarding the scope and impact of interventions in the region. Kaduuli (2008:6) suggests that some Karamojong view government officials and development partners as 'rural tourists' who appear for short meetings before retreating back to towns and mission compounds. Stites et al (2007:6) agree that 'Karamoja receives little attention from international donors, agencies and organisations in comparison to the north-central region of the country'. This contrasts with Muhereza who believes 'numerous organisations... have pumped in resources to develop these areas with very little impact' (1999:6).

The livelihoods debate

One dilemma confronting governments with regard to pastoralist regions is how to manage the issue of land. Halderman et al (2002:44) have argued that the failure to implement appropriate and effective 'land tenure policies and laws' in pastoralist areas has created a problem with regard to dry season grazing areas. For Oxfam, an undue focus on policies which promote settled agriculture represents a failure to understand the rationale for nomadic pastoralism (2002:20). FEWS NET (2005:15) report that pastoralist groups generally feel their needs are not represented by central development planning and that, as the state considers pastoralism a non-viable economic activity, the only option presented to them is modernisation in the form of ranching, privatisation of rangelands and nationalisation of resources. Oxfam (2008:18) quotes the Chief Administrator in Kotido District as telling the Jie pastoralists that settling down is the answer as they will 'think of improving the environment instead of destroying it'. Stites et al (2007a:30), in their study of Bokora County, strongly called on the government to recognise 'pastoral transhumance' as the appropriate livelihood strategy for the ecosystem of Karamoja and to therefore drop the promotion of a sedentary, agriculturalist lifestyle.

The 1980 famine in Karamoja represented one of the worst examples of failed governance and economic and political isolation, according to Gray (2000:410). She suggests that Kampala elected to ignore the famine, perhaps in the hope that the famine would prove to be a 'final solution' to the region's problems (ibid:410). Gray argues that to ensure the survival of the pastoralists, the government should protect herds as a national resource, improve veterinary services and recognise that intensified agriculture is not an option in North Eastern Uganda (ibid:413). UNDP (2007:108) also states that the climate of the region is 'not conducive to sedentary arable/dairy farming.'

In line with the arguments that pastoralism represents the most viable livelihood option in the region, various papers have called on the government to strengthen systems for the protection and management of livestock. Stites et al (2007a:30) have argued that a key government provision should be the training of community-based animal health workers who can be based at *kraals* and *manyattas* and who would be able to move with herds.

Traditional land management structures are intended to keep environmental pressures in check, for example by reserving wetlands for dry season grazing. Government policies on natural resources such as the Land Sector Strategic Plan of 2001 aim to improve land services and strengthen land rights, and places emphasis on privatisation and sedentary development, rather than on the interests of mobile pastoralists (FEWS NET, 2005:27). Forestry policies have also been criticised for denying access to the Karamojong, who sell wood for their livelihoods during times of resource scarcity.

As the above demonstrates, the debate around how to ensure 'livelihoods' in Karamoja is controversial. Some people are of the view that traditional pastoralist livelihoods should be supported as much as possible, since they are the most viable form of livelihood in environments such as Karamoja and have a strong cultural history, without being innately violent. Others argue that a more peaceful and prosperous model for the development of Karamoja would support alternative forms of livelihoods, which are not so closely linked to cattle rustling or vulnerability to changes in climate.

OCHA (2008c:4), in a summary of a 2008 Oxfam report, argues that 'pastoralism feeds Africa'. The summary states that Ugandan pastoralists own 55% of the country's livestock and provide meat, milk, milk products, hides and skins to local markets and for export. Although no specific reference is made to Karamoja, this report suggests that support to the pastoralist way of life would have benefits for the whole country. On the other hand, the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN, 2007:3) believes that moves to reduce dependency on livestock and livestock products could be a way of 'lessening the instances of raids'. The Karamoja Private Sector Development Promotion Centre (KPSDPC) also sees the promotion of alternative livelihoods as a means to encourage people not to engage in cattle rustling and to diversify economic activity in the region (OPM, 2008:50). They provide support for 'beekeeping, mushroom growing, stabilised block technology, gum-arabic and aloe development, post-harvest technology, metal fabrication, and mineral identification and processing' (ibid:50). After it was found that gums grown in the region were of sufficient quality for the American market, the gum-arabic project received support from the country office of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) and the Presidential Initiative on Karamoja (ibid:41).

The UNDP's programme 'Building Sustainable Peace and Development in Karamoja' also seeks to promote economic activities other than pastoralism. UNDP supports a set of labour-based community projects to employ local residents. In this way, UNDP also hopes to foster community ownership of development interventions. The KIDDP prioritises the development of the energy and mineral sector in Karamoja as a means by which to uplift the region economically. It proposes connection to the national electricity grid and a series of 'Artisanal Small-Scale Mining' projects, to support alternative livelihoods (OPM, 2008:39).

Switzer and Mason (2006:1) make the point that livelihood strategies should be demand-driven and integrated into existing local development plans. They see resource access rights as key, as well as expanding the range of available livelihood options; reinforcing the 'synergistic relationship' between different land users; strengthening community capacity to resist ecological shocks; reinforcing traditional and administrative dispute resolution mechanisms; promoting access to markets; and ensuring cross-border harmonisation (ibid:4).

Early warning and coping mechanisms

Official drought early-warning systems used to be hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries (MAAIF) but these are no longer operational, a symptom of the lack of drought-preparedness at the national level. Traditional early-warning indicators cited by respondents to the 2005 FEWS NET survey include: northerly winds indicate drought; rainbows appearing frequently indicate the end of the rains; rain coming from the south marks a good year ahead; the presence of large wild game precedes a drought; and tamarind trees bearing fruit means a bad year ahead.

In drought periods families may only eat once a day, and sometimes not at all. Diets will be composed of fruit and wild vegetables, people will migrate to the towns and livestock have to be taken long distances to find pasture. Coping strategies uncovered in the same survey include searching for casual labour in towns, sale of charcoal (this has, though, led to the disappearance of many trees and large bushes on the plains and lower hill slopes [Quam, 1996:2]), hunter-gathering of wild foods, sale of livestock, brick making, brewing local liquor and raiding other clans. Mwaura (2005:2) argues that these types of coping mechanisms have been undermined by an increasing emphasis on individual rather than communal property rights, which has led to increasing restrictions on population movement and grazing rights and has limited access to water and other productive resources. Some communities also access food from NGOs or UN agencies, one example of this being a WFP initiative that gave girls enrolled in universal primary education (UPE) take-home rations to promote female education (ibid:21).

