



# Pastoral conflict and small arms:

## The Kenya-Uganda border region



**Kennedy Mkutu**

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# 1

## Introduction

**SOME 500-600 MILLION PEOPLE** live in the arid and semi-arid parts of the world and 30–40 million of them depend entirely on animals for their livelihoods. Of these 30–40 million people, 50–60 percent of them are found in Africa. The Horn of Africa, where arid and semi-arid areas make up 70 percent of the total land area, contains the largest grouping of pastoralists in the world.<sup>1</sup> These areas provide an average of 20 to 30 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the Horn countries. At the local level, as much as 70 percent of cash income is generated from livestock.<sup>2</sup>

All aspects of pastoral social and economic life are ordered in relation to livestock and the environment in which they live. In pastoral societies, cattle hold central value within society and are the basis of association in a complex of social, political and religious institutions. The system depends largely on the availability of water and the distribution, quality of, and access to, pasture. However, pastoralism is under threat. This is due to a range of factors including: weak governance; inadequate land and resource management policies; political and economic marginalisation of pastoral groups; and increasing insecurity, resulting from cattle raiding fuelled by growing access by all sides to small arms and light weapons.<sup>3</sup>

The challenge today is to identify the dynamics of conflict associated with pastoralism in the Horn and to identify potential opportunities for peace-building. This requires an analysis of pastoral communities that are at risk as well as an exploration of the impact of interventions by governmental and non-governmental actors at all levels – local, national, regional and international.

In December 2001, as the first fruits of a wider research programme, the Africa Peace Forum, Saferworld and the University of Bradford published *Pastoralism and conflict in the Horn of Africa*. This report combined a regional overview of factors contributing to conflict involving pastoralists in the Horn with a brief case study of Laikipia, a district in northern Kenya which has been the scene of conflict between pastoralists and ranchers and between pastoralists and the state over pasture and water resources, in which small arms proliferation has played a major part.

Recommendations for action in the December 2001 report centred on the role of the European Union (EU) in helping to address these problems. This second report represents a further extension of our research programme on pastoralism and conflict. It is a detailed study of the dynamics of conflict in the Kenya-Uganda border area.

<sup>1</sup> The term 'pastoralist' is used to describe a person for whom the herding of domestic animals on open bushland is the dominant economic activity. See 'Nomads of the Drought: Fulbe and Wodaabe Nomads Between Power and Marginalization in the Sahel of Burkina Faso and Niger Republic' in *Adaptive Strategies in African Arid Lands*, eds Bolvin, Mette & Manger Leif (Scandinavian Institute of African Studies (SIAS), Uppsala, 1990) p 30.

<sup>2</sup> 'Coping mechanisms and their efficacy in disaster-prone pastoral systems of the Greater Horn of Africa (GHA). Effects and responses of pastoralists and livestock during the 1995–97 drought and the 1997–98 El Nino rains', ILRI/ASARECA, draft.

<sup>3</sup> The phrase 'small arms and light weapons' has been shortened to 'small arms' in the rest of the report.

Research has mainly been conducted in three districts – Moroto and Nakapiripirit in Uganda and West Pokot in Kenya.<sup>4</sup> In addition to extensive use of public records from a wide range of sources, 140 interviews have been conducted. An effort has been made to reflect the ethnic and occupational diversity of the border area. Those interviewed included: members of the different pastoral communities – for example, elders, chiefs, young fighters, women; members of religious bodies, community-based organizations and non-governmental organisations; and government officials and members of the security forces. While this report echoes many of the themes discussed in the first report, it explores them in significantly greater depth and uncovers additional dynamics that were not addressed there.

The report identifies a range of factors that have contributed to growing conflict between the pastoral communities on both sides of the Kenya-Uganda border. The vicious circle of cattle raid/counter-raid has led to dangerously low levels of livestock. Drought has increased (and has been acute since 1999), steadily reducing the amount of pasture and water available. This has provoked greater need for movement and made clashes more likely. Vigilante groups of armed youth have proliferated and the border area has in recent years seen the emergence of local businessmen/warlords, whose economic activities span cattle raiding, small arms sales and drugs and who are at the centre of incipient regional criminal networks linked in turn to wider international networks. Official government structures are often conspicuous by their absence. Where interventions have taken place they have been poorly coordinated and executed, too often taking a narrow definition of security that has focused on more-or-less coercive disarmament without focusing sufficiently on providing viable economic alternatives to those whose livelihoods have become dependent on the gun. This has been demonstrated once again during the forcible disarmament campaign being waged in the Karamoja region by the Ugandan People's Defence Force since February 2002 which has actually led to increased resentment, insecurity and violence and the further weaponisation of communities. Finally, traditional structures of authority within the communities have been gravely weakened – as have some of the cultural restraints upon violence that operated in the past.

The research on which this report is based has confirmed the need for a multi-dimensional approach that addresses the root causes of conflict as well as the symptoms, in which meaningful political and economic incentives are provided for those currently engaged in protracted and violent struggles over scarce resources such as water, pasture and livestock to opt for different survival and livelihood strategies. Without security, sustainable development will be impossible. But without development, security too will prove elusive.

This report directs its recommendations mainly to the Kenyan and Ugandan Governments. It also makes a number of recommendations to donors. Saferworld and its partners have been heavily involved over the past three years in supporting efforts by signatory governments to implement the March 2000 'Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa' ('Nairobi Declaration'). The 'Nairobi Declaration' remains a potentially enabling framework for the kind of multi-dimensional approach that is needed, provided that governments and donors show the necessary commitment.

Part 2 of this report examines the factors that have contributed to conflict involving pastoralists in the Kenya-Uganda border area, including a number of important developments in recent years that are exacerbating this conflict. Part 3 charts the patterns of conflict that have emerged in the border area, ranging from conflict at the local level within and between pastoral communities to the growing regional dimension. It also explores the routes by which small arms flow into and around the

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<sup>4</sup> Information gathered in these districts has been used to make assumptions about other parts of the Uganda-Kenya border. Accordingly, these assumptions should be viewed as tentative in nature.

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border area and the prices that small arms and ammunition can be purchased for. Part 4 reviews the efforts that have been made by a wide range of governmental and non-governmental actors to tackle and manage conflict in the border area. Finally, Part 5 offers some concluding remarks and sets out recommendations for future action by the Kenyan and Ugandan Governments and by donors.



# 2

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## Factors contributing to conflict involving pastoralists in the border area

**PART 2 OF THIS REPORT IS IN FOUR SECTIONS.** The first section provides a brief description of the topography and ethnography of the Kenya-Uganda border area. The second section briefly surveys the historical and cultural background of the pastoral communities of the border area. The third section then describes the deepening political and economic marginalisation of those communities since Kenya and Uganda attained independence in the early 1960s and addresses how and why conflict has become an endemic feature of life in the border area. The final section focuses in more depth on several new factors contributing to conflict in the border area that have hitherto not received much attention: the commercialisation of cattle raiding; the rise of warlords; and changing gender relations within pastoral communities.

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### Topography and ethnography

The Kenya-Uganda border area is a largely arid and semi-arid area and so well suited to pastoralism. It is marked by an escarpment, which is 500 metres above the general plain and runs the entire length of the border. There are numerous passes, which for a long time have provided means of communication between ethnic groups along the border. It is through these passes that cattle raids are frequently carried out. The region is dominated by a number of hill ranges. For example, the Charangani hills that rise to 11,300 feet (3444m) to form the highest non-volcanic point in Kenya: on the Ugandan side, there is Mount Komerimeri. The border as it is today was established in 1926, during the colonial period.

The Kenya-Uganda border runs through the territory of a number of mainly pastoral communities, including the Sebei, Teso, Pokot, Luhya, Turkana and Karimojong. The Ugandan side of the border is known as the Karamoja region, which is divided into three districts: Nakapiripirit, which is largely occupied by a mix of Upe (Ugandan) Pokot and the Pian clan of the Karimojong; and Kotido and Moroto, which are

occupied predominantly by the Jie and Matheniko clans of the Karimojong, respectively. The Kenyan side of the border is divided into West Pokot district, which is occupied mainly by Pokot, and Turkana district, which is occupied mainly by Turkana. At its northernmost point the border adjoins Sudan. At that point, the Ethiopian border is also not far away.

## Historical and cultural background

Livestock ownership by pastoralists has always been a way of life rather than simply an economic activity. The communities along the Kenya-Uganda border are no exception. Traditionally, migration in search of water and pasture has been part of a seasonal pattern of activity. As a rule, herds moved along pre-determined routes each year in search of water and pasture. Sophisticated coping mechanisms developed over the centuries to address crises of scarcity, including diversification into other economic activities such as trading, handcrafts, smuggling and transporting. Traditionally, pastoralism was a labour-intensive process that kept children and young men actively engaged on a full-time basis.

Whenever scarcity or disease depleted a community's livestock, it often sought to replenish numbers through raiding. Cattle raiding has long been central to both the cultural identity and the social, political and economic organisation of pastoral communities in the Kenya-Uganda border area. Traditionally, land was held in forms of 'communal tenure'. It was a common resource whose use was regulated by councils of elders. Use was a matter of constant negotiation and conflict, shaped by changing alliances between different communities. Traditional cattle raiding, while often involving some violence, tended to be small-scale and involve the theft only of a number of the best livestock broadly reflecting the number that had been lost, or which were seen as being needed, by the raiding group. Deaths were few and when they occurred, extra cattle from the killers' family were given to compensate the victim.<sup>1</sup> Those who killed could not re-enter the homestead until they had been ritually cleansed. The livestock stolen usually remained within the raiders' community

Raids took place either at dawn or in the evening. Elders oversaw such raids to ensure that they did not spiral out of control. Raiding was also part of ritual processes by which young men in the community proved that they were ready for manhood. The weapons were spears and bows and arrows. Accumulation of livestock reflected not just growing wealth but increased personal status. Relations between persons were mediated through systems of reciprocal rights and obligations with regard to livestock. Sacrifice of cows as part of religious ceremonies – for example, to communicate with ancestors – was entrenched within all pastoral communities and remains so. Cattle became the key means of paying 'bride price' – that is, the assets to be transferred by the family of the bridegroom to the family of the bride as the means of legitimising a marriage. The need to accumulate for this purpose could also lead to raiding.

Prior to colonial rule, the pastoral societies of the area were dominated by elders who were collectively responsible for the governance of the community. African communities had structures for conflict resolution through councils of elders, traditional courts and peer or age-group supervision, where each individual or group had to meet certain social expectations. For example, in Uganda, among the Karimojong, the elders made important decisions through discussions and debates and solved communal conflicts.<sup>2</sup> While in the field in August 2002, in Pokot, Alale, the elders informed the researcher that all disputes were settled democratically by the council of elders

<sup>1</sup> Former President Daniel Arap Moi of Kenya, who is a pastoralist, once stated: "Traditionally, cattle rustling did not involve killing people". See *Daily Nation*, 18 April 2001. See also Mkutu K 'Banditry, cattle rustling and the proliferation of small arms: The case of Baragoi division of Samburu district' in *Improving human security through the control and management of small arms* (AFPO/IRG, Nairobi, 2000) and Novelli B, *Aspects of Karimojong ethno-sociology* (Kampala, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Quam MD, 'Creating peace in an armed society: Karamoja, Uganda' *African Studies Quarterly* (1, 1, 1996), p 15.

discussing issues under a tree. As noted in an interview by Rev. Kewasis “The Pokots have a governance system based on the council of elders. Among the council of elders, there was always some one or group of people and they came from a particular clan that are highly respected ruling clusters of people. When they want to consult over matters affecting the community they would go to that clan. Roles were divided very distinctively. The elders acted as diviners: they would foretell of impending danger and would make pronouncements on governance issues. For example if a raid was imminent they would urge the taking of cover before any attack.<sup>3</sup>

The elders were responsible for settling disputes, for example, relating to the killing of a person or a dispute over land. The most senior elder would act as the leader and once settled by the elders, the matter was considered closed.

A devastating combination of rinderpest and drought in the 1890s left most pastoral communities in a weak position to resist efforts to impose colonial rule during that decade or to effectively oppose the new authorities in the years that followed. It appears that during the interwar period and immediate post-war period colonial governments in both Uganda and Kenya were able greatly to reduce levels of cattle raiding in the border area. Indeed, the policy was to end raiding entirely. In 1964, a law, shaped by colonial policies, was passed – the Administration of Justice (Karamoja) Act – that reflected continued official concern to prevent the holding of any form of arms by the Karimojong. Section 33 (1) (c) stated: “where three or more persons assemble carrying any weapon any such persons shall be deemed, unless the contrary is proved, to be preparing for taking part in or returning from a cattle raid”. The legislation was largely ineffective. But such heavy-handed and intrusive measures enacted by the colonial authorities generated a deep-rooted mistrust of government by pastoralists on both sides of the border that persists among many of them to this day.

Colonial governments often appeared to be seeking not just to end cattle raiding but pastoralism itself, on the grounds that it was a backward way of life. This contributed to a process of growing marginalisation. In 1945 the District Commissioner for West Suk<sup>4</sup> noted that: “West Suk, after 34 years administration, ranks as one of the most backward districts in Kenya. This is in no way the fault of the tribe who are in character and intelligence the equals of most and superior to many tribes who have passed them in the race, while the country is full of potentialities for development. This lag is attributable solely to the fact that geographically they are, so to speak, on the edge of the world and West Suk has come to be regarded as Cinderella district where nothing much happens and to which no great attention need to be given so long as they behave themselves. This is in consonance with the policy which appears to have been adopted by Government, possibly without fully appreciating the implications, viz. ‘To him that hath shall be given.’ The inevitable result is that those districts which are called ‘advanced’ because they are rich are given [an] ever increasing share in the social services and other good things which a bountiful government bestows, thereby ever widening the gap between the ‘advanced’ and the ‘backward’ areas.”<sup>5</sup>

Colonial governments on both sides of the border also arrogated to themselves the right to appoint chiefs. These were often considered to lack legitimacy by the communities concerned, given their previous adherence to structures of collective leadership by successive generations of elders.