Humanitarian emergencies

The 2007 floods in North Eastern Uganda provide a recent example of a climate-induced humanitarian emergency in Karamoja. A CEWARN brief from the same year (2007:2) indicates that Kaabong district was experiencing a famine prior to the floods. Their onset seriously hampered food distribution efforts as bridges linking Karamoja to Mbale collapsed and roads became impassable. A further grave side effect to the flooding (which CEWARN attributes to climate change) was the spread of contagious livestock diseases.

According to Bevan, natural shocks such as disease and drought have always been present in Karamoja but it is the influence of external shocks – particularly land reallocation, increased firepower and minimal state security – that has pushed an ‘already fragile pastoral system out of equilibrium’ (Bevan, 2008:21). In 2008, the Red Cross (2008:2) estimated that 700,000 people in Karamoja were chronically food insecure due to three consecutive poor harvests; depleted food stocks; poor livestock terms of trade in relation to high cereal prices (decreased purchasing power); and a generally declining resource base for agro-pastoralism. Also in 2008, OCHA reported that three consecutive years of extended dry spells had led to a humanitarian emergency, in which planting had been delayed and in many areas reduced. This combined with the decimation of much livestock by rinderpest and Contagious Bovine Pleuropneumonia (CBPP) and an outbreak of crop fungus, locked people into a ‘vicious downward spiral’ resulting in elevated food insecurity, higher malnutrition rates and an increase in morbidity (ibid:2). Krummacher (Krause and Kagan, 2008:9) also believes that there have been more frequent and severe livelihood shocks in Karamoja in recent years. He has highlighted new approaches by humanitarian agencies in preparing for and managing drought, using local knowledge and practices, including a pilot scheme called the Pastoralist Field School (ibid).

3

Small arms control, supply and demand

The role of small arms in Karamoja

MWAURA (2005:2) defines the state as having two key roles in Karamoja: the provision of security to pastoral communities and support to pastoral livelihoods. As long as the state fails to fulfil these roles, Mwaura argues, self-armament or joining informal militia groups is a rational approach to dealing with conflict and insecurity (ibid:5). According to Mwaura, despite periodic state interventions, pastoral communities have historically largely fended for themselves, making the gun a key means of protection and a livelihoods asset (Mwaura, 2005:2). Bevan (2008:16) believes that small arms are often the only source of security for Karamojong groups due to the lack of adequate security service provision by the state. However, he sees guns as playing as much of an offensive role as a defensive one and comprising the 'greatest source of violence-induced mortality and morbidity' (2008:17).

Mirzeler and Young subscribe to the theory that small arms proliferation has undermined both spiritual sanctions and traditional restraints against violence. They cite the Karamojong belief that the spear's power came from the soul of the iron ore of the sacred Mount Toror, whereas the gun has no such spiritual meaning (2000:409).

FEWS NET (2005:10) believes that the high fatality rates associated with commercial raiding are the result of a shift from the use of *amatida* guns, sticks, spears and bows and arrows to modern automatic weaponry. Knighton (2003:432, 436) believes that the use of more advanced weapons has had no real impact on the pattern of raiding, although the outcomes may have been altered. Eaton (2008a:105) also questions the assumption that firearms have been the major agent of change in the region, arguing that as the spear is a silent weapon, raiders carrying spears who were able to infiltrate the *kraals* would be more effective.

Gray (2000:412) notes that the Ugandan public perceive the Karamojong to be 'cowboys' who should be disarmed and educated in alternative livelihoods and their 'rights and responsibilities' as Ugandans. Knighton's view, in contrast, is that use of the gun should be seen as a necessary instrument to maintain Karamojong 'autonomy' (Knighton, 2003:450).

Sources of small arms supplies

A number of writers point to the raid on the Moroto barracks by the Matheniko in 1979 as the key moment in the proliferation of small arms in Karamoja. An estimated 60,000 state-owned weapons entered illicit circulation and the uneven distribution of these arms between groups in Karamoja gave some a strategic advantage over others

(Bevan, 2008:26). Gray (2000:411) highlights the same raid as marking a shift to state-of-the-art automatic weapons, leading to an upsurge in intra-tribal raiding.

Bevan (2008:17) undertook detailed research on the sources of small arms and ammunition in Karamoja and identified the main sources of weapons as South Sudan, the illegal domestic markets and members of Uganda's security forces. Ammunition (7.62 x 39 mm rounds) was found to come predominantly from Chinese factories (194 out of the 438 rounds surveyed coming from one factory in particular), with most other rounds from Luwero Industries in Uganda and from Russia (ibid:47). Bevan cites Sudan as the main supply route for arms and ammunition, which pass into Uganda via the Toposa clans and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA). The weapons trade was also reported to involve the Local Defence Units (LDUs) in Northern Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (ibid:50). Based on ammunition data collected in 2006, Bevan reported (in 2008) that there was a clear case to suggest the illicit transfer of ammunition from members of Uganda's military and auxiliary forces to the Karamojong, due to stocks of ammunition found in Karamoja matching closely to those of the state armed forces (ibid:52). He also pointed to evidence that a certain type of poor quality Ugandan-manufactured ammunition, which had been criticised by some members of the security forces, appeared to be circulating among the Karamojong, suggesting that the state forces may have been 'off-loading' this ammunition (ibid:53).

Mutengesa and Hendrickson (2008:46) believe that the intensity of conflict is closely related to the supply of cheap arms (although they differ with Bevan on the actual cost). In March 2007 they estimated the cost of an AK-47 at the equivalent of \$57, compared to Bevan's estimate of \$250 at around the same time (Bevan, 2008). According to Bevan, (2008:51), previous periods of intensive disarmament saw a rise in arms prices. However, according to a focus group in Moroto, the cost of arms has apparently decreased since the 2006–07 disarmament exercise, suggesting a possible rise in supply.

Disarmament programmes

Government-led disarmament initiatives took place in 1945, 1953, 1954, 1960, 1964, 1984, 1987, 2001 and 2006–07. According to Bevan, none of these achieved a reduction in armed violence in the region (Bevan, 2008:54). The 2001 programme appeared to gain the support of some Karamojong with an estimated 44% of Bokora weapons voluntarily surrendered, as well as 27% of the Jie's and 20% of the Dodoth's. However, this programme ultimately failed as the UPDF became increasingly forceful in their methods of disarmament, alienating many communities before finally departing rapidly from the area in 2002 due to renewed LRA attacks. Sabala concludes that the 2001 voluntary disarmament did not progress as anticipated due to the lack of parallel programmes in Kenya and Sudan and the LRA insurgencies in Teso (ibid:29). Subsequently those ethnic groups who had disarmed the least, and the Pokot from Kenya, launched raids on the relatively defenceless groups who had given up their arms. The Pokot's involvement demonstrates the problems of a lack of cross-border co-ordination on disarmament.

The Kotido Peace Initiative (KOPEIN) was heavily involved with the 2001–02 voluntary disarmament process, working in close collaboration with the members of the Kotido District Security Committee and running sensitisation sessions in *kraals* (Longole, 2007:2). Following the withdrawal of the UPDF and the subsequent security vacuum, KOPEIN became a target for attacks as local communities deemed them to have collaborated with the UPDF (ibid:3).

A study of Bokora County provides a further example of the negative effects of uneven disarmament (Stites et al, 2007:7). The Bokora gave up large numbers of weapons in the 2001–02 disarmament programme and were subsequently subjected to intensified raids from the Matheniko and Jie. As a result the study called for a more uniform

approach to disarmament, to be carried out in a transparent manner with detained weapons catalogued and destroyed (ibid:30), and with clear links to development programmes.

Dolan and Okello (2007:7) also warn of the risk that uneven disarmament can create incentives for violence. Knighton (2003:449) believes that part of the reason for the hostile reaction to recent disarmament attempts is that the UPDF are seen as 'an old enemy unworthy of respect'. He writes that 'instead of [providing] protection, the army has itself been one of the major perpetrators of violence among the Karamojong', and cites revenge and personal gain as their primary motives (ibid:446).

The next significant phase of disarmament began in 2006 and saw the use of 'cordon and search' techniques, which involved surrounding a suspected *kraal* or trading centre until all the people detained within had been searched. Where resistance occurred, it resulted in high loss of human life and property, along with the prolonged detention of those suspected of owning guns (Longole, 2007:3).

There were widespread reports of UPDF abuses during the 2006 disarmament campaign, including reports of an incident at Nagera-Kapus during which, according to the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNOHCHR), 34 people were killed, among them 16 children (Bevan, 2008:57). This has reinforced the existing view amongst Karamojong of the UPDF as an enemy force, and led to allegations of troops of Iteso and Acholi origin targeting Karamojong civilians in revenge for past raids on their communities. The Karamojong have fought back against these attacks, causing the death of 16 soldiers in one incident in October 2006 (ibid:60).

Bevan sees this phase of military-led, forced disarmament as having been launched irrespective of the KIDDP and believes it has served to destabilise the situation even further due to extrajudicial killings and, in some cases, torture of the Karamojong (2008:17). Bevan's report suggests that this has impeded implementation of the KIDDP, and served to undermine the principle of 'integrated security'. It also ignores the call from the Karamojong for greater involvement in decisions concerning the defence of their communities and in community policing (ibid). Otim (2006:3) reports CEWARN field monitors stating that the KIDDP is being undermined by forceful 'cordon and search' disarmament. The UNOHCHR (2007:29) argues that new economic coping mechanisms must be made available to those that have given up their weapons.

Perhaps the most common type of research conclusion regarding the effectiveness of the disarmament programmes is given by the Conflict, Security and Development Group (CSDG) at King's College London: 'No end seems likely to the long-standing insecurity in the Karamoja region, in spite (or perhaps because of) the intensification by the government of efforts to disarm the armed pastoralists forcefully' (Mutengesa and Hendrickson, 2008:46). Knighton (2003:449) has argued that 'there is little difference in the bellicose approach of the Karamojong to anyone who would remove their freedoms or threaten their cattle holdings and in the willingness of state forces to use brutality as a quite effective means of imposing their presence'. Knighton's concept of the 'state as raider' sees the government trying to implement territorial sovereignty in a region where land tends to be communal. He concludes that disarmament actually reinforces the desire for autonomy, due to abuses of power by security forces. However, CEWARN (2007:11) report that forceful disarmament may at least have resulted in a change in attitudes towards carrying illegal arms, due to the fear of detection by the UPDF.

In 2007, KOPEIN identified the following challenges to the disarmament process: persistent insecurity; continuous arms flow; lack of active involvement of Karamoja communities; lack of parallel disarmament efforts in Sudan and Kenya; and the failure to adopt an holistic approach (Longole:4). Furthermore, KOPEIN highlighted that future programmes must involve transparency by the UPDF to re-build trust after

stories emerged of soldiers raiding cattle themselves (ibid:5). CEWARN (2006:3) reported the use of helicopter gunships against warriors in 2006 and said that development partners were forced to suspend their programmes on safety grounds. This, combined with the deaths of UPDF soldiers and civilians, led CEWARN monitors to call for a suspension of disarmament by force. Captain Agaba of the UPDF (2007:6) suggested in late 2007 that the disarmament campaign had been a success, with 9,763 guns having been voluntarily surrendered at that time.

Despite these issues, Halderman et al (2002) note that the Karamojong are considered loyal supporters of President Museveni, with groups in neighbouring regions suggesting that the government has either armed or failed to disarm pastoralists for that reason. Linked to this is the Oxfam (2002:20) belief that the National Resistance Movement (NRM) has gone further than any other previous government in seeking to address the 'Karamojong problem' and bring Karamoja into the 'national fabric'.

Human rights

A 2006 report by the UNOHCHR in Uganda found clear evidence of human rights violations during forced disarmament activities. The UNOHCHR mission found that on 29th October 2006 UPDF soldiers surrounded Lopuyo village as part of a cordon and search operation (2006:2). In the ensuing gunfight, 48 Karamojong (men, women and children) and 30 UPDF soldiers apparently died. The soldiers damaged 166 households and in the aftermath, armed Karamojong looted houses in Kotido town. The UNOHCHR found that these actions by the UPDF were against international human rights law and domestic law (ibid:3). They discovered evidence of 'destruction of property, arbitrary arrests and detentions, torture and ill-treatment, extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions, forced labour and one case of rape'. To address these issues, UNOHCHR recommended strengthening existing civil-military co-ordination centres (CMCCs) and increasing the presence of the UHRC in the region (ibid:9).

A 2007 Human Rights Watch report (2007:3) also alleged serious human rights breaches by the UPDF including 'unlawful killings, torture and ill-treatment, arbitrary detention, and theft and destruction of property'. It stated that civilians detained by the UPDF were subject to severe beatings, violent interrogation, food and water deprivation, and lack of shelter (ibid:4). The report called for an end to impunity for UPDF soldiers in Karamoja and a transparent, impartial system of prosecuting those who commit human rights violations.