From the 1950s, the colonial governments in Kenya and Uganda sought to introduce private land tenure. The 1954 Swynnerton Plan introduced the concept of title deeds for the first time in Kenya. There were efforts to integrate pastoralists into the new system through the granting of private group title to some groups, creating in the process ‘group ranches.’ Private group title gave security to these groups but also circumscribed their ability to access pasture and other resources outside the group ranch.

<sup>3</sup> Interview Right Reverend Bishop Stephen Kewasis, Anglican Bishop of Kitale Diocese, Kitale July, 31, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> West Pokot was formerly known as Suk.

<sup>5</sup> Kenya National Archives, District Commissioner West Suk, Annual Report, 1945.

## Dynamics of marginalisation and conflict since independence

Policies pursued by successive post-colonial governments in the Horn of Africa have failed to reduce the marginalisation of pastoralists from mainstream national development in most countries of the region. This is certainly the case with regard to the Kenya-Uganda border area. There has been a tendency to neglect the needs of pastoralists and even to envisage the gradual eradication of pastoralism. More attention has been paid to the interests of agriculture and urban dwellers. For example, West Pokot district in Kenya has seen the loss of much land to agriculturalists in recent years.<sup>6</sup>

A major concern of policy and law since independence has been the regulation and 'orderly' use of land.<sup>7</sup> Successive governments have seen this as requiring the further extension of private land tenure. Policies and laws put in place in the 1950s and 1960s have been continued. The ratio of land to population on the Kenya-Uganda border has steadily deteriorated. Accelerating privatisation of land has fuelled growing insecurity in pastoral areas. This in turn has forced people to congregate in more secure areas, further increasing the pressure on land and other resources.<sup>8</sup>

Ambitious and costly programmes of land titling and registration, supported by the World Bank have continued to be pursued.<sup>9</sup> The rate of land expropriation in pastoral areas is severe. The problem has been made worse by the creation of national parks and game reserves that take in land on the Kenya-Uganda border. For example, in Karamoja region in Uganda a number of game reserves are in existence today such as the Kidipo game reserve. Many Karimojong appear unaware that part of their land has been gazetted for such purposes.<sup>10</sup> In the 1990s, many pastoral advocates have persistently called for an immediate moratorium on land titling until land rights could be equitably regularised.<sup>11</sup>

Pressure on land and other resources has been further increased since independence by the increased regularity and severity of drought. For example, during 1999–2002, drought affected the West Pokot,<sup>12</sup> whilst in Karamoja, in January and February 2003, the drought was severe and raids escalated due to the famine and drought.<sup>13</sup> This has left many pastoralists largely dependent upon food aid.

The post-independence period has seen a further weakening of traditional governance institutions in pastoral areas on either side of the Kenya-Uganda border. This is partly due to the failure of the Kenyan and Ugandan governments to recognise the role of the traditional institutions in management at the community level, and partly due to changing property rights regimes. While the Ugandan Government has relinquished powers to appoint chiefs and community elders, its Kenyan counterpart has yet to do so. Indigenous institutions are no longer significant mechanisms for resource management.

The erosion of traditional governance institutions among the pastoralist communities has weakened the ability of community elders to exercise control over young men. Indeed, 'eldership' can now be attained by wealth, and youth are often well positioned to attain wealth if they can gain access to guns. Elders now have to 'negotiate' with such youth in a way that has not been the case in the past. At the same time, official

6 For example see Memorandum (2002). 'The Pokot Land claims in Trans Nzoia district' 1895–2002 presented to The constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC), Presidential Commission of Enquiry into Land Law System in Kenya and His Excellency, The President of the Republic of Kenya, Mr. Daniel T. Arap Moi. 18 April 2002.

7 See Bazaara N, 'Land reforms and agrarian structures in Uganda: Retrospect and prospect', *Nomadic Peoples* (34, 35, 1994), pp 37–54. For land alienation in Kenya see Fratkin E, 'Pastoral land tenure in Kenya: Masai, Samburu, Boran and Rendile experiences, 1950–1990', *Ibid*, pp 55–68.

8 Mkutu K and Marani M, *The role of civic leaders in the mitigation of cattle-rustling and small arms: The case of Laikipia and Samburu* (AFPO, Nairobi, 2001). Also see Niamir-Fuller M, *Conflict management and mobility among pastoralists in Karamoja, Uganda in managing mobility in African rangelands* (ITDG, 1999).

9 Sayer G, *Kenya: Promised Land* (Oxfam, 1998).

10 'KPIU strategic planning workshop', Moroto Hotel, Moroto District, Uganda, 17–19 May 2002.

11 Bazaara N (1994) *op cit*.

12 While in Alale in August of 2002, the situation was terrible. The Pokots had taken their animals to Uganda.

13 Gomes, Nathalie, Mkutu, Kennedy and Iseult Kesterlin *Breaking the spiral of violence: the challenges of small arms, capacity building for conflict resolution and development in Karamoja region* (2003 – forthcoming) SNV-Uganda and Pax Christi Netherlands.

governance structures since independence have usually been either entirely absent or weak. Police on both sides are poorly paid and unable effectively to control movements across the Kenya-Uganda border. Co-operation, collaboration and co-ordination is relatively uncommon unless a raid takes place.

Traditional structures have been undermined by the authorities without 'modern' alternatives being established to replace them. A good example was noted in Alale (West Pokot) during the fieldwork. A local African Inland Mission employee had been requested to take school children to a sport function on the tractor (being the only available transport). On the way to the function, the little child was playing with the bars on the tractor. Accidentally, without the driver noticing the two bars the kid was playing with strangled the little kid to death. According to modern public administration that was a police case. But according to the local customary law, the AIC employee had killed the child and he must pay *lapai* (Compensation) of 60 cows. The local police authority was holding the identification for the poor fellow and he could not go anywhere. Meanwhile the POKATUSA organisation (Pokot, Karamoja, Turkana and Sebei) was trying to come up with a method to manage the problem locally. Interviews with well-informed Pokots at the District in Kapenguria informed the researcher "we have many Pokots who have to face customary law of killing somebody at the same time as the modern legal system of the courts. They cannot come home because of *lapai* (the requirement to pay compensation) while under state law they face murder charges.<sup>14</sup> Bishop Kewasis noted that "[t]he administration must understand how the Pokot operate and how they obey the system in place because the youth and elders should never contradict. Nevertheless the situation is changing because now we have youths who act as thieves and go on their own accord to steal; but they are always punished".<sup>15</sup> This is a double failure on the part of post-independence governments in Kenya and Uganda. Corruption is rife and officials are themselves sometimes involved in the illegal activities that they are supposed to be preventing. Pauline Isura, a Pokot living on the Ugandan side of the border, observed in 2001 that: "Government administration and chiefs are involved; it is well know that some get 10 per cent of the loot, and so will not expose the culprits no matter how much the community identifies them. I am shocked at such activities by government administrators. Why can't they have a rule so that if the communities point them out they will be sacked".<sup>16</sup>

Pokot living on the other side of the border confirmed in the same year that the situation was the same for them too. They claimed that most chiefs (government administrators) colluded with members of their communities to conceal cattle raiders and used irregular methods to avoid the prosecution of any suspects. In some cases, chiefs took a share of the stolen animals.<sup>17</sup>

The revival in cattle raiding post-independence has also been supported by the growing demands upon families of paying bride price. Reductions in the cattle holdings of many households has progressively increased the cost of dowry for the families of young men who wish to marry. According to research conducted in 2001 and 2002, the bride price in Pokot ranged from 15–30 cows.<sup>18</sup> In Karimojong areas the rate at the time was 30 cows if you were poor and 60 cows if you were rich. But among the Jie it was as high as 130 cattle without including small stocks (goats).<sup>19</sup>

From the early 1960s onwards the Karimojong were raided by armed pastoral groups, including the Turkana from Kenya, and the Toposa and Didinga from Sudan, all of whom had acquired arms from the then Abyssinia (now Ethiopia). The inability of the Uganda government to protect the Karimojong from these external attacks resulted in

<sup>14</sup> Interviews with elders, victim of *lapai*, focus group discussions with women and also district officials in Kachilaba and Kapenguria. August, 2002.

<sup>15</sup> Bishop Stephen Kewasis op cit.

<sup>16</sup> Pauline Isura, *Report on IBAR pastoral community harmonisation meeting held at Mount Elgon Hotel, Mbale, Uganda, May 2001*.

<sup>17</sup> NCCK/SNV/SARDEP, *Pacifying the Valley. An analysis of the Kerio Valley Conflict* (Nairobi, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> Interviews with elders, women, warriors, chiefs Alale, West Pokot, 3 August 2002.

<sup>19</sup> See Gomes, Mkutu, Iseult Op cit.

them making local hand-made guns, called *Ngamatidae*, to protect themselves and their property from external aggressors. The chairman of the Karamoja Initiative for Sustainable Peace (KISP) in Namule has noted that: “Our homes were under siege and we were rendered totally helpless by the Turkana, who got their guns early while we had spears. From 1950 to the 1970s, the Turkana depleted our livestock through raids. The government could not protect us. It was only when we managed to get guns that we were able to stop the Turkana from raiding us and the other neighbours.”<sup>20</sup> The Karimojong soon moved on to purchasing modern weaponry. The Pokot had a similar experience. Turkana raiding in the late-1950s led to the Pokot in Kenya buying hand-made guns from the neighbouring Luhya before moving onto modern weaponry. Some of the latter was supplied by Pokot refugees from Uganda fleeing instability in that country during the 1970s.

By the 1970s, large-scale cattle raiding along the Kenya-Uganda border had resumed. However, now it was exacerbated by the proliferation of small arms. The weapon of choice became the AK-47. Increased insecurity in Ethiopia during that decade encouraged a growth in the smuggling and sale of small arms and ammunition into Kenya. War and instability in southern Sudan and northern Uganda from the 1980s onwards exponentially increased the volume of small arms available.

The relative ease of acquisition and low cost of these small arms has enabled the pastoral communities to guarantee a sustained market. Some sources estimate that there are as many as 150,000–200,000<sup>21</sup> firearms in the Karamoja region of Uganda alone. While the exact number of small arms in the hands of pastoral communities is difficult to assess, it is clear that the threat posed by them is enormous.

Pastoral communities seem to have been arming themselves for several reasons. First, they need to protect themselves against being plundered by hostile groups. Second, the weapons are used to defend their animals against other armed pastoral communities. Third, arms are used forcefully to steal stock from other pastoral communities, often for revenge: guns are an economic investment. In Karamoja region in 1998, a bullet could be used as bus fare or to buy a glass of beer.<sup>22</sup> In the past, it appears as if bullets were used to pay for goods in shops, although these days are now gone.<sup>23</sup> The arms issue is a cross-border problem and arms acquisition is now both a cause and consequence of insecurity and conflict in the Kenya-Uganda border area.

The problem of small arms has been made more complex by a new dimension: the commercialisation of cattle raiding, whereby wealthy businessmen, many of them based in towns, fund raids in the pastoral communities.<sup>24</sup> Accordingly, the economic benefits to be derived from obtaining a gun are significantly greater now than they have been in the past.

The Kenyan and Ugandan authorities have often used force against pastoral communities, sometimes in the context of efforts at disarmament. Since 1979, there have been 12 operations by the Kenyan army to try and retrieve unlicensed arms from the Pokot. According to local community representatives, these operations have often targeted innocent people.

Disarmament efforts regularly prompt resistance and things can spiral out of control, as the most recent effort to disarm the Karimojong in Uganda shows. In May 2002, 19 soldiers of the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) were killed by Karimojong fighters resisting a disarmament programme. The UPDF retaliated by setting on fire several Karimojong homesteads in a fierce fight. At least 13 warriors were killed and the UPDF captured several weapons (see **Part 4** for more details).

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Philip Ichumer, KISP chairman and co-ordinator, Namule County, 21 June 2001.

<sup>21</sup> It is worth noting that though Karamoja is awash with small arms, no one is sure of the actual figure. It ranges from 40,000 and above.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with Stella Sabiti, Executive Director of CECORE, Uganda, 8 March 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Interviews Kanawat, sub county Kotido. February, 2003. For more see Gomes, Mkutu Iseult. *Breaking the spiral of violence. The challenges of small arms and Capacity building for Development* SNV-Uganda/Pax Christi (2003 – forthcoming).

<sup>24</sup> Op cit Mkutu (2000).

Insecurity has triggered further arming of communities, sometimes with official support or complicity. In 1992, as security conditions in Karamoja continued to deteriorate, Moroto District Council decided to take matters into its own hands. They appointed Sam Abura Pirir as Secretary for Moroto district and tasked him with organising a local police force recruited from among the armed warriors. Members of this force came to be known as 'The Vigilantes'. Abura Pirir got support from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and churches. His vigilantes succeeded initially in reducing insecurity on the roads. President Museveni also gave his support, putting them under the authority of the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF). Sanction was given for vigilante numbers to be increased from the initial concept of ten people per county to 1000 per county. To qualify as a vigilante a person was required to register his firearm. In return, the Ugandan Government undertook to give that person 10,000 Ugandan shillings (\$6.50) each month. More recently, the amount has been increased to 30,000 (\$20)<sup>25</sup>. However, the government was often found to be in arrears on these payments. With the start of the phase 1 voluntary disarmament in December 2001, Local Defence Units (LDUs)<sup>26</sup> were recruited to assist with protecting the communities in the wake of increased cattle raiding and road ambushes. Some of these members of LDUs came from the vigilante groups who were initially recruited in 1992. However, it is not clear what happened to the other vigilantes and their weapons.