4

Governance, security provision, rule of law and access to justice

Local versus traditional government

LOCAL GOVERNMENT, according to FEWS NET (2005:16), is seen as ineffective in terms of service provision and co-operation with traditional governance systems. FEWS NET argues that the customary traditional system has ‘no faith’ in modern public administration systems (ibid:15). Stites et al (2007b:19) discuss the tensions that often exist between local council (LC) ‘leaders’ and elders, due to the former being of a lower status in the community than the latter, creating a ‘fragmented and inefficient system of power’. Yet FEWS NET notes that traditional governance systems are themselves weakening as the power of the elders is diminished (2008). Mirzeler and Young (2000:425) also stressed that an increasing number of educated young Karamojong have been entering local government service or occupying posts in Kampala, providing important ‘intermediary links’.

Akonyu (2005:25) seemingly highlighted another problem with local leadership in the region when he urged local government leaders to ‘put aside their personal interests’ and work for the people of Karamoja.

Tensions between traditional and formal justice

Muherza et al (2008:1) argue that formal justice systems have been largely ineffective in Karamoja due to the challenges posed by ‘significant structural, financial and logistical constraints and insecurity due to armed conflicts’. In this context the majority of Karamojong who live outside towns (almost 95%) rely on traditional systems (ibid:1). Traditional justice institutions such as the *akiriket*, or sacred assembly, consist of elders, who decide on declarations of war and peace and the movement of herds, in consultation with the community and seers. The elders’ orders are then carried out by the *karachuna*, or male youth (Mutengesa and Hendrickson, 2008:55). Muherza et al (ibid), who have produced perhaps the most comprehensive study on access to justice and the administration of law and order in Karamoja, argue that such traditional justice institutions should be streamlined into the national system. They suggest that in the current situation the justice needs of the Karamojong are not adequately served by either the formal or traditional systems. In particular there are concerns that some of the traditional rulings ‘bordered on criminality’ as they were contrary to the fundamental principles of the laws of Uganda (ibid:1).

Muhereza et al suggest that one of the main areas of difference between traditional and formal systems is in relation to the defence of individual rights. A central tenet of the traditional system is the pursuit of social justice, and the recognition that the rights of the collective, rather than those of the individual, are central to the traditional system. Hence the rights of an individual are only respected to the extent that they don't impact on social justice, 'where social justice is defined by the common needs of furthering the survival of the community' (ibid:83). For example, under the traditional justice a *kraal* member cannot sell a bull if it is thought its sale would 'undermine the survival of the collective' (ibid:83).

FEWS NET (2005:16) argue that a tension exists between customary and formal mechanisms of conflict management and justice, which leads to discrepancies in terms of the content, procedure and product of conflict management processes. FEWS NET also point to confusion surrounding which justice system to use in the event of a raid, theft or other violent incident. It has been argued that some people in the region view the modern criminal justice system as lenient to criminals and prefer traditional practices that are seen as participatory and fair, but which are not codified (Dolan and Okello, 2007:9). According to Oxfam (2002:28), modern justice systems are sometimes seen as inappropriate by the Karamojong, who might find it 'inconceivable' to give evidence against a fellow Karamojong before a 'foreign' court (ibid:29).

Muhereza et al (2008:84) express concern that the traditional system may be at risk due to the increasing difficulty faced by the elders in punishing the *karachuna*, or male youth. Mutengesha and Hendrickson note that in recent years the balance of power has shifted towards the *karachuna* who, with their modern weapons, view themselves as 'independent agents' and not just implementers of the community's will (2008:55). Further concerns include the risk of 'double jeopardy' in a dual justice system; lower standards of proof in the traditional setting; the threat of mob justice when formal rulings are contrary to the traditional; collective punishment for criminals' communities; and the preference for blood compensation (Muhereza et al, 2008).

In order to build 'synergies' between formal and traditional justice systems, Muhereza et al suggest that support should be given for better documentation of traditional justice practices (ibid:166). Other recommendations include providing training for Karamojong elders on the functions of the formal justice system and training for legal aid service providers on the traditional justice system; ensuring justice, law and order sector (JLOS) actors in Karamoja are able to communicate in the local language; and pressing the government to come out openly in support of traditional courts (ibid).

The extent to which the elders' power has diminished has, however, been disputed. FEWS NET (2005:16) believes that elders are still capable of influencing decisions, particularly in 'enforcing traditional punishments such as *ameto*' to preserve inter-clan peace agreements. Knighton (2002:26) suggests that the *akiriket* still functions as it did 30 years ago, and anticipates that the 'persistence of culture held dear will endure much longer'. He also sees the *akiriket* as retaining some control over gun usage as an instrument to maintain the autonomy of the Karamojong (ibid).

Law and order and security institutions

Muhereza et al (2008:96) suggest that Karamojong communities are generally closed to outsiders, making the job of the police in the region particularly difficult. Misunderstandings regarding, or resistance to, the role of the police also present problems. Local people apparently lose faith in the formal system when a suspect is released on police bond or a suspect is acquitted (ibid:97). Karamojong are willing to turn over a suspect who has been found guilty by traditional methods, but if a witness then gives evidence against the accused they become responsible for his or her suffering and may even become a target for reprisals (ibid:98).

Mutengesa and Hendrickson (2008:50) point out that with a 2008 police-to-population ratio of 1:7,220 in the districts of Moroto, Nakapiripirit and Kotido, compared to a national average ratio of 1:1,866, Karamoja is the worst-served region in Uganda in terms of policing. According to the authors, this means that traditional decision-making structures have remained in place.

OCHA reported in 2008 that there were, on average, 15 police officers per sub-county in the Karamoja region, and that no sub-county had child protection systems in place or functional service delivery systems for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). The police have since been seeking to increase their presence and capacity, including with regard to child protection, through the KIDDP and the Re-Establishment of Law and Order in Karamoja (RELOKA) programme. However, the capacity of the police remains curtailed outside of the towns. As Bevan pointed out in 2008, the police in Karamoja have primarily been devoted to protecting towns and commerce from acts of aggression, which rendered them unable to engage in pastoral disputes. This was compounded by the fact that they had very few vehicles in operation (2008:32). Bevan argued that this resulted in an urban-pastoral security provision divide, where poorly-funded local community-based organisations (CBOs) were often left to mediate disputes and thefts which, if ignored, could lead to retaliation. Bevan (ibid:33) suggests that investment in a police force capable of engaging in negotiation and mediation would address the sources of much armed violence in the region, instead of merely attempting to contain the aftermath.

Strengthening law and order institutions is a key component of the KIDDP. The plan aims to 'enhance the capacity of the state to restore justice, law and order in Karamoja' (OPM, 2008:xviii). Strategies to achieve this include establishing a Special Police Constabulary (SPC) under the control of Uganda Police, which will relieve the UPDF of law and order functions and the associated risks of human rights abuse (ibid:72). It is envisaged that *karachunas* and former warriors would be eligible for recruitment into this force and elders would be involved in selections. The Karamoja SPCs would be non-transferable from the sub-counties from which they are recruited, and would come under the command of the Uganda Police, ensuring that they are providing security to their own people. This proposal is in line with the 2004 PEAP commitment to work with community groups to address the problem of cattle-rustling (MFPED, 2004:104).