While such vigilantes often had initial success in reducing levels of insecurity, thereby garnering some community support, in the longer-run they have proven a force for further insecurity as they have resorted to banditry and other illegal activities. Since the early 1990s vigilante groups have mushroomed in Northern Uganda. They are also increasingly common on the Kenyan side of the border. Many have been organised into the Kenya Police Reserve (KPR). The KPR is the modern incarnation of the Tribal Police that was used by the colonial authorities to maintain order in the African rural areas since 1927. It is under the authority of the Kenya Police and the District Commissioners. This is very much security 'on the cheap'. These reservists, all of them locals to the areas in which they are performing their duties, do not receive a salary and are given only minimal training. Nonetheless, they are supplied with arms and ammunition by the authorities. The Laws of Kenya Cap.14, section 5, (1) states that a licensed officer should issue all firearms. However, in practice reservists simply obtain their firearms from the senior police officer in the district, thereby contravening the law. Their knowledge of the areas in which they are operating does assist efforts to combat cattle raiding and they appear to retain significant community support.<sup>27</sup> However, as is the case in Uganda, KPR personnel sometimes misuse their arms – for example, by selling or bartering them – and there have been cases of banditry and participation in cattle raiding activities.<sup>28</sup>

Those in authority have often failed to agree a unified response to conflict and have regularly been split over whether to support vigilante groups. A demand in 1999 by some parliamentarians from Teso District in Uganda for the disarmament of the Karimojong was opposed by others who argued that their constituents, who had borne the brunt of Karimojong raids, be given guns to defend themselves.<sup>29</sup> On 22 March

25 See Mkutu, Kennedy 'Challenges of Cross Border Co-operation: the Case of Kenya and Uganda', paper presented at the 'International Conference on Small arms trafficking in the Border Regions of Sudan, Uganda and Kenya: Determining the Issues and Setting the Strategies 9th–13th November, 2001 Jinja– Uganda'.

26 In 1992 as security conditions in Karamoja worsened, the Moroto district council decided to take action. They appointed Sam Abura Pirir as the secretary of security for Moroto district. He was given the responsibility to organise a local police force recruited from the armed warriors. The warriors were recruited on two conditions, firstly one had to have their own gun, secondly they were supposed to be of good conduct and a leader in the community. They initially wanted to create camps where vigilantes would live, so that from the camps they would follow the stolen cattle. The duty of vigilantes was mainly to follow the footmarks of stolen animals and this enabled them to trace and recover these animals. Although these groups tried to contain the cattle-raiding problem it became evident that they could not do so without the aid of the government. However, the support they required from the government was not forthcoming, thus making it difficult for the community to combat thuggery and cattle rustling on their own. In 1999–2000, the GoU decided to change the vigilante into a Local Defence Unit, who were expected to protect the communities. In the year 2003 while in the field, the LDUs were living in the same army barracks with the UPDF.

27 This assessment is based on answers to questionnaires answered by District Officers in Kenya between January–September 2003.

28 Ibid.

29 Appeals from neighbouring communities for the disarmament of the Karimojong have frequently been made. For example, disarmament formed part of the resolutions of the Conference on Peace in Northern Uganda in Gulu on 29–30 March 1999.

2000, President Museveni was reportedly present when an assortment of weapons was given to the people of Teso District to defend themselves against Karimojong raiders.<sup>30</sup> It was also reported that each district had been required to provide 700 youths for training by the army.

The lack of a coherent and consistent strategy to address issues of insecurity was highlighted at a workshop in 2001 organised by the Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Research and most recently in the upcoming work by Netherlands Development Agency (SNV) and Pax Christi (2003). One participant argued that: “when there is trouble the government will come with guns and distribute them, also, government administration and chiefs are involved, it is well known some get ten percent of the loot, and so will not expose the culprits no matter how much the community identifies them.”<sup>31</sup> Disarmament initiatives have also failed to properly take into account the fact that they threaten livelihoods, however problematic these may be for peace and security in the border area. Similarly, periodic demobilisation programmes such as that in Uganda between 1992–95 have thrown more young men into semi-destitution. Many have rapidly gravitated towards armed cattle raiding and armed rebellion such as that being pursued in northern Uganda by the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA).

The arming of one community, by whatever means, has inevitably lead to others demanding arms for protection, resulting in further proliferation of small arms across the region. In turn, poorly conceptualised and co-ordinated disarmament has often simply meant that small arms circulate to those areas on the border where it is not taking place.

## New factors that are exacerbating conflict

This section focuses on three new factors that warrant more detailed exploration if we are to understand why conflict in the Kenya-Uganda border area has exacerbated in recent years. While some were briefly alluded to in our December 2001 report, *Pastoralism and conflict in the Horn of Africa*, more in-depth research since then in the Kenya-Uganda border area has highlighted their growing salience.

## Commercialisation of cattle raiding

The transformation of cattle raiding into a commercial and entrepreneurial activity has increased the intensity of that raiding and is leading to major changes in economic, social and political structures in the border area. It is creating a black market for commercial cattle trading that straddles the localities, urban areas and the wider region. Access to small arms has become essential to successful commercial cattle raiding.

Since the mid 1990s, the main form of cattle raiding has become that which is driven by commercial considerations. There is a lot of evidence linking businessmen and politicians to this raiding<sup>32</sup>. Although much more research needs to be done to ascertain who the businessmen involved in commercialised cattle raiding are, many believe that they are powerful and well-connected people in authority in Kenya, Uganda and the Sudan People’s Liberation Army (SPLA), who are also characterised by their ability to easily access weapons. The financing of cattle raids for commercial purposes appears to originate in the towns and cities, with local organising ‘agents’ in the rural areas. Migration from rural to urban centres in Kenya and Uganda has increased demand in the towns and cities for Nyoma choma (roasted meat) especially in Kenya.

<sup>30</sup> *The Monitor*, 22 March 2000.

<sup>31</sup> Paulina Isura, *Report on IBAR pastoral community harmonisation meeting held at Mount Elgon Hotel, Mbale, Uganda, May 2001*.

<sup>32</sup> Mkutu (2000) pp 97–102, Mkutu, Phd dissertation chapter 3 op cit. See also Ocan Emunyu, *Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda: the changing significance of cattle raids*. Working paper No. 21 Center for Basic Research. Kampala, (June 1992). Also see Muhereza, Frank and Peter Otim op cit.



Several elders interviewed for this report referred to a trader who is known to sell meat between Kotido district in Uganda and Kachiliba town, West Pokot district, in Kenya. He possesses many lorries and apart from trading in cattle, has also traded in guns in the past. Research undertaken in Samburu district in Kenya found that raided livestock from that area ended up for sale in Dagoretti, a market in Nairobi. Between 1996–99 over 25,770 cattle were stolen, with very few recoveries. The approximate total cost of lost livestock to the community was calculated to be 384m Kenyan shillings or US \$5 million.<sup>33</sup> Some have suggested that some of the raided cattle meat from Samburu could be being sold as far away as South Africa and Saudi Arabia. This implies that co-ordinated trading cartels on a transnational scale are operating, probably using lorries.<sup>34</sup> The increasingly organised and militarised nature of commercialised cattle raiding in the Kenya-Uganda border area and its links to wider trading networks, many of them frankly criminal in character, means that the authorities face an uphill struggle to combat it. This struggle has been rendered all the more difficult because some politicians and officials have become part of that trade themselves.

### The emergence of warlords

Some of those businessmen involved in commercialised cattle raiding in the Kenya-Uganda border area are taking on some of the characteristics of a phenomenon with an ominous track-record in sub-Saharan Africa: the warlord. Evidence suggests that the commercial cattle trader, the arms merchant and the warlord are increasingly one and the same person.

A warlord has been defined as the leader of an armed band, sometimes numbering thousands of fighters, who can hold territory locally and act financially and politically in the international system without interference from the state in which he is based.<sup>35</sup> Warlords operate at three levels of sophistication. At the highest level he is well organised, has extensive transnational relationships and controls large swathes of territory. Examples include Charles Taylor in Liberia and the late Jonas Savimbi in Angola. In his early years, John Garang, leader of the SPLA, could have been included in this group. These 'big warlords' accumulate resources mainly through the illegal export of valuable primary resources such as tropical wood, diamonds and ivory and minerals.<sup>36</sup> The intermediate level of warlord is less organised and does not unambiguously control significant tracts of territory, although they may be able to operate freely in certain areas. His armed band is smaller in size and his transnational links are weaker although not necessarily insignificant. Such warlords tend to utilise local resources and 'tax' local communities or companies in order to survive. Examples are the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) in Uganda, the Somali warlords and the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) and Mayai Mayai in Kivu, both in Democratic Republic of Congo. The lowest level of sophistication includes businessmen, politicians, traders or local 'strongmen' pursuing predominantly economic objectives. These have weak and at best incipient transnational links and do not control any territory. Their armed bands are small in size, not normally paid by the warlord and under only limited supervision.<sup>37</sup> The Kenya-Uganda border area has seen the rise of this type of warlord over the past decade.

Osamba argues that warlords first emerged in the 1980s in Turkana and Pokot areas in Kenya.<sup>38</sup> Some youths were recruited from nearby trading centres, where they were

<sup>33</sup> Gomes, Mkutu, *loc. cit.*

<sup>34</sup> Mkutu (2000), pp 97–102.

<sup>35</sup> For an interesting discussion, see Reno W, *Warlord politics and African states* (Boulder, 1998); see also Duffield M, 'Post-modern conflict. Warlords, post-adjustment states and private protection', *Civil Wars* (1, 1, 1998). More recent works on warlords in Karamoja see Jackson, Paul 'The March of the Lord's Resistance Army: Greed or Grievance in Northern Uganda' *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 13 Autumn, 2002, pp.29–52. See also Rich, Paul 'Warlords, State Fragmentation and the Dilemma of Humanitarian Intervention' *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. 10 No. 1 spring 1999, p 97–106. Also see Hills, Alice, Warlords 'Militia and Conflict in Contemporary Africa: A Re-examination of Terms' *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Vol. No 1. Spring, 1997, p 35–51.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Osamba J, 'The Sociology of Insecurity: Cattle Rustling and Banditry in North-western Kenya', *African Journal of Conflict Resolution* (2, 2000).

eking out a living as night watchmen (guards) or performing odd jobs. Evidence also suggests that a significant number of soldiers who fought in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) came from the cross-border areas of West Pokot and Karamoja. On their return, some of these men have become warlords through raiding and are now employing and training young men to engage in raiding.<sup>39</sup>

This new development is changing the nature of conflict in the border area. There is a real danger that, if these are not effectively combated, some of the warlords may move towards the higher levels of warlordism described above. If this happens, larger militias may begin to form that start to resemble armies in scale. Wider political objectives may become intertwined with expanded strategies of accumulation. Ultimately a single leader might emerge who could – by a mix of threats and incentives – persuade currently divided pastoral communities to unite around these objectives and strategies. The only thing preventing this from happening so far has been the preference of these communities for temporary alliances and their lack of inclination towards establishing permanent and exclusive control over territory. Finally, it is not impossible in such circumstances that terrorist groups may find fertile soil for recruitment and training in such an environment.

The situation in the Kenya-Uganda border area is far from being beyond repair. But strategies to restore peace and security will have to be based on a frank acknowledgement that there are many in the area whose survival and livelihood has come to depend on a state of ‘durable disorder’. Worryingly, some of these people are politicians, businessmen, local officials and traditional leaders. It is crucial that the authorities take effective action to combat the influence and activities of these emerging warlords without delay. Difficult as this may be, it will be far harder in future years if these warlords are given time to consolidate and expand their operations.

## Gender relations under growing pressure

Conflict in the Kenya-Uganda border area is experienced differently by men and women and has different consequences for them. In this context, gender roles are being reconfigured. This has been so far a largely ‘hidden’ dimension of the conflict

The majority of women appear actively to encourage their sons or husbands to take part in cattle raiding. One teacher noted that: “The system is the one that causes the problem of insecurity. The man wants to marry and needs the livestock to marry, so he has to go livestock raiding”.<sup>40</sup> Women, of course, usually wish to marry too and so are unlikely to object to men going on cattle raids.

Compounding the problem is the steady inflation of bride price, as discussed earlier. This can lead some men to marry but defer payment. However, it cannot be deferred indefinitely. The arrival of children is often the point of no return. Then there is little choice but to engage in cattle raiding in order to pay bride price if the marriage is to continue. One commentator has stated: “Karimojong custom decrees that when a man is officially committed to a girl, he may lead a full married life with her, but the girl remains in her parents village until the bride price is paid in cattle”.<sup>41</sup> On the woman’s part, the non-payment of bride price condemns her to an uncertain and vulnerable status that she is unlikely to want to prolong: “If a woman is not married with cows she is invalid, any man can collect you, therefore women are commodities to trade”.<sup>42</sup>

Women are expected to sing songs of praises and ululate in celebration when the men arrive with the spoils of war and to deride those who have failed. They wear a special cloth when their man is on a raid. They will taunt their man if he refuses to go on a raid, sometimes going so far as to question his manhood.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>39</sup> This issue was mentioned several times during interviews with senior government officials in both Kenya and Uganda.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Rachel Christine deputy head teacher at Kaala Girls School in Amudat, Uganda, 19 June 2001.

<sup>41</sup> Pazzalia, Augusto *The Karimojongo: Some Aspects* Bologna, Italy (1982), p 103.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Rachel Christine, op cit.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Philip Ichumer, op cit.

One Ugandan elder even claimed: “If you are poor, no woman will agree with you nor marry you, they are the source of raids”.<sup>44</sup> This is surely an exaggeration, but it does confirm that women have a more active role, for better or for worse, in supporting cattle raiding than many have admitted.

Women whose husbands have been on raids can be vulnerable to attack themselves because the livestock stolen is usually brought home. Further, when a man has been killed, women are left alone and have to take on responsibility for security along with more traditional responsibilities of managing the home and taking care of the children. Some women who were interviewed for this report claimed that if their man is killed on a cattle raid, women would quickly request ownership of the gun of their loved one.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, due to the high death rate of men taking part in cattle raiding, women are now being forced to learn how to use guns.<sup>46</sup> They even alleged that widowed women would often buy guns for their sons so that they could go on raids and provide security for the homestead.

There has been a major increase in the number of widows in the Kenya-Uganda border area in recent years. In the case of communities such as the Karimojong and Pokot, these widows are ‘inherited’ by brothers of the deceased man. In some such situations widows can face mistreatment and abuse.<sup>47</sup> Some women have found themselves having to marry like this as many as five times. At a peace meeting in 2001 in Mbale, Uganda, a woman who had been inherited over five times in this way cried as she told those present that women were “tired of sleeping with dying men”. She added that “women had lost the meaning of love because of all these battles, beautiful people dying, husbands, wives, girls, boys and children dying”.<sup>48</sup>

Even women whose husbands and sons survive are finding everyday life a major struggle. Their men are spending more and more time – sometimes as much as two weeks every month – away from home on cattle raiding activities. This is particularly the case amongst the Karimojong, where families have permanent homesteads. Amongst the Pokot, men move around with their wives and families. Men can find it more difficult to re-integrate into family life when at home. If they are unable to reintegrate or, indeed, to provide properly for their family, this may engender feelings of shame and humiliation. These developments are undermining marriages and contributing to rising levels of domestic violence. El-Bushra has argued that many marriages are being held together only by concerns to maintain ‘respectability’.<sup>49</sup>

The death of so many loved ones can also have a major impact on the mental health of women. Weakening family structures impact heavily, of course, upon children too and there is no doubt that some are displaying disturbed behaviour and signs of trauma. The fact that increasing numbers of young men are unable to find the means to marry, which as we have seen earlier is viewed as an essential moment in attaining the status and dignity of adulthood, may also lead to increased incidence of rape outside marriage.

As we have seen, the burdens falling upon women in pastoral communities in the Kenya-Uganda border area are steadily increasing. Yet when it comes to efforts to prevent and resolve conflict in the border area – whether through new or traditional structures – women continue largely to be excluded. This must change. As we have seen, it is too simplistic to see women as passive victims of conflict. Similarly, we should not view men simply as perpetrators. The gender dimensions of conflict in the border area are far more complex than that.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Interview with Grace, a nurse at Matany hospital, 21 January 2001.

<sup>46</sup> *Kenya Times*, 16 April 2001.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Elizabeth Chepsok at Amudat, Uganda, 16 June 2001. This also came up during interviews in Alale Pokot with the focus group discussions with women.

<sup>48</sup> Taken from Pauline Isura, *Report on IBAR pastoral community harmonisation meeting held at Mount Elgon Hotel, Mbale, Uganda, May 2001*.

<sup>49</sup> El-Bushra J, ‘Transforming conflict: Some thoughts on a gendered understanding of conflict processes’ in Jacobs S, Jacobson R and Marchbank J, *States of conflict: Gender, violence and resistance* (Zed Press, 2000), pp 66–86.

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## Current patterns of conflict and flows of small arms into the border area

**CONFLICT IN THE KENYA-UGANDA BORDER AREA** has occurred in recent years at three distinct but inter-connected levels: those within or between pastoral communities at local level; those between pastoral communities and non-pastoral communities at local level; and those that have taken on a wider regional dimension. At the same time, there has been a steady increase in the volume of small arms in the border area. This section begins by examining the different levels at which conflict has been occurring. Next, it looks at the routes and methods that have been used to move small arms into and around the Kenya-Uganda border area. It ends with a brief survey of the available evidence about the prices at which small arms can be bought and sold.

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### Different levels of conflict

One of the most vivid examples of conflict within a pastoral community is the case of the Karimojong. It has been claimed that the first clan amongst the Karimojong in Uganda to gain access to large numbers of small arms were the Matheniko.<sup>1</sup> In 1978–79, they successfully broke into the military barracks in Moroto town. The Matheniko raided the military again in 1985 when General Tito Okello overthrew the then-President Milton Obote. During this period, the Matheniko increasingly regularly launched armed attacks against other closely related Karimojong clans, namely the Pian and the Bokora. These continued after the demise of the Okello regime and its replacement by the National Resistance Army (NRA), led by President Yoweri Museveni. For example, in 1989, 300 people were reportedly killed in battles between the Matheniko and the Bokora.

Pazzaglia argued over 20 years ago: “Whereas in the past, the three Karimojong sections, the Maseniko [Matheniko], the Bokora and the Pian were united against the

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Philip Ichumer, 19 June 2001. Also confirmed in an interview with Moses Mudong, Moroto, 17 June 2001.

### Map 1: The North Rift cross border region

Source: Modified from Macmillan Sec. Sch. Atlas, 1999.



common raiding foe, this unity has now been destroyed. The sections are quite ready to align themselves with former enemies to fight the Pian, the Maseniko against the Bokora, and so on, in diverse combinations. Once *nigkaitotoi* (brothers), the groups are now *ngimoe* (enemies). It is true that from time to time attempts are made to secure peace, but the process of disintegration seems irreversible.”<sup>2</sup>

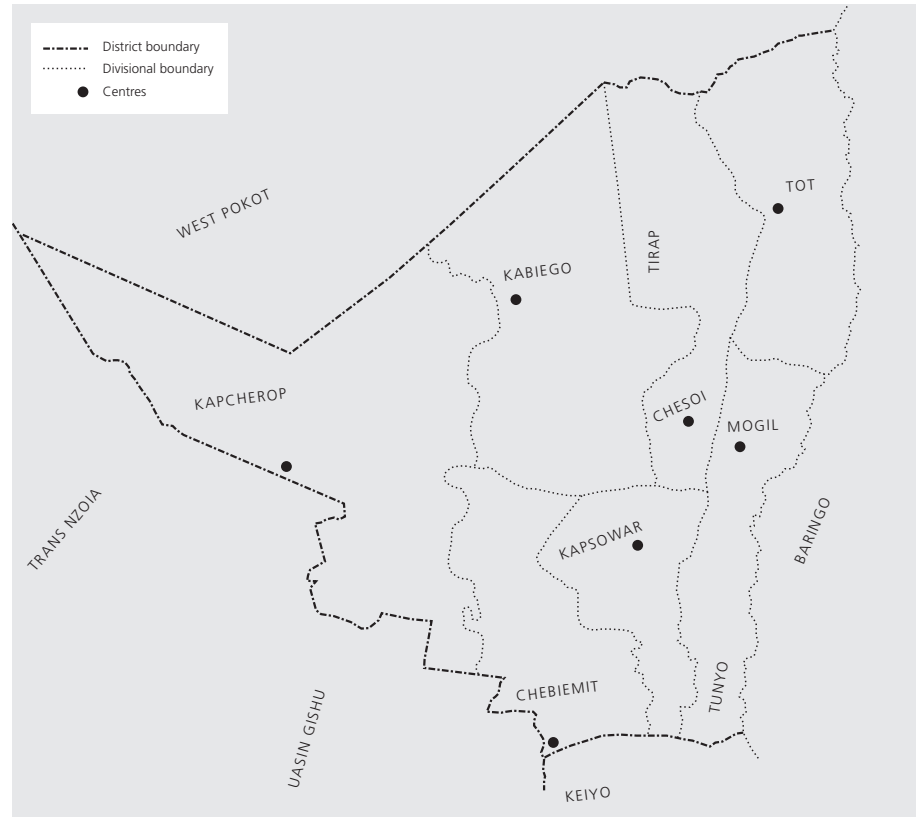
Relations between the three clans remain poor to this day and violence continues periodically to erupt. Leaders of one clan cannot visit the areas of other clans without fear of attack.<sup>3</sup> Some argue that disarmament initiatives since December 2001 in Karamoja region have led to an intensification of cattle raiding activity.

An example of conflicts between pastoral communities can be found on the other side of the border in Kenya, where the Marakwet and the Pokot have regularly clashed. The two communities live in Rift Valley Province and both belong to the larger Kalenjin group. Unlike the Pokot, the Marakwet are agro-pastoralists. They farm maize, beans, mangoes, tea, Irish potatoes and vegetables as well as rear cattle, sheep and goats. The two communities have in the past engaged in barter trade with each

<sup>2</sup> Pazzaglia (1982), pp 77–89, 129–130. Maseniko here is equivalent to Matheniko as used throughout this report.

<sup>3</sup> See Gome, Nathalie and Mkuu Kennedy, *Breaking the spiral of violence in Karamoja. Building capacity for peace and development in Karamoja, Uganda SNV-Uganda and Pax Christi* (2003 – forthcoming). CECORE/GTZ, *Hands across the border: Building peace among and between the people of Teso and Karamoja* (2000).

## Marakwet district



other. Traditionally, there was much intermarriage. Indeed, some clans are found in both communities.<sup>4</sup>

Today, however, tensions are high between the communities. Due to relatively favourable environmental conditions prevailing on the Marakwet side of the Kerio Valley, the Pokot have sought to encroach on their grazing areas, using arms to do so. In turn, this has forced the Marakwet to attempt to move onto the grazing land of others, resulting in the displacement of smaller pastoral communities from the Valley. For example, the Biya, one of the small communities that had moved into the Kerio Valley in the past have started returning to the Highlands and reclaiming their former lands. The Biya have armed themselves and are using force to re-occupy these lands (*see map above*).

Currently the Marakwet may be more armed than the Pokot. They have deliberately armed themselves over the past six years so that they can strike back at the Pokot and also for their protection.<sup>5</sup> A localised arms race has been under way for some time. In 2002, some communities caught up in the conflict were demanding to be armed and trained.<sup>6</sup> A group of pastors from the African Inland Church (AIC), led by Pastor William Chepkok and Joel Cheptoo, expressed concern that the security situation in the Kerio Valley and neighbouring areas was getting out of control.<sup>7</sup> Religious and political leaders called on the Kenyan Government to carry out a major disarmament exercise in those areas, they argued, that “the disarmament would help reduce insecurity aggravated by cattle thefts and banditry”.<sup>8</sup>

In Uganda, Karimojong have increasingly been attacking non-pastoralist communities in Teso, Katakwi and Kitgum districts, creating significant internal displacement.

<sup>4</sup> NCCK ‘It’s a Lapai for Pokot Marakwet Peace Accord’, *NCCK Update* Issue No 54, 31 July 1997, pp 1, 2, 11.

<sup>5</sup> Name withheld, Interview with a former District Commissioner, West Pokot, 25 May 2001.

<sup>6</sup> *Daily Nation*, 7 June 2002. See also Mkutu K, *Pastoralism and conflict in the Horn of Africa* APFO/Saferworld/University of Bradford (2001) pp 6.

<sup>7</sup> *NCCK Update* op cit.

<sup>8</sup> *Daily Nation* 6 May 2003. Also see *East African Standard* 2 May 2003, and *Daily Nation* 29 April 2003.

For example, on 14 March 2000 Karimojong fighters killed 19 people in Kitgum district and many others were abducted.<sup>9</sup> They also issued death threats to villagers. At the same time, Karimojong raids on Teso district reached a point where the Ugandan Government was forced to deploy 3000 soldiers to police the border between Karamoja and Teso districts. As we saw earlier, a disarmament initiative was subsequently launched.

The violence has continued. In September 2001 a group of 200 Karimojong fighters overpowered 40 Local Defence Unit (LDU) personnel stationed at a camp for Internally Displaced People (IDPs) at Ngarium, Katakwi district, killing 15 people and stealing 500 head of cattle. This attack led to reprisals. Eight people travelling by bus who were thought to be Karimojong were killed by an angry mob that blocked the Katakwi-Moroto road in Katakwi town.<sup>10</sup>

Inevitably, conflicts have in recent years been increasing across what is a highly porous and – for many local communities, at least – artificial border. For example, in January 2000, in the context of serious drought in the Kenya-Uganda border area, Karimojong massacred 60 Pokot at Kiwawa on the Kenyan side. 5000 head of cattle were stolen from them. 11 children and 16 women were among the dead. The then District Commissioner for West Pokot stated that about 200 raiders armed with guns, bows and arrows had attacked the *manyattas* (homesteads) and escaped with the animals. He argued that Pokot herdsmen and police reservists were forced to flee and abandon the animals after six hours of fierce fighting.<sup>11</sup> On 25 December 2001 eight people were killed when cattle raiders from Uganda invaded Turkana district in Kenya. In November–December 2002 there were several raids by Kenyan Pokot on Karimojong homesteads. The Pokot were apparently looking to take advantage of the UPDF's forcible disarmament campaign against the Karimojong. In January 2003, a group of suspected Kenyan cattle rustlers attacked two Ugandan villages, killing at least 10 people and driving away up to 800 head of cattle.