The KIDDP also calls for improvements to the strength and efficiency of the judiciary, the Directorate of Public Prosecution and the Prisons' Department in Karamoja (ibid:73). Specific interventions planned in this area include establishing a police post in every sub-county; construction of police barracks in Abim and Kaabong; training for Local Administration Police; training for paralegals to support community policing; designating a resident High Court judge to Moroto; piloting mobile courts; recruitment of more judicial officers in the region; construction of a permanent detention centre at Namalu, Nakapiripirit; improvement of Prisons' Department's transport facilities; and moves to ensure the proper welfare of prisoners and detainees (ibid:86-90).

Dolan and Okello (2007:4) question the PRDP's description of Karamoja as a law and order problem given that government interventions are highly militarised and imply a full-blown conflict. According to Mutengesa and Hendrickson, as the elders' control has declined, the government has come to see the *karachuna* as an independent militia with the capacity to carry out attacks against state forces (2008:56).

KOPEIN sees the maintenance of law and order as the basis for any meaningful disarmament as it is crucial to deny raiders the chance to benefit from arms they have refused to surrender (Longole, 2007:5). They suggest the establishment of a community-based security system that would operate with the assistance of elders. This is, in part, due to the impracticality of regular security forces guarding such a large region.

Another security reform suggested by KOPEIN is to bring cattle markets under tighter control to make raided cattle difficult to sell (ibid:6).

Another potential response to insecurity that is addressed in the literature is the protection of livestock by the UPDF. According to Stites et al (2007:25), in Bokora County there appeared to be recognition that disarmed communities required livestock protection from the UPDF, although this would be difficult to maintain during seasonal migrations. The UNOHCHR (2007:3) saw an improvement in UPDF confidence-building measures and civil-military relations from April to August 2007. It noted the increase in the number of protected *kraals* and the establishment of communal grazing areas, both important steps in convincing Karamojong that it was safe to give up their guns. The UPDF are instructed in the KIDDP to improve collaboration with local communities and provide an environment in which human rights are respected (OPM, 2008:63).

In the past, attempts have been made to bolster security in Karamoja through the use of 'quasi-formal security arrangements' (Mkutu, 2006:53) such as vigilantes, Anti-Stock Theft Units (ASTUs), LDUs and militias. Some of these groups are – to various degrees – under the control of the government.

In 1992, Moroto District Council supported the creation and arming of a local community security force recruited from local warriors, known as 'The Vigilantes'. These groups were initially supported by NGOs and churches and were given government support when President Museveni put them under the authority of the UPDF. Initially 'The Vigilantes' had some success in reducing the levels of insecurity as cattle raiding and road incidents fell. However, they were rarely paid and in the ensuing years many returned to cattle raiding, warriorhood and banditry (ibid:54). During the 2001 disarmament programme, the government created LDUs and recruited some of the former vigilantes into these new units. However, the army tended to use them as a reserve force in fighting the LRA, and they did not end up providing community protection, as initially envisaged.

There was no clear policy regarding whether the responsibility for LDUs lay with the police or the army, and they were seen to be under only loose control (ibid). Nonetheless, according to FEWS NET, in certain places they were crucial in helping to maintain law and order and in recovering stolen animals (2008:50). FEWS NET concludes that strengthening community policing could be the single most effective intervention in restoring Karamojong confidence in state government (ibid:52). Interestingly, the use of LDUs does not appear in the final draft of the KIDDP, although mentions of them are made in earlier versions, suggesting that there may have been a change of government policy.

5

Levels and forms of armed violence

Levels of violence

A SMALL ARMS SURVEY REPORT BY BEVAN (2008:16) argues that Karamoja is one of the most violent regions in the world, with a small arms death rate of nearly 60 per 100,000 of the population. CEWARN data shows that between July 2003 and August 2008 there were 1,665 violent incidents, 2,841 human deaths and a net total of 189,821 livestock raided (minus those recovered) in the Ugandan section of the Karamoja cluster (CEWARN website, February 2009). OCHA reported that in the first half of 2008 there was a general increase in security incidents but that road ambushes declined sharply, with no attacks on humanitarian vehicles (OCHA, 2008b:4).

A key finding of Halderman et al (2002:2) is that conflict in Karamoja is characterised by 'peaks and valleys' and is by no means 'steady and unrelenting'. They suggest a monitoring system to determine whether emerging tensions are likely to turn violent. Eaton (2008a:101) finds that peace is more likely during periods of drought, throwing into question the presumed link between resource scarcity and violence. However, statistics from years of severe drought 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2004 actually indicate increased conflict during these periods (FEWS NET, 2005:17). On the other hand, according to FEWS NET, years when the climate is favourable may be marked by ceasefires, inter-clan socialising, traditional ceremonies and the peaceful reversal of stock decline through friendships and marriage (ibid:18).

Captain Agaba of the UPDF (2007:8) observed relative peace during the dry season, but noted that during the rainy spell vegetation would grow, making it easier for raiders to conceal themselves and meaning that raided cows would raise less dust as they were taken. Furthermore military vehicles, which could normally give chase, got stuck in waterlogged terrain. Otim (2004:5), analysed a period between July 2003 and March 2004, and noted a strong correlation between a rise in environmental pressures and what he calls 'triggering behaviour', such as an increase in male migration, traditional forecasting and pre-raid blessing. Otim believes that this combination of factors may in turn explain the increase in raiding and casualties which was experienced at this time (ibid:5).

The most vulnerable populations tend to be those living along the boundaries between different groups, as raiders often come from distant areas to attack but retaliations are indiscriminate and may target the nearest group associated with the raiders (Halderman et al, 2002:39). As a result Halderman et al (ibid) report that groups living on boundary areas tend to be the strongest advocates for peacebuilding efforts.

Sources and forms of armed violence

FEWS NET (2005) interviewees identified the most contested resources in Karamoja as land, livestock and water. Competition over these resources was said to be a key cause of conflict, as a reduction in the availability of resources in one region forces clans to move out of their territory, resulting in border areas becoming flash points (ibid:23). Halderman et al's interviewees (2002:41) also highlighted competition for scarce resources, in particular grazing land and water, as the single most important factor needing to be addressed by peacebuilding and development interventions.