The cross-border conflicts of recent years have been characterized by a number of worrying developments. Firstly, there have been an increased number of attacks on unarmed civilians, in particular women and children. Secondly, there has been a growth in the number of raiders and in the sophistication of the arms that they carry. The raiders often come in armies of 100–500 people and sometimes 1000s, thereby outnumbering the security forces. In such cases, overstretched government security personnel are unable to deal effectively with the raiders.

These cross-border conflicts have also clearly taken on a wider regional dimension. For example, in September 2001 some 100 Sudanese Toposa cattle raiders armed with AK-47 assault rifles attacked Nanam village, a Turkana settlement 80 km northwest of Lokichogio in Kenya. Ten Toposa and two Turkana herdsmen were killed during the battle, which lasted for more than two hours. The raid happened less than a week after Toposa raiders had killed eight Turkana herdsmen in an attack at Kamutia, 160 km from Lokichogio.

All of the communities mentioned above are increasingly raiding each other across the borders of Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan either to restock or to seek revenge for previous raids.<sup>12</sup> The Eleme Triangle area has become the site of a localised arms race and is now one of the major routes of arms flows into Kenya and Uganda from Sudan.

The shifting and unstable nature of the alliances that are being made within and between pastoral communities is also shaping and deepening conflicts in the Kenya-Uganda border area. As one long term foreign resident of Karamoja district has noted: “It is a matter of making alliances when it is useful, when not useful they break them.

<sup>9</sup> *The Monitor* 19 March 2000. Also confirmed by interviews in Mbale, Uganda 16th and 17th, 2003

<sup>10</sup> See Gomes and Mkutu op cit.

<sup>11</sup> *Kenya Times*, 28 January 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Interviews with officials. Names have been withheld at their request. May–June 2001, August 2002 and January–February 2003

Lord Palmerston argued that nations do not have permanent alliances or enemies, they only have permanent interests. The Karimojong are fully convinced of this and they practice it without a problem. For instance, in 1999, Matheniko were allied with Turkana [and] together they were fighting the Bokora (section of Karamoja). Of course in order to defend themselves the Bokora allied themselves with the Jie, who are the enemies of Matheniko. After one year all the alliances changed. The Bokora made peace with the Matheniko, so they did not need the Jie. So the Bokora and the Matheniko went against the Turkana”.<sup>13</sup>

For the Karimojong in recent years their enemies have been the Pokot and Turkana in Kenya and the Toposa and the Didinga in Sudan. A striking feature of cross-border raiding is that such raids are usually organised in alliance with a group on the other side of that border. Alliances are also important in determining the routes through which small arms, ammunition and stolen cattle are moved across the border and where they are subsequently sold.<sup>14</sup>

## Routes and methods of arms trafficking

**Map 2: North Rift cross border arms movement**

Source: Modified from Macmillan Sec. Sch. Atlas, 1999.



<sup>13</sup> Interview with late Father Bruno Navoli, Moroto, 16 June 2001.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Dani Dradriga, former Resident District Commissioner for Kotido district, Jinja, 12 November 2001.



Map 2 shows the routes used by arms traders to move small arms into the Kenya-Uganda border area. Of course, the routes used are not fixed – they are changed as circumstances change, including the level of official scrutiny. This is particularly the case on the Kenyan side, where the security forces regularly mount checkpoints on routes and patrol randomly. Any sale of arms by soldiers on the Kenyan side is subject to heavy punishment, including dismissal.<sup>15</sup> However, on the Ugandan side, security is laxer and the routes have to be changed less regularly.

Those actively involved in the small arms trade range from warlords to vigilantes, from small traders to wealthy businessmen, from personnel of the UPDF on the Ugandan side to the KPR on the Kenyan side. In practice, as we have seen, ostensibly different categories of participant are often one and the same person. Women too are involved, mainly trading in ammunition. The ammunition trade appears to operate independently from the trade in guns. It is easy to carry bullets in a food bag or milk gourds or as water in jugs. Security forces rarely check women, making it relatively easy for them to carry loads of ammunition across the border.

There are four main routes for the movement of small arms into the border area. The first – and most commonly used – route is that into Karamoja region in Uganda from Sudan. The second is the ‘north-eastern route’ into Kenya from Somalia. The third route is the route from Sudan into Lokichogio in Kenya. The fourth route is the Karenga-Lopoch-Kotido route. There used to be a fifth route originating in Ethiopia and connecting to Uganda via Sudan, but the eviction of the SPLA from Ethiopia has led to the decline of this route.

### Sudan-Karamoja

This is currently the main route for arms into the Karamoja region. Large quantities of small arms are brought across the Sudan border to Kotido district. From there, some are taken on to Pokot and Samburu areas in Kenya. Others are taken on to Moroto and Nakapiripit districts in Uganda. Interviews indicated that a very well-known businessman has also been involved in transporting arms and *mira* (Khat) from Kotido district in Uganda to Kachiliba town, West Pokot district, in Kenya. With the current disarmament on-going in Uganda, interviews in the field revealed that he is now co-operating and helping with the disarmament.<sup>16</sup>

Evidence from interviews with Sudanese refugees and with high-placed sources have revealed that during 1993–94 the SPLA laid off several hundred officers, giving them varying quantities of small arms as a kind of ‘retirement package’.<sup>17</sup> The officers sold many of these to sustain themselves at gun markets on the Ugandan side of the border.<sup>18</sup> The SPLA itself has also regularly traded guns in Karamoja region for other items: “[The] SPLA come into Uganda with donkey-loads of ammunition and guns and they exchange them for grain and livestock. Livestock captured with the use of arms are sold or exchanged for arms, which actually increases the quantities of small arms in the hands of traders/warlords or warriors. The arms are then traded for more cattle. The SPLA army needs food, and that is how they are getting part of their food.”<sup>19</sup> Depending on the type of AK-47 (Chinese or Russian), the rate of exchange in Ugandan villages appears to be 2–3 cows for one gun. The major mode of payment is through barter. The SPLA denies that it trades arms for food, including cattle, arguing that they have no link to the arms traders moving through its areas into Uganda.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Op cit ADOL, p 15.

<sup>16</sup> Gomes and Mkutu, 2003 op cit.

<sup>17</sup> Nyaba, Adwok, P. ‘The long running civil war in south Sudan and the flow of small arms and light weapons in the Sudan-Kenya-Uganda border area’ A paper presented at the regional seminar to ‘Improve Law Enforcement and Operation Capacity to Tackle the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, Kampala’ 28–29 June 2001. Gomes, Nathalie and Mkutu, Kennedy, *Breaking the spiral of violence: Building local capacity for peace and development in Karamoja Uganda*. SNV-Uganda and Pax Christi (2003 – forthcoming).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Interview, Moroto, 20 June 2001. Source did not want to be identified.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

### The north-eastern route

This route begins in Somalia, moving through the Merille area in Ethiopia and then onto the Karamoja region in Uganda. From there, small arms move through Upe Pokot areas in Uganda and cross the border into Turkana and Pokot areas on the Kenyan side. This route is very costly because the arms have to pass through a series of brokers over a long distance. For this reason, relatively few arms currently come through this route. In addition, the trademark gun of the Karimojong is the AK-47, while the guns that come through this route are G3 rifles. This rifle is considered outdated. However, if the Sudan-Karamoja route was to be more effectively policed this route could quickly become more important. Somalis are very influential in the Kenya-Uganda border area. One respondent asserted: “the best arms smugglers are Somali – they carry guns on donkeys and they exchange them for oxen. They take *mira* (Khat) to Kachiliba in Kenya, Iriri, Karenga, Namule in Uganda; sometimes they transport the guns in *mira*”.<sup>21</sup> There appears to be a growing trend for the chewing of *mira* by young men in many small towns in border areas, a habit that has spread from Somalis. *Mira* grows wild on Mount Kadama and Mount Napa in Iriri, Uganda. Evidence suggests that it is some of the best *mira* in the region and that the harvesters are Somali.

### Sudan-Lokichogio

Traders from Sudan sometimes pass through Turkana villages in Kenya and sell small arms to them directly. Turkana traders then often take the arms into Upe Pokot areas in Karamoja region in Uganda for sale. From there, arms may once again be taken back across the border and re-sold in Kenya. Due to the rivalry between the Turkana and the Samburu, most arms that reach the latter come directly from Sudan to Lokichogio.

### Karenga-Lopoch-Kotido

The Karenga-Lopoch-Kotido route is the route through which the Jie clan of the Karimojong accumulates most of its small arms. The Jie clan is believed to be the main supplier of arms to the other clans of the Karimojong, largely due to its geographical location. In 1995 it was reported that there were six major small arms markets along the Sudan-Uganda border, including those at Logalangit, Kapedo, Kathile, Kangole, Moroto and Karenga. Small arms continue to be shuttled between such markets.<sup>22</sup> Karenga has been a major market for small arms,<sup>23</sup> although tighter security since December 2001 has affected the degree to which it has operated openly.

In interviews conducted for this report with members of the Jie clan it was claimed that a primary route for the movement of small arms has been through Dodoth County in southern Sudan. Other informants indicated that small arms obtained by the Jie came mainly from the border near Kidepo and from Didinga. Interviews also indicated that the Jie clan is the main source of small arms for the Turkana in Kenya and that its members are increasingly demanding payment in cash, rather than with cattle – as was the case in the past. For example, at the weekly markets at Kangole and Moroto cash is now the means of exchange. Those who use these markets are looking to generate cash, which is required to buy certain consumer goods.

A growing body of evidence makes it possible to gain some understanding of the barter- and cash-value of the arms that make it into the Kenya-Uganda border area today. From this evidence, it is clear that we need to distinguish between guns and ammunition. The price of a gun has come down enormously since the late-1970s. At the time, a gun could cost up to 70 cows. During the 1990s the cost of a gun dropped to between 20–30 cows. At one point, it reached 10–15 cows. By May–June 2001, research for this report indicated that, in a saturated market, guns were being exchanged for

<sup>21</sup> Interview, 20 June 2001 Source did not want to be identified. *Mira* grows wild on Mount Kadama and Mount Napa in Iriri, Uganda. Interviewees indicated that it is some of the best *mira* in the region. The harvesters were said to be Somalis. In small rural towns such as Iriri, Karenga, Amudat, and Namule, many young men are now eating *mira*.

<sup>22</sup> Interview with an elder, Moroto, 20 June 2001.

<sup>23</sup> Op cit ADOL, p 10.

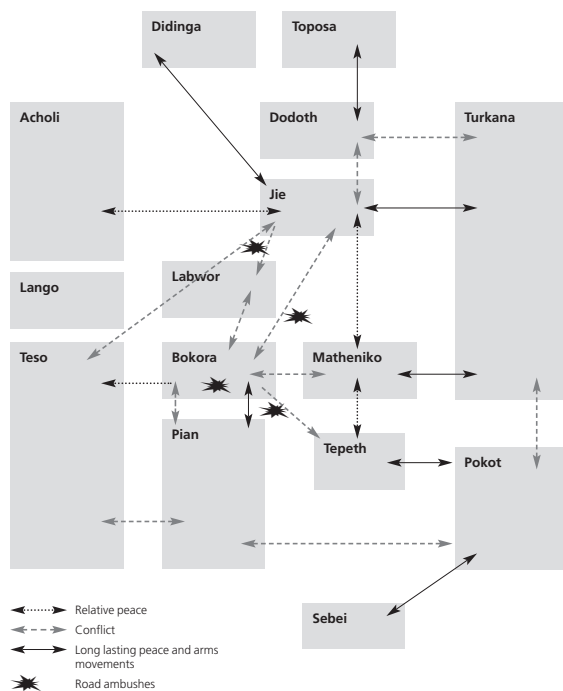
5–10 cows in Pokot. In Karamoja region an original Russian AK-47 was worth only 3 bulls.

Since the latest disarmament initiatives began, the price of guns in Karamoja region seems to have reduced further. Currently the cost of an AK-47 has reduced to between 200,000 to 400,000 Ugandan shillings per gun or 2–3 cows. Chinese-made guns are cheaper, costing 150,000–200,000 Ugandan shillings or 1–2 cows.<sup>24</sup> People in Nairobi, or those with contacts there, are reportedly able to rent guns. Rental for three days can cost US \$20 for a .38 calibre police-issued handgun and US \$130 for a submachine gun. An AK-47 can cost US \$30 to rent.<sup>25</sup>

By contrast, the cost of ammunition has risen dramatically. About a decade ago one could pay three Ugandan shillings (US \$.0018 cents) for one bullet. However, by 2001 the price had increased to 50 Ugandan shillings (US \$.029 cents).<sup>26</sup> Alternatively, one cow could be traded for a bucket full of bullets.<sup>27</sup> Ammunition was even more expensive in Kenya at that time. According to one official: “for ammunition, it is now 50 Kenya shillings (\$.62cents) for one live ammunition, though they are not readily available”.<sup>28</sup> As noted above, in Nairobi guns can be rented. However ammunition is extra and once again astonishingly expensive: US \$2.60 for “sharp-edged bullets” and US \$1.90 for “ordinary” bullets.<sup>29</sup> The price of ammunition in Karamoja region seems to have increased further since the latest disarmament initiatives began. Interviews undertaken for this report in January 2003 indicate that wholesale ammunition prices have now dropped to 50–100 bullets for a small cow and 100–200 for a huge bull. In cash sales, a bullet can now fetch between 500–1000 Ugandan shillings.