The FEWS NET study (2005:6) is based on the premise that resource scarcity is central to conflict in the Karamoja cluster and concludes that there are 'direct links between the changing climatic conditions, natural resource and livelihoods shrinkage and conflict in the cluster. Drastic change in climate affects the availability of resources, which leads to food deficits, and food insecure populations resort to conflict as a coping strategy against food shortage' (ibid:6). The situation has apparently been exacerbated by a decline in pastures available during emergencies, resulting in part from an increased incidence of drought and a rise in the prevalence of small arms. The frequency of drought has also forced certain groups of pastoralists to leave their natural territory in search of grazing. This change, argues FEWS NET, combined with the restriction of access and migration to some traditional dry season grazing areas (game reserves, large-scale agriculture, forest reserves and private land purchases have all restricted movement), has aggravated conflict (ibid:10).

Raiding also contributes to armed conflict. The purpose of attacks is generally thought to have shifted in recent years, with a rise in commercial raiding for 'immediate profit' as opposed to the traditional practice of stealing cattle to boost your own herd and thus contribute to the entire community (Bevan, 2008:30).

Stites et al (2007b:5) characterise commercial raiding as carried out by small groups without communal consent, with captured livestock being sold quickly to prevent the animals being traced. They suggest that the practice has come about due to the monetisation of Karamojong society, but they also highlight testimony from raiders who feel they have been forced into stealing by hunger and desperation (ibid:61). Interviews conducted by Mkutu (2006:66) raise the possibility that some raiders are conducting ambushes to pay their school fees. FEWS NET (2005:13) concludes that, in general, 'powerful *kraal* leaders, businessmen, opportunistic gun traffickers, and "warlords"' have taken advantage of the situation to amass huge profits, and urban entrepreneurs are accused of facilitating the sale of raided cattle in markets and even organising the transit of stolen animals (Bevan, 2008:30). However, Knighton is sceptical about the perception that raiding is dominated by 'warlords' (2003:432, 436). Bevan argues that the 'zero-sum' nature of intra-pastoral relations has left certain communities without sufficient livestock to survive, with the net effect of a 'reduction in the opportunity cost' of armed criminal behaviour (2008:28).

FEWS NET (2005:10) looks at the type of pastoralist conflicts within the Karamoja cluster, highlighting intra-clan conflict (between sub-groups within one clan) as the most common. Examples include the Tepeth and Matheniko rivalry and clashes between the Dodoth and Lik. Inter-clan conflicts (between different clans within Karamoja) have become more common and violent since 1987, after the overthrow of the government in 1986, with battles between the Jie and Bokora and between the Pian and the Bokora (ibid). Conflict has also occurred at various times between the Karamojong and ethnic groups/communities living in neighbouring districts of Uganda or across the borders in Kenya, Ethiopia or Sudan.

Jabs (ibid:1510) believes that the lack of central authority in Karamojong sub-tribes, which instead have a 'network of familial and culturally prescribed relationships' across various *manyattas*, with values 'consensual' among the sub-tribes, makes conflict more intractable rather than less. This is because the coveting of cattle inevitably results in conflict.

FEWS NET also highlights the stereotyping of other clans, such as the Bokora referring to the Matheniko as '*ngidwee anakodadoli*' or 'children of beggars', as a source of conflict. It is this type of insult that led Gray to doubt whether the collective identification of the Matheniko, Pian and Bokora as 'Karamojong' is meaningful (2000:405).

Impact of armed conflict

The impact of armed conflict on communities in Karamoja is clear, according to Bevan. In a survey of 337 respondents, 55% listed insecurity as the greatest problem affecting them, with a further 29% specifically stating armed conflict (2008:35). 89% blamed cattle raiders for the violence although the survey does not distinguish between 'traditional' and 'commercial' raids. The same survey indicates that 26% of households had suffered a death or injury in the previous six months with 88% of incidents involving small arms (ibid:37). In a comparative study with other regions of Uganda, Bevan found that the use of small arms was highest in Karamoja. He concludes that there may have been a 'substitution' effect, whereby the proliferation of small arms has meant disputes that would previously have involved fists or a knife are now resolved using guns (ibid). Cattle-raiding was found to account for a large proportion of violence, with the likelihood of resistance and the nature of Karamojong settlements making multiple deaths and injuries common. Bevan used hospital data to show that in 2005 around 530 people were killed as a result of violent incidents, equating to 60 deaths per 100,000 of the population annually (ibid:42). Other impacts of armed violence identified by Bevan include a decline in face-to-face inter-clan meetings (with a negative impact on the potential for dispute resolution) and the disruption of family relations due to men sleeping outside their huts in case of raids (ibid:43). Mirzeler and Young (2000:424) link a surge in beer consumption in Karamoja to increased violence in the region, and use this as further evidence of social fracture.

Armed violence involving the Karamojong has also had a devastating impact on communities living in neighbouring districts. In 2005, Akonyu (2005:4) described the outcomes of raids in neighbouring districts as devastating, citing loss of life, internal displacement, loss of livestock, food insecurity, collapse of social services, family break-up and a growing number of orphans, the spread of HIV/AIDS due to rape and high levels of 'mistrust, tension, fear, trauma, despair, uncertainty and ... poverty'. According to Akonyu, the Teso region has experienced persistent insecurity for over 50 years due to the Teso/Karamoja conflict. This has had a hugely negative social impact, especially in the IDP camps where productivity levels are already low, privacy and dignity are compromised, and theft becomes a coping mechanism (ibid:18).

6

Society and culture

A changing culture?

KNIGHTON (2003:431) finds undeniable evidence of changes in Karamojong culture. He points out that women increasingly wear Ugandan dresses rather than skins and that raiders have been targeting consumer goods as well as cattle, then using the proceeds to buy beer (ibid). Knighton also believes that the alarming trend of raiders raping women has been copied from the UPDF (ibid).

The role of the gun in catalysing change has provoked much debate. The gun used to be restricted to encounters with enemies from outside the ethnic group (as spears were prior to the 1970s), but is now regularly deployed in intra-group disputes (Gray, 2000:408). Guns have also changed the dynamics within families, according to Oxfam's 2002 report, as sons with weapons are less likely to obey their parents, who in the past have been a controlling influence (Oxfam, 2001:32). Eaton (2008a:98) agrees that the nature of raiding is undergoing a transformation but is wary of defaulting to the theory that a peaceful pre-colonial Africa has been destabilised by contact with guns and a monetised economy.

When it comes to the relationship between the gun and Karamojong culture, Knighton accuses many recent papers of 'presentist analysis' which fails to recognise the historical use of the gun at dances and traditional celebrations (2003:432). Indeed he rejects the idea that arms have altered authority structures and suggests that replacing the gun with the 'decency' of Western clothing would 'precipitate [an] unprecedented crisis in culture and identity' (2006:269).