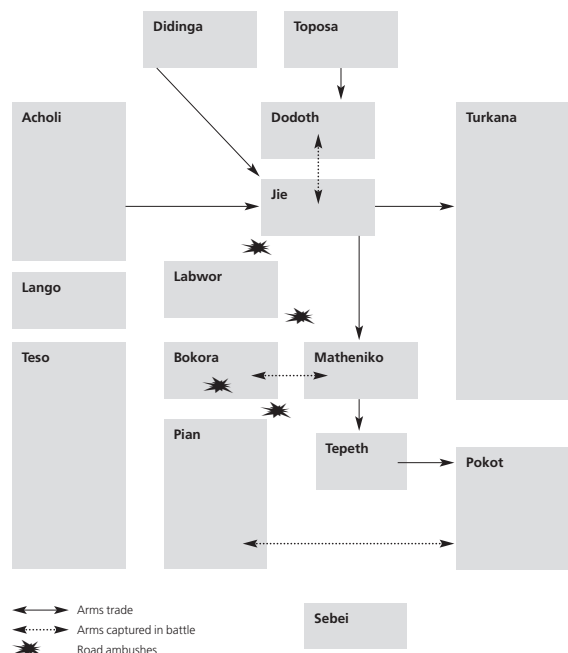
### Ethnic/tribal pattern of relationships February 2003

Adapted from: Gomes and Mkutu (2003)



### Arms trafficking in cross border Sudan, Kenya and Uganda February 2003

Source: Field interviews, 2003



<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Robinson (2001). <http://www.time.com/time/europe/af/magazine/0.9868,168544,00.htm>.

<sup>26</sup> Interviews Chief Shaban Muriri of Amudat now LC3 member Amudat, June 2001. Also interviews on in Alale 40 miles from Uganda border, with chiefs, focus group discussion with elders in which the most wanted elder (by Ugandan authorities) and most powerful Pokot elder, Arimoit, attended, as well as focus group discussions with women, Kenya police reservists. All mentioned the rising cost of ammunition. Alale (West Pokot) August, 2002.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Pastor Samuel Kotiyot, Amudat, 31 May 2001.

<sup>28</sup> Interviewee did not want to be identified.

<sup>29</sup> Robinson (2001).

The high price of ammunition reflects its relative scarcity in the Kenya-Uganda border area. Given that small arms are valueless without ammunition, it may be that a coordinated strategy to control its supply and use could be a valuable interim measure to reduce violence and insecurity while longer-term efforts to promote complete and sustained disarmament are pursued. It is to these efforts that we now turn.

# 4

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## Efforts to prevent or resolve conflict in the border area

**THERE HAVE BEEN MANY ATTEMPTS** to prevent or resolve conflict in the Kenya-Uganda border area in recent years. This section reviews the efforts by the Kenyan and Ugandan Governments in this regard, which have ranged from specific disarmament processes to wider peace-building initiatives. The main focus is on the Pokot in Kenya and Karimojong in Uganda. It also describes interventions by two regional organisations, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU – now the African Union) and the Inter Governmental Authority on Drought (IGAD). Finally, it addresses important community-based initiatives, which have been supported by donors such as the European Union (EU) and the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

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### Efforts by the Kenyan and Ugandan Governments

#### Kenya

Disarmament efforts in the 1980s were heavily dependent upon the use of force. Despite this, relatively few arms were seized. Relations with pastoral communities were badly damaged in the process. This has led to a revised strategy by the Kenyan Government since 1995, when it decided to offer amnesty to anybody who handed over guns. This approach has been supplemented by attempts to engage communities in dialogue and continued threats of force. There have been disarmament initiatives on this basis in most years since 1995. Offers of amnesty have not led to dramatically improved outcomes.

The most recent disarmament initiative on the Kenyan side of the border took place during 2001–2. Former President Daniel Arap Moi gave the residents of West Pokot, Marakwet and Baringo an ultimatum to hand over arms in exchange for amnesty. Pokot elders argued “it was difficult for the Pokot to live without guns, while their neighbours, including the Karimojong of Uganda, were allowed to use guns like walking sticks”.<sup>1</sup> The amnesty period ran out without any arms being recovered. As a result, a public education campaign was launched to persuade the Pokot to surrender their weapons. Local leaders, in particular the chiefs, were used to educate their communities on the importance of giving up their arms. In the background were government

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<sup>1</sup> *Daily Nation*, 22 April 2001.

threats to seize arms by force if co-operation was not forthcoming. In January 2002 the acting District Commissioner of West Pokot announced that the government was offering a further three-week amnesty period to West Pokot and Turkana residents to surrender all illicit arms, after which there would be a military crackdown. However, this crackdown appears not to have materialized as the country focused on presidential and parliamentary elections held in December 2002.

Since the coming to power of the new Kenyan Government in those elections, hopes have been raised that a new determination will be demonstrated in addressing the root causes of violence amongst pastoralists in the Kenya-Uganda border area. The new government has pledged to improve security in pastoralist areas. However, cattle raiding in West Pokot has increased in recent months. In late-April 2003, three people were killed in Lokichogio by fighters armed with AK47 rifles.

The previous Kenyan Government sought in its last years in power to develop a more sophisticated framework for co-operation with pastoral communities in pursuit of disarmament. To this end, it established a National Steering Committee on Conflict Resolution in 2000. The aims of the Committee are as follows: “To establish co-ordination, collaboration, and networking between government and civil society, with a view to strengthening and institutionalising effective national peace building and conflict resolution strategies and structures”.<sup>2</sup> Its responsibilities include: creating a databank on actual or potential sources of conflict; developing a national policy on conflict resolution with an emphasis on integrating peace-building into development programs; and organising public consultation processes. On the Committee is a representative of the Office of the President, NGO and religious representatives and delegates from UN and donor agencies. An interim secretariat serves the Committee. The Committee is very new and as yet untested, but it has the potential to be the basis for a more systematic and coherent approach to conflict management. The fact that it has the backing of the Office of the President may mean that it can play a more effective role under the new government.<sup>3</sup> Positively, to mark the third anniversary of the signing of the ‘Nairobi Declaration’, in March 2003 the new Kenyan Government announced that it was beginning to destroy the illicit weapons in its possession.<sup>4</sup> The government later destroyed over 8,000 small arms collected from various parts of Kenya.

## Uganda

Uganda has witnessed decades of disarmament initiatives aimed at the Karimojong. While in recent years there have been periodic offers of amnesty to those who handed over their guns, these initiatives have still been heavily based on coercion. They have also been overwhelmingly unsuccessful.

The most recent initiative had its origins in a resolution passed in April 2000 by the Ugandan Parliament that stated that the time had come for the Karimojong to be fully disarmed. The first phase of voluntary disarmament was due to get under way in late 2000. However, delays meant that it did not do so until 2 December 2001. The first phase of voluntary disarmament lasted until 15 February 2002.

The first phase of the initiative contained some innovative measures. In addition to offering an amnesty to those who handed over their small arms, the Ugandan Government also agreed to offer compensation, reflecting an acknowledgement that those with guns see them as an important economic asset as well as crucial for security. In return for handing over a gun, people would be provided with an ox-plough and a bag of maize flour. The initiative also sought to turn those who did surrender their guns into ambassadors for disarmament by using them in sensitisation activities. Those who did so would also receive some form of payment. Thirdly, the authorities tried to

<sup>2</sup> Juma, John, Office of the President of Kenya, August, 2002

<sup>3</sup> Interviews with senior officials in the Office of the President of the Republic of Kenya, May–July 2001.

<sup>4</sup> IRIN, 17 March 2003.

tackle the counter-productive activities of vigilante groups. It was decided to reduce the number of vigilantes from the estimated 8,000 on the Ugandan side of the border by setting the numbers allowed in each sub-county at 146 while at the same time providing them with training. This would involve demobilising 854 vigilantes in each sub-county of the previous complement of 1000. The remaining vigilantes were to be placed under much closer supervision by the UPDF.<sup>5</sup> These steps were accompanied by the most sustained efforts yet seen to close off the routes into Uganda used by small arms traders. The Uganda/Sudan and Uganda/Kenya borders were supposed to be sealed. Local officials and NGOs were strongly involved in Civil-Military Organisation Centres (CMOCS). The CMOCS were independent of government information points and centres established to assist the population during the disarmament process.<sup>6</sup>

The Inspector-General of Police stated: “The government as a matter of policy has been carrying out a disarmament exercise of the Karamoja tribesmen in the north-eastern region of Uganda bordering Kenya and Sudan ... the exercise is on-going and a good number of illicit firearms have been collected in exchange for cash rewards to those willingly surrendering their illegal weapons. An inventory of such weapons has been made and they are stored in government armouries”.<sup>7</sup>

As already stated, pastoralists with guns were given until 15 February 2002 to hand over their small arms. After that deadline, there would be a UPDF-led campaign of forcible disarmament. For all of its positive ingredients, phase one needed much longer than two-and-a-half months to bear fruit. A relatively sophisticated, low-key, strategy that held out considerable promise was too quickly superseded by the more traditional approach in which threats and force were once again prominent.

The short timeframe for phase one did little to reduce levels of mistrust of government on the part of pastoralist communities. In December 2001 some Upe Pokot fled with their cattle and guns to join their cousins in Kenya rather than be disarmed. According to a military commander: “These Pokot do not trust that the disarmament is for real, they think it is a trick from the government to take guns away from them and leave them at the mercy of their perennial Karimojong enemies”.<sup>8</sup>

The table below shows small arms returned as indicated by the different official registers.

**Voluntary disarmament (December 2001–15 February 2002): small arms returned.**

Counties	Units	SMG	SAR	SLR	G.3	LMG	U2 Gun	She GUN	M4	NATO	Pistol	HM <sup>9</sup>	RL <sup>10</sup>	Total
Labwor	67													173
Jie	67	1026	170	0	182	2	8	–	49	6	2	–	–	1,445
Dodoth	75	1614	191	12	186	5	9	4	31	17	–	4	1	2,076
Kotido		2640	361	12	368	7	17	4	80	23	2	4	1	3,594
Matheniko		967	125	10	170	–	10	2	28	9	2	4	–	1,328
Bokora	61	1337	110	70	47	1	20	10	14	–	4	3	1	1,617
Pian		820	112	60	49	–	21	9	16	7	–	2	–	1,097
Chewii		608	103	50	130	–	7	3	30	5	–	8	–	944
Pokot		744	140	42	82	–	9	11	22	10	–	–	–	1,060
Moroto		4,476	590	232	478	1	67	35	110	31	6	17	2	6,046

Source: 405 Infantry DDE headquarters, 17 June 2002.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Elizabeth Chepsok, 19 June 2001.

<sup>6</sup> For more on CMOCS see Gomes and Mkutu, 2003 op cit.

<sup>7</sup> Keynote address by the Inspector-General of police at the ‘Workshop on the Implementation of the Nairobi Declaration’, Kampala, 28 June 2001.

<sup>8</sup> *New Vision*, 18 December 2001; *Daily Nation*, 30 December 2001

<sup>9</sup> Home made guns

<sup>10</sup> Rocket launcher

<sup>11</sup> Also see ADOL (2002). *Karamoja response to disarmament* Pax Christi Netherlands. Also see Gomes and Mkutu, 2003 op cit.

The table above indicates the small arms returned as of 15 February 2002. In Kotido county 3,594 SALW had been returned. While in Moroto, which also covered the new district of Nakapiripiriti 6,046 SALW, were voluntarily returned. SMGs like the AK 47 were the most popular gun followed by SAR and G3. One significant point to note from the voluntarily disarmament is the presence of homemade SALW. At least 42 home made guns were returned indicating that the community has the capacity to manufacture their own arms. Also worth highlighting is that the types of SALW possessed by the Jie and Dodoth are the most sophisticated arms. The Jie and Dodoth, as noted earlier, live in the regions directly bordering Sudan and are therefore close to the source of many of the arms in the region. They have easy access to the SPLA and other groups like the National Islamic Front (NIF) that is believed to have supplied arms to Toposa.<sup>12</sup>

**Forceful disarmament (15 February 2002 to date): arms returned.**

Counties	Units	SMG	SAR	SLR	G.3	LMG	U2 Gun	She GUN	M4	NATO	Pistol	HM <sup>13</sup>	RL <sup>14</sup>	Total
Labwor	67													36
Jie	67	172	17	–	1	–	–	–	2	3	–	–	–	195
Dodoth		237	10	1	9	2	–	–	4	1	–	1	–	265
Kotido		409	27	1	10	2	–	–	6	4	–	1	–	496
Matheniko		203	10	3	1	–	–	–	–	–	–	3	–	220
Bokora	67	193	8	1	4	–	–	–	–	–	–	2	–	208
Pian		123	9	4	3	–	–	–	4	–	–	1	–	144
Chewii		182	3	8	2	–	–	–	3	2	–	3	–	203
Pokot		72	3	1	3	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	79
Moroto		773	33	17	13	–	–	–	–	2	–	9	–	854

Source: 405 Infantry DDE headquarters, 17 June 2002.<sup>15</sup>

Forceful disarmament (after end of grace period given to the Karimojongs to hand in their small arms) in the region has yielded at least 854 guns although some other interviews indicated 1,949 SALW. Not much has been achieved with the forceful disarmament. In total, approximately 10,686 guns have so far been recovered from Karamoja, and 763 from Kapachorwa district inclusive, some way short of the target for the disarmament exercise of 40,000.<sup>16</sup> Again, small but of significance is the fact that in each county in Karamoja except Pokot and Labwor, home made guns exists (at least 20 were recovered in total). This implies that even if the sophisticated arms are removed from the community, if they are not provided with alternative livelihood, they can manufacture their own weapons.

In May 2002, Karimojong fighters resisting disarmament reportedly killed up to 19 soldiers. The UPDF retaliated by setting on fire several Karimojong homesteads. At least 13 warriors were killed and the UPDF captured several weapons. A few days later, UPDF soldiers stripped and paraded over 50 Karimojong in Moroto town. The move followed the passing of a by-law prohibiting Karimojong men dressing in *sukas* (sheets of cloth wrapped around the body). The by-law was justified on the grounds that warriors were hiding weapons under their *sukas*. He said the order was also intended to enforce moral sanity in the Karimojong whose men walk naked to this day.<sup>17</sup> This in turn led a group of women from Rupa and Nadunget villages to protest in Moroto town, chanting songs critical of President Yoweri Museveni. Sections of the

<sup>12</sup> See for example IRIN, 19th June 2003

<sup>13</sup> Home made guns.

<sup>14</sup> Rocket launcher.

<sup>15</sup> See Gomes and Mkutu *ibid*.

<sup>16</sup> UPDF, 'The security situation and disarmament programme in Karamoja region' (Briefing to participants at the National Strategic Planning Workshop for Karamoja, 24 January 2003). Available at <http://www.karamoja.org>.

<sup>17</sup> *New Vision*, 14 May 2002.



Karimojong in Jie County were reported to have fled to Kenya with their livestock to avoid disarmament.

7,319 weapons had reportedly been handed in by 15 February 2002, the end of the voluntary disarmament phase. By mid-May 2002, the total number of weapons collected had reportedly reached 9,329. In January 2003, the UPDF stated that the number of weapons collected during the first and second phases of the disarmament initiative had reached 10,686.<sup>18</sup> The phase of forcible disarmament continues to this day.

It seems abundantly clear from these figures that the brief period of voluntary disarmament was far more productive in terms of weapons surrenders than has been the much more prolonged period of forcible disarmament. This is not to suggest that the first phase was somehow perfect in all respects. The CMOCs, which represented a potentially important means of promoting confidence in disarmament processes by establishing structures for civilian-military cooperation, ultimately collapsed.<sup>19</sup> They did so in part because the first phase of voluntary disarmament was simply too short but also because the government was unable to resist seeking to control them. As such, they failed to establish themselves as relatively autonomous organisations that were genuinely accountable to local communities. A further problem was that the CMOCs failed to develop structures at village level. Another, almost inevitably, was lack of funding. Equally importantly, the incentives offered for voluntary disarmament fell far short of what many in pastoralist communities had been hoping for. There was to be no local equivalent of the 'Marshall Plan', as some hoped. Field research indicates that many of those who disarmed sold the ox-ploughs they had been given.<sup>20</sup> For those living on mountains, the ploughs were useless.

There are other factors that help to explain why the latest disarmament initiative in Karamoja region has failed so far. Firstly, there is the effect of the continuing war with the LRA, which has reduced the number of soldiers available to provide security in the region. Secondly, there is the fact that parts of the security forces have continued to provide arms to different clans amongst the Karimojong, most notably the Pian clan in Nakapiripirit district, who have used them to raid their neighbours.<sup>21</sup> Thirdly, there has been a failure effectively to block the routes used for bringing small arms into the region. Fourthly, it has been alleged that the LDUs, which are supposed to protect the communities, have been recruited to fight the LRA, a role they are not equipped to perform.<sup>22</sup> The use of militia in fighting LRA raises the issues of their legality and accountability in case they abuse people's human rights<sup>23</sup>. Finally, the absence of a complementary disarmament effort across the border in Kenya seriously undermined the effectiveness of the disarmament exercise in Uganda. Without disarmament initiatives on the Kenyan side of the border Kenyan raiders were able to attack the unarmed Ugandan pastoralists and in so doing created new demand for arms among the Ugandan pastoralists for self defence, in the absence of effective security measures to protect them from these raids. Disarmament efforts in Uganda also meant that

<sup>18</sup> Op cit UPDF.

<sup>19</sup> Many lessons can be learned from observing the demise of the CMOCs. Firstly, the initial concept was narrow, involving police and judiciary would have greatly assisted their functioning. Secondly, the running of the centres had more military overtones than civilian, even through this was contrary to those of CMOCs. Thirdly, the title of the centres should have reflected its human rights function. Fourthly, proper training and proper delegation of duties according to what a given stakeholder could do well, would have gone a long way in streamlining and enhancing the efficiency of operations of the CMOCs. In future, assigning roles to different stakeholders would assist and avoid confusion in operations. Fifthly, any future use of CMOCs would require re-thinking donor support. The support provided to CMOCs was geared to supporting only NGOs and CSOs. The support should have been extended to government agencies dealing with peace-building and security. Sixth, any future CMOCs would have to ensure that monitoring and evaluation would be incorporated in the process. Also, there is a need to provide basic training for the officials of the centres. The training would need to include managing disputes, simple training in human rights etc. The training would need to be extended to LDUs, CMOCs, civil society and UPDF. Seventh, lack of proper co-ordination between UHRC, local government, RDC, CAO, LWF and Minister for Karamoja undermined the entire process. Future attempts should be made to streamline co-ordination where it is lacking. Finally, resources to strengthen the information and reporting functions should be given priority and be made available by both donors and government to the CMOCs. Budgets should also be decentralised to individual centres and CMOCs should participate with training in budget management. Women are heavily involved in the conflict and greatly influence their husbands and children to hand in guns; they should be involved.

<sup>20</sup> For more see Gomes and Mkutu op cit.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> See for example IRIN 8 September 2003. The GoU admits that it is using militia to fight LRA. The use of LRA could create more warlords than currently exist.

some arms were simply moved across the border to Kenya to avoid the disarmament efforts of the Ugandan government.

Despite the fact that many pastoralists tend to view the UPDF as part of the problem rather than the solution, field research conducted for this report suggests that it could have an important role to play in preventing and reducing conflict on the Ugandan side of the border if its approach changed. For example, the UPDF was active during 2001 in peace-building initiatives in Karita sub-county. Karita sub-county is highly isolated, lacking social amenities and physical infrastructure. At first, the UPDF worked to restore peace between the Pokot and the Pian clan of the Karimojong and provide civilian protection for citizens living in the region. Community informants initially expressed satisfaction with the UPDF's activities and complimented the army on their friendly approach: "the UPDF are not thieves. They do not beat us. They only inquire about our problems. When we go to get water in the river, they accompany us. They tell us we should build our lives, they are not bad".<sup>24</sup> Unlike other areas in Karamoja region, the UPDF did not allow young men to carry guns freely. During one peace meeting over 400 young men came with rifles. The army disarmed them and kept their guns in a strong room. After the meeting, the rifles were returned to their owners who then left peacefully. The Administrative Police also played a constructive role in Karita sub-county in building peace.

The case of Karita sub-county shows that the security forces need not just be part of the problem – they can be part of the solution too if their military commanders and political leaders will allow them. However, recent reports suggest that the UPDF has not sustained its more constructive role in Karita as the forcible disarmament phase has continued. The fragile peace has broken down amidst renewed fighting between the Pian and the Pokot. There have also been clashes between the Pokot and the UPDF. One such clash in December 2002 left 12 soldiers dead.

## Co-operation between the two governments

The two governments have made a number of attempts to develop a more co-ordinated approach to peace and security in the Kenya-Uganda border area since 1997. In May 1997, they organised a joint peace meeting between the Turkana and Pokot from Kenya and the Upe Pokot and Karimojong from Uganda. Mr. Mohammed Yusuf Haji, the then Provincial Commissioner of Rift Valley Province, headed the Kenyan delegation. Hon Peter Lokaris, the Minister of State for Karamoja, led the delegates from Uganda. There were three main outcomes from the meeting. Firstly, in order to improve security co-operation, it was agreed to increase border patrols and establish or re-open border posts. It was also agreed that there should be improved exchange of intelligence. Operational responsibility for co-operation was given to the Provincial Police Officer (PPO) and the District Commissioners for Turkana and West Pokot on the Kenya side, and the Anti Stock Theft Unit, the UDPF and Resident District Commissioners of Moroto and Kotido districts on the Ugandan side.

Secondly, various development programmes were identified as priorities, including building link roads, water development, human and animal health services, basic education and telecommunication. Lead responsibility on the Kenyan side was assigned to the chairmen of the District Development Committees (DDCs) and District Education Boards (DEBs), who are the District commissioners for Turkana and West Pokot. On the Ugandan side lead responsibility was given to the Chief Administrative Officers and to the local Council V chairmen of Kotido and Moroto districts, working with the Permanent Secretary to the Minister of State for Karamoja.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Patrick Sabotori, Karita Sub-County, 31 May 2001. Also see Mkutu, Kennedy 'Challenges of Cross Border Co-operation: the case of Kenya and Uganda' paper presented at the 'International Conference on Small Arms Trafficking in the Border Regions of Sudan, Uganda and Kenya: Determining the Issues and Setting the Strategies' 9–13 November 2001 Jinja – Uganda.

Thirdly, it was agreed that there should be regular follow-up meetings and monitoring of the delivery of what had been agreed.<sup>25</sup> Important as these agreements were, vital questions of governance, marginalisation, the weakened authority of elders and the broader relationship between security and development were barely addressed.

Despite agreement that there be regular high-level meetings to co-ordinate actions, relatively few have taken place. The Ministry of State for Karamoja has continued to liaise with the Kenyan Government and this has produced occasional positive results. In 2000, following the invasion by Turkana of Kidepo National Park with their animals, the Karimojong called on the Ugandan Government to arm them so that the Turkana could be forcibly expelled. The government refused and worked with its Kenyan counterpart to resolve the issue peacefully. A traditional peace agreement was ultimately achieved that allowed the Turkana to graze in the National Park.<sup>26</sup>

In May 2002, with clashes intensifying between the UPDF and the Karimojong, the Kenyan Government agreed to disarm pastoralists crossing into Kenya from Karamoja region and return the weapons to the Ugandan authorities. This produced little in practice. In early 2003, Kenyan and Ugandan officials met to discuss ways of reducing cross-border violence. The Kenyan Minister of Security also met with President Museveni to this end. But there remains very little evidence that a coherent joint strategy is any nearer to being achieved. On 8 September 2003, the Government of Kenya injected 650 million shillings for the revival of Kenya's meat commission,<sup>27</sup> a very good move to assist the marketing of pastoralist stock. The idea is good and well intentioned, but power dynamics on the ground must be addressed as benefits could still go the warlords instead of the communities.

### Assessing government efforts

There is an urgent need to create sustained day-to-day cross-border co-operation. This should address more than just security issues as traditionally conceived. It is crucial that co-operative efforts tackle the root causes of conflict – above all, endemic competition over scarce resources and the wider lack of development in the Kenya-Uganda border area, which leaves many young men without alternative livelihood strategies. This lack of alternatives means that young men, once disarmed, often gravitate towards the businessmen/warlords who need their own militias for illegal activities and who can provide pay or some other form of economic benefit. In Uganda, current measures to reduce the number of vigilantes could simply play into the hands of such businessmen/warlords. Some may even find their way into the LRA. This is what happened to many of the 36,000 soldiers that were demobilised by the UPDF during 1992–5. Those disarmed or demobilised must be provided with employment and effective mechanisms for 'tracking' them afterwards are required so that problems of reintegration can be tackled early.

The Kenyan and Ugandan Governments also need to co-operate much more with the Sudanese and Ethiopian Governments, both of whose territories have been used as routes for the illicit livestock and small arms trades. A regionally co-ordinated disarmament initiative is vital if the arms that are claimed in one part of the region are not simply to be displaced to other parts of the region. Such co-ordination should embrace community-based initiatives too (see below). This is currently lacking. If all communities are not disarmed simultaneously, those that have been will inevitably feel vulnerable to attack as the on-going disarmament in Karamoja has proved. The result will be resistance to disarmament and re-armament as the Karimojong are currently doing.

<sup>25</sup> 'Kenya-Uganda joint peace meeting between the Turkana, Pokot of Kenya, the Karamojong, Pokot and their immediate neighbours of Uganda', Moroto, Uganda, May 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Interview with Hon Peter Lokoris, Minister for Karamoja, Jinja, 12 November 2001.

<sup>27</sup> Daily Nation, 9 September 2003

To address these issues effectively, institutional mechanisms for co-operation are required. Day-to-day efforts at co-operation have depended heavily up to now on committed local officials, who have too often been transferred just as they were beginning to make a difference. The key is effective implementation of the March 2000 'Nairobi Declaration on the problem of the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa'. Both Kenya and Uganda have now established the National Focal Points that it was agreed should oversee implementation of the Declaration at the national level and co-ordinate with the regional secretariat, based in Nairobi. The challenge now is to render them effective.