Gray (2000:401) views cattle raiding prior to the arrival of Europeans in the late 19th century as a response by nomadic pastoralists to environmental uncertainty. She quotes a 1998 study by Hendrickson et al which points to the profit motive as the reason behind the more random and violent nature of modern raids, whereas in the past raiding served as a 'pivotal structure' in pastoralism by acting as a buffer against 'personal calamity'. Indeed, it used to be taboo to sell stolen livestock as they would become the safety net for others in times of need. However, as noted above, in modern times raiding has clearly become a means for rapid wealth accumulation (FEWS NET, 2005:13). This is in contrast to powerful traditional cultural reasons for raiding such as paying a high bride price or to enhance 'personal or generational status' and recognition in society (ibid:14; Quam, 1996:1).

According to Jobs, another key area of change has been around the norms governing respect for elders, which have been undermined by modern weapons that do not require extensive training and planning to use (Jobs, 2007:1513). Stites et al (2007:5) discuss the generational age-set system, in which only two generation-sets, elder males in power and juniors who will inherit power, exist. There is no fixed timetable for handing over power and they believe the fact that the last handover was in the 1950s

has further served to frustrate younger males, undermine their respect for traditional authority, and turn them to unauthorised raiding.

At the ACTED conference³ (Knaute and Kagan, 2008:6), Mario Cisternino made the case for 'valves' to allow the culture of Karamoja to sustain itself through enhanced mobility outside of their own territory. He suggested this would counter demographic pressure and enhance positive interrelations. At the same conference Ben Knighton (ibid:6) argued that freedom of movement for cattle was economically and ecologically more sustainable than intensive production. This feeds into Knighton's (2005:22) thesis that the Karamojong are naturally acting as custodians of the land, thus negating the need for 'scientific rangeland management'.

This line of argument falls into the 'tradition versus modernity' debate that still divides many of those who have studied Karamoja. For example Stites et al (2007:31) argue that Karamojong children should not have to wear school uniform as it takes away their right to cultural expression. Furthermore, Knighton (2006:149) calls for orality to be seen as part of a 'pervasive and cohesive' Karamojong culture, and not as a sign of backwardness. He believes literacy is too often used as part of a Western education ideology which imposes 'alien discipline and social control' on nomadic pastoralists (ibid:138). Mirzeler (2007:386) cites Mkutu (2006:310) as arguing that Knighton presents a 'romanticized view of Karamojong religion, cosmology and culture'.

Kagan et al (2008:28) offer a more level critique of current education programmes in Karamoja. They note that the government's UPE programme has not been successfully adapted to meet the educational needs of young Karamojong, who are instead mocked by their elders for their lack of knowledge of pastoralist techniques (ibid:58).

Formal education has also been criticised for separating children from their communities. The ACTED conference praised an alternative education system called Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), which seeks to adapt the curriculum to the needs of Karamojong children who have dropped out of school (Knaute and Kagan, 2008:14). ABEK schools seek to provide a more relevant education, including lessons in livestock management, crop production and peace and security (Kagan et al, 2008:74). Stites et al (2007b:44) found a very high interest in ABEK amongst their respondents but warned against failing to live up to expectations by making unfulfilled promises to people that the programme was coming to their area.

Kagan et al (2008:16) believe a 'resilient mind' is a key characteristic of the Karamojong, with pragmatism and survival instinct meaning that most people are not opposed in principle to change.

Bevan (2008:25) mentions that policies of colonial and post-independence governments have actually forced an increase in mobility due to restricting access to rangelands. This has had the effect of Karamojong communities grazing their cattle close to populations with whom they have no historic relationship or access agreement, thus making raids more likely. Bevan argues that important shifts in Karamojong values include the use of currency and material goods, which had no place in the pastoral barter system but are now essential for survival. As most Karamojong have poor employment prospects, opportunists have taken to hiring impoverished warriors to carry out ambushes on political or economic rivals (ibid:31).

³ The Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED) is a non-governmental organisation with headquarters in Paris. As part of its Karamoja campaign, ACTED has been involved in organising a series of 4 international conferences on issues related to the region. See <http://www.karamoja.eu> for more information.

External attitudes towards the Karamojong

A common attitude towards Karamoja is to treat it as a place that should be made more like the rest of Uganda (Dolan and Okello, 2007:3). This attitude was evident in Idi Amin's directive to change the way the Karamojong dress and, arguably, the promotion of sedentary models of existence by the current government. Halderman et al (2002:45) note that there is a tendency amongst elite Karamojong to accept the negative stereotypes of popular Ugandan rhetoric. A state view comes from Captain Moses Agaba (2007:5) of the UPDF, who argues that the Karamojong are partly responsible for raiding as they regard the act as 'heroic', which ingrains the belief that the cow and the gun go hand in hand. He therefore suggests that 'mental disarmament' is required so that the gun is no longer seen as a symbol of wealth and power (ibid:6). The UHRC (2007:3) also believe that the Karamojong's ownership of arms and their raids on their Ugandan neighbours have been largely provoked by the xenophobic and racist attitudes they experience.

The role of women

The role of women in Karamoja was highlighted at the ACTED conference as an under-researched area, and women were recognised as a potential focus for alternative livelihoods interventions (Knaute and Kagan, 2008:13). Dolan and Okello (ibid:10) have raised the issue of women as unseen instigators of violence, who apply pressure on men to prove their manliness by raiding. The inability of most men to meet this expectation is seen as a source of 'psycho-social problems' which can manifest themselves in domestic violence and substance abuse (ibid:12). Oxfam (2001:24) have argued that women are neglected by their polygamous husbands when cattle are lost and also point out the practice of the brother of a deceased man inheriting his wife. Oxfam also observe that the Karamojong place emphasis on informal schooling which replicates traditional gender roles, with boys taught how to be effective herders and girls learning how to look after the home and family (ibid:28). Educated girls are thought to fetch a lower bride price than uneducated girls, which has the effect of their enrolment dropping off during primary school.

Kipuri and Ridgewell (2008:3) discuss the problems faced by pastoralist women, describing them as experiencing a 'two-fold' discrimination, at the national level and within their own society. The report highlights female genital mutilation, 'bridewealth' and the image of women from pastoralist societies as 'silent and subordinate individuals existing on the margins of an already marginal system' (ibid:28).

Political exclusion is also a concern. Kipuri and Ridgewell (ibid:20) point out that even Uganda's provision for one female MP from each district does not guarantee that a pastoralist or other minority group woman will be elected. They suggest a number of interventions to address this marginalisation such as advocating against negative attitudes towards girls' education; disaggregating data between pastoralists and non-pastoralists and men and women to give a clearer picture of the status quo; and supporting women community leaders to become role models in the region (ibid:29).