## Efforts by regional organisations

### The OAU

The OAU has become involved through its Inter-Africa Bureau for Animal Research (IBAR). IBAR's mandate includes the control and eradication of epizootics as well as the promotion of animal health across the African continent. IBAR has been drawn into conflict management and peace-building activities through its work to protect livestock health.<sup>28</sup>

IBAR has found that its work to eradicate rinderpest was being continually undermined by the high levels of insecurity in the Kenya-Uganda border area. IBAR has held a series of meetings with community elders, bringing together leaders from the different groups to explore ways and means of restoring peace and creating an environment that allows for long-term planning and development.<sup>29</sup> At a workshop held in Mbale, Uganda, in May 2001,<sup>30</sup> participants developed action plans and identified key implementing partners to promote peace and development in the region. The major issues addressed included ensuring that the voices of pastoral communities were better heard. It was agreed that continued community-level dialogue was essential and that IBAR should identify ways to improve information flow and document best practice.<sup>31</sup> The most recent initiatives by IBAR have been to support women's 'peace crusades' in the cross-border area and a number of peace choirs to raise awareness on security issues. The limitation with the IBAR approach like those of other civil society groups in Karamoja, including churches, NGOs and CBOs, is that they have invested a huge amount of money in the organisation of peace meetings between warring groups. However, as noted in an interview by the Chief Administrative Officer for Kotido, they have just been fire fighting and not addressing the root causes.<sup>32</sup> In an interview with Terrace Achia, the Local Council five (LC5) Moroto, he argued, "we are tired of meetings that achieve nothing".<sup>33</sup>

### IGAD

The Inter Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD) has been trying to reduce conflict in the Horn of Africa, including the Kenya-Uganda border area. IGAD has commissioned the UK-based NGO FEWER to undertake research into pastoralist conflict on the borders of Kenya, Uganda, Sudan and Ethiopia. On the basis of this research, it has developed a Conflict Early Warning Response Mechanism (CEWARN) as part of its conflict management and resolution mandate. Crucially, however, the research and work by IGAD in its attempt to develop an early warning mechanism for conflict does not address nor examine the *alomer* security council. An *alomer* is a group of 5 to 10 kraals. In each kraal, there exists a council to monitor the movement of *Karachunas* (warriors) in Karamoja and enforce discipline, identify criminals and hand them over to the government, disarm the undisciplined *Karachunas* and practice

28 IBAR, 'Karamoja cluster harmonization meeting', Lodwar, Kenya, 6–8 December 1999, p 7.

29 Ibid.

30 IBAR, *Brief report on Pastoral community harmonization meeting*, Mbale, Uganda, May 2001 IBAR (2001).

31 Ibid.

32 For more on the limitation of IBAR and other civil society initiatives see Gomes and Mkuu op cit.

33 Terrace Achia, LC5 Moroto, Interview, Mbale, 17 May, 2003.

traditional punishment (*ameto*).<sup>34</sup> The failure to incorporate traditional community structures like *alomer* councils makes CEWARN a failure before it even kicks off. Ignoring traditional community structures, like *alomer*, make cross border conflicts impossible to manage.

## Community-based initiatives

### The KISP elders

The Karamoja Initiative for Sustainable Peace (KISP) is a Ugandan community-based initiative by elders that has developed good ties with their counterparts on the Kenyan side of the border. Elders in the Karamoja region have decided to try and reclaim their traditional leadership role within their communities.

KISP was formed in August 1998 by elders from the eight counties of the Karamoja region.<sup>35</sup> The objectives of KISP include: to unite Karimojong communities on the basis of their common cultural heritage; to establish peace within the Karamoja region and between the Karimojong and its neighbours, including through cross-border initiatives; to revive the authority of councils of elders; and to promote and achieve development in the Karamoja region. Over 80 per cent of KISPs funding has come from the EU. The balance has come from the Italian Government and from local contributions. KISP played an important role in bringing peace in 2001 between the Pokot of Kenya and Uganda on one hand and between the Turkana of Kenya and the Jie and Dodoth (clans of the Karimojong) of Uganda on the other.

Its activities have included advocacy to persuade aid agencies and donors to support conflict management and peace-building initiatives. It has also organised peace sensitisation meetings. For example, KISP organised four such meetings in Uganda during May–June 2001. The first meeting was held in Achorichor on 19 May 2001. Participants included the Pokot, the Matheniko, the Pian and the Tepes. The second meeting on 26 May in Nakapiripirit brought young fighters from the Pokot, the Pian and the Kadama, along with government and army officials. A third meeting was held in Karita sub-county on 31 May. Here, the participants included the Sebei, the Pokot (Kenya and Uganda) and the Karimojong. A delegation from Kenya also attended. The fourth meeting took place in Namule on 1 June. Participants included the fighters that had attended the Karita meeting, leaders from Namule, and the Hon Peter Lokoris, Minister for Karamoja. KISP has the capacity to address traditional issues in Karamoja and it is very good at liaising with the elders and bringing the community together to settle disputes. However, recently, KISP decided to incorporate development in its strategy, despite lacking the human capacity to address development.

### The KPIU

The Karamoja Project Initiative Unit (KPIU) was established in 1995 with EU support.<sup>36</sup> More recently, it has also received funding from DFID. KPIU mainly works with communities in the Karamoja region but is also supporting initiatives by elders such as KISP. It has offices in Kotido and Moroto districts. The KPIU employs participatory approaches and gives communities the power to define their own priorities. Five key sectors have been identified on this basis: water, livestock, agriculture, environment and community development. The KPIU has sought to support the following: the establishment of schools; micro-credit programmes; privately-owned tree nurseries and tree planting initiatives; and the building of dams and tanks to increase access to water.

The KPIU appears to have a positive reputation among those communities that it works with. Its emphasis on encouraging local ownership and sustainability is bearing

<sup>34</sup> For more on *Alomer* security councils see Gomes and Mkutu op cit.

<sup>35</sup> The 8 counties comprise Chekwi, Pian, Bokora, Matheniko, Labwor, Pokot, Dodoth and Jie.

<sup>36</sup> Interviews with Simon Egadu and Julius Ogwanda Ongom, KPIU, Moroto, 14–15 June 2001.

fruit, as is its realisation that insecurity can only be reduced in the long-term if there are economic incentives to pursue a peaceful path. The project should be replicated on the West Pokot side. However, the decision by the EU to hand control over the project to the Ugandan Government has already undermined its effectiveness. Since January 2003, KPIU has been restructuring. Recent field research suggests that the KPIU is scaling down its programmes. An evaluation by the EU is essential to determine what the achievements of the KPIU have been since it was handed over to the government.

**POKATUSA  
(Pokot, Karamoja,  
Turkana and Sebei)**

POKATUSA is a peace-building cross-border project originally established in June 1997, whose name is an acronym of the first two letters of Pokot, Karimojong, Turkana and Sebei. It operates in four districts in Kenya and two in Uganda. It is co-ordinated by World Vision (WV) and funded by DIFD. However, it lay relatively dormant until March 2001 and is a relatively new actor on the scene.

POKATUSA has two structures that deal with peace and security issues: the District Peace and Reconciliation Committee (DPRC) and the Location Peace and Reconciliation Committee (LPRC). Membership of the DPRC is comprised of local MPs, District Commissioners, teachers, senior fighters, LDUs, traditional healers, women and church leaders. The LPRC is comprised of the same membership less the MPs and District Commissioners. The DPRCs and LRPCs act as an early warning system when cattle raids are imminent and seek to recover raided cattle. POKATUSA has co-operated with KISP elders.

POKATUSA has more recently established a Joint Venture Committee (IJVC). It includes representatives of national governments, MPs and religious leaders from Kenya and Uganda. The main objective of this committee is to influence policies through lobbying and advocacy. They are also mandated to supervise POKATUSA projects on the ground. Members of the committee have participated in a number of international conferences and peace meetings and are lobbying for follow-up funding, given that the project is supposed to end in September 2004. There appear to be growing doubts as to the effectiveness of the project and mutual recriminations over who is to blame for the problems that have arisen.

## Recommendations

**IT IS CLEAR FROM THE FOREGOING DISCUSSION** that success in reducing the level of armed violence amongst pastoralists in the Kenya/Uganda border area will ultimately depend on the development of positive partnerships between governments, their agencies, civil society organisations and communities at the local and national levels and between governments and their agencies at the regional level.

Fundamentally, these partnerships will need to address the complex range of factors that drive pastoralists to acquire and use small arms – from the scarcity of resources and lack of development and economic opportunities, to the need to protect themselves and their livelihoods and the emergence of a culture of weaponisation and violence. Comprehensive solutions are therefore required which ultimately enhance security and prosperity for all on the Kenya-Uganda border.

Efforts to reduce the availability and circulation of arms amongst the pastoralists will necessitate the adoption and implementation of a range of political, institutional and legal measures to tackle supply and availability of SALW on the ground. In this regard, the signing in March 2000 of the ‘Nairobi Declaration’<sup>1</sup>, which explicitly acknowledges the link between security and development, represents a crucial political framework for tackling small arms proliferation and misuse in Eastern Africa. Whilst the implementation of the ‘Nairobi Declaration’ and its ‘Co-ordinated Agenda for Action’<sup>2</sup> has proceeded more slowly than originally anticipated, governments remain committed to the process. At the same time, there is considerable scope for the implementation of the ‘Nairobi Declaration’ commitments to impact positively upon the small arms situation in the Kenya-Uganda border area and beyond.

Whilst this report is primarily concerned with the situation of the pastoralist communities in Kenya and Uganda, in view of the regional character of the small arms problem affecting them, many of the recommendations for action set out below have a wider regional application and are put forward for consideration by all those seeking to become involved in tackling the small arms problem in Eastern Africa.

<sup>1</sup> ‘Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa, March 2000’; <http://www.ploughshares.ca/CONTENT/BUILD%20PEACE/NairobiDeclar00.html>

<sup>2</sup> ‘Co-ordinated Agenda for Action on the Problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa; November 2000’; <http://www.saferfrica.org/DocumentsCentre/Books/Matrix/Nairobi%20Agenda.asp>

## Developing the institutional, legal and policy framework for tackling SALW proliferation and misuse

Despite the serious nature of the small arms problem in East Africa, until recently this region was characterised by the lack of a common approach to this problem. Developments within the Eastern African Police Chiefs Committee (EAPCCO) and the 'Nairobi Declaration' and 'Co-ordinated Agenda for Action' have, however, provided the political impetus and operational framework required for co-ordinated action against small arms in the sub-region and will necessarily impact on the availability and misuse of SALW in the Kenya-Uganda border area. Priority areas for action include:

- Continued support for the Nairobi Secretariat – the regional body responsible for implementation of the 'Nairobi Declaration' commitments is now effectively operational, with a new Co-ordinator and experienced staff drawn from Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. However, it requires continued donor support and increased financial support from States Parties to sustain its operations. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for the interaction between the Secretariat and National Focal Points are currently being developed. The Secretariat has a role to play in helping co-ordinate co-operation between National Focal Points to tackle cross-border issues.
- Continued support for National Focal Points – in accordance with the 'Nairobi Declaration', Kenya and Uganda have both established NFPs to co-ordinate inter-agency work on small arms issues. Importantly, civil society organisations are included as members of both NFPs. The development and sharing of annual work plans and reports on activities and of exchange programmes to facilitate cross-fertilisation of ideas and sharing of best practice between the NFPs will be important to effectively address the cross-border small arms problem.
- Approval by Eastern African Ministers of the draft 'EAPCCO Protocol on Small Arms and Light Weapons' and the subsequent setting in motion of a process of harmonisation of relevant legislation across the Eastern African sub-region specifying, inter alia: a prohibition on the unrestricted civilian possession of small arms and the total prohibition of the civilian possession and use of light weapons including automatic and semi-automatic rifles and machine guns; regulation and centralised registration of all firearms owned by civilians; regulation and control of the manufacture, import, export, transfer, brokering, possession and use of SALW ammunition and related material; standardised marking and identification of SALW at the time of manufacture, import and export; and establishing common penalties for illegal firearms possession and use.
- The development and co-ordination of complementary National Action Plans that contain comprehensive measures to address the cross-border small arms and conflict issue. The Ugandan Government has completed a national assessment of the small arms problem and is at the time of writing in October 2003 developing its National Action Plan. The Kenyan national assessment is also currently underway. It is important that both National Action Plans include provision for joint cross-border operations and development programmes to combat small arms proliferation.

## Building capacity and enhancing the effectiveness of operational agencies

The effective and responsible operation of law enforcement agencies – including police, border guards, customs and immigration officials and, in some cases, the military – will be central to efforts to addressing the increased availability and use of SALW in the Kenya-Uganda border area. The operation of such agencies can also have a major impact upon the demand for small arms, since unprofessional behaviour and, in the worst-case scenario, abuses of human rights by such agencies can lead to civilian populations taking up arms to protect themselves. Priorities for enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of operational agencies in East Africa as a whole include:



- Co-ordinated training for law enforcement agencies, including an assessment of capacity and training needs, the development of common guidelines for training, and common curricula for law enforcement agencies across the sub-region. Training in human rights and local conflict prevention, as well as increasing the capacity of such agencies to play a positive role in non-coercive disarmament initiatives will be important facets of such training (also see below).
- The development of effective systems for monitoring small arms flows throughout the Kenya-Uganda border area in order that government resources can be allocated in accordance with needs.
- The undertaking of Joint Operations for weapons control and reduction on a bilateral and sub-regional basis through, and with the support of EAPCCO and the Interpol sub-regional bureau. An increase in cross border co-operation between operational agencies in Kenya and Uganda is essential with emphasis on joint border controls and action to prevent illicit flows of arms; border posts should be established or re-opened along known smuggling routes.
- Given that it is already expensive and in short supply, exploring means of further reducing the availability of ammunition in the border area, giving time for longer-term initiatives to begin having an impact.
- The development of guidelines and implementation of systems for effective control and disposal of state-owned SALW so as to reduce the vulnerability to theft of state-owned stockpiles of SALW. All weapons deemed surplus to requirements should be speedily and effectively destroyed.
- Development of enhanced systems for assessing the performance and ensuring the accountability of state institutions at all levels, for example, through vigorous and co-ordinated anti-corruption measures, improving training for officials and paying adequate salaries on time.

## Developing partnerships amongst stakeholders

Effective action to tackle the spread and misuse of firearms on the Kenya-Uganda border will require collaboration between all those with a stake in achieving a more peaceful society. Government institutions and agencies must work together in genuine partnership with civil society in order to arrive at a common understanding of the nature of the problems to be addressed leading to the development of a shared agenda for resolving