Dolan and Okello (2007:4) have serious concerns regarding protection in relation to the outward migration of women and children. This includes the trafficking of children and the forcible round-ups of migrants in Kampala. Kaduuli (2008) expresses concern about operations to remove migrants from the streets, arguing that not enough attention is paid to finding permanent solutions.

Jabs (2007:1498) believes that cultural gender norms now perpetuate conflict and are 'leading to [its] increased intractability'. In 2007, she reported the current bride price to be between 60 and 100 heads of cattle, an amount which, according to focus groups, is difficult to obtain without raiding (ibid:1508). In 2002, Halderman et al estimated the figure at 50–200 heads of cattle, up from around 25 heads of cattle during the previous generation (2002:42), although they had trouble explaining why this inflation has taken place. Furthermore, marriage must be ratified by cows or there is a risk of a woman leaving for another man of higher status and cattle wealth.

7

Capacities for conflict prevention and resolution

THE 2003-04 VERSION OF THE PEAP included national commitments to conflict resolution, in Karamoja specifically through ‘disarmament, arms control, peacebuilding, and development’ (Human Rights Watch, 2007:24). Switzer and Mason (2006:5) believe that successful peacebuilding requires a combination of technical and social interventions such as strengthening trade networks, establishing a political voice for pastoralist groups (in part through civil society) and engaging women in the peace process. They give the example of the ‘Women’s Peace Crusade’ in Karamoja, backed by the African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU/IBAR), which encourages women to take on roles as peace ambassadors to promote dialogue and try to find common bonds to unite conflicting groups (ibid:6). Jabs’ belief that the coveting of cattle inevitably results in conflict leads her to argue that peace interventions must be based on an ‘elicitive’ approach that takes into account the cultural norms that have always defined Karamoja (ibid:1517).

Akonyu (2005:29) identifies specific challenges to peacebuilding in the Teso/Karamoja conflict, including the politicisation of disputes; lack of goodwill and trust between the two parties; and in certain cases language barriers. He also points to the Moroto/Katakwi border dispute as one issue which has the potential to spark further violence (ibid:32). Halderman et al (2002:5) highlight the difficulty for those involved in conflict reduction to ‘predict, locate, and identify and quickly respond’ to violence. Even when it is possible to predict that a retaliatory attack will take place, the desire for surprise and careful planning amongst raiders means that there may be a lengthy gap before it takes place (ibid).

One innovative and cost-effective peacebuilding scheme is run by the Kids League Uganda, which aims to use sport and games to improve the lives of children in Karamoja (Knaute and Kagan, 2008:9). This was discussed at the ACTED-led conference, at which participants identified one of the main challenges for youth groups as balancing the need to learn the traditions of their elders with that of gaining skills necessary to prosper in the modern world. This approach was one of the key ‘concepts’ put forward at the ACTED conference; other concepts highlighted included the importance of strengthening political representation; efforts to rebuild cross-border confidence; giving international organisations an advocacy role; reducing resource overexploitation; and raising the profile of environmental problems caused by climate change (ibid:12).

Minear's (2002:4) study discusses the Pastoral Community Harmonization Initiative (PCHI). This is a conflict-orientated intervention targeting pastoralists who have been provided with veterinary services by the Community-Based Health and Participatory Epidemiology Unit of the AU. In an attempt to build trust, PCHI began with meetings at community level involving all parties affected by conflict in Karamoja. Then vaccines were administered and subsequently livestock management became an important vehicle for peacebuilding.

For Bevan (2008:18), investment in police and the legal system in Karamoja, combined with better roads and infrastructure, would encourage investment into the region and help the development initiatives that are needed to accompany disarmament. Stites et al (2007:28) raise the issue of resettlement provision for Karamojong (especially children) returning from Kampala.

FEWS NET (2005:36) argues that traditional soothsayers and fortune tellers are particularly influential in fanning inter-clan conflict, in part because they give raiders false assurances of protection. The same report argues that women should be involved more in conflict prevention because they are heavily affected by the insecurity, even though some may pressure their husbands to go raiding. FEWS NET lists women-led peace committees, advocacy groups, promotion of agro-pastoralism and encouraging women to join church peace crusades as potential actions. Other peacebuilding initiatives discussed in the paper include recovering stolen cattle; recruitment of vigilantes; peace crusades; identifying and arresting criminals; and the use of civil society (ibid:40–44).

The media can also play a significant role with regards to peace and conflict. Halderman et al (2002:51) suggest that 'inaccurate and biased' reporting by the media contributed to the Karamojong being viewed by many as 'vicious savages', creating an anti-pastoralist bias which delays constructive interaction. Akonyu (2005:27) points out that Karamoja FM radio could potentially be an important tool with which to provide regular security and development updates which could help foster a positive attitude towards change amongst the Karamojong.

Eaton (2008a; 2008b) writes extensively about peacebuilding efforts, believing that a lack of understanding of cattle raiding is central to the poor results of many of them. He believes that too great a focus has been placed on seeking to address factors such as arms proliferation, resource scarcity and commercialisation of raiding. He also criticises what he describes as the 'cynicism, corruption and incompetence' of most NGOs, which he says has seen them become the subject of intense dissatisfaction in Karamojong *kraals* (ibid:92). Eaton also highlights a number of other issues that he believes undermine peacebuilding efforts including the desire of donors to fund 'hot-button' issues; failure to question received wisdom; and the lack of research into understanding the rational decisions behind violence.

Bevan (2007:7) believes that one of the main reasons that there has been so little success in tackling pastoralist conflict is due to the 'enormity with which the problem of pastoral conflict is often depicted.' He argues that an approach that seeks to 'fix failings in the system' rather than replace it would have more chance of success (ibid:7).

According to Eaton, CBOs are often unable to transcend ethnic roots, with many leaders finding it difficult to mediate or restrain hard-line elements due to their own political position within the community (Eaton, 2008b). A further criticism is that people have become tired of workshops that are often held in towns far removed from the conflict and attended by *kraal* leaders but not warriors (ibid:247). In short, Eaton believes that peace work is mainly a source of patronage with few monitoring mechanisms or success stories. He suggests that instead of putting funding towards peace meetings, it should be used to hire well-trained trackers who can help recover stolen cattle, thereby restraining victims and preventing the cycle of retaliation that he views as the critical factor in the continuing violence in Karamoja (ibid:258).

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COVER PHOTO: A pastoralist watches his herd cross a dried up river bed in Moroto District, Karamoja. Unpredictable rains have been a cause of changing movement patterns, leading to higher levels of tension in the region and contributing to outbreaks of conflict.

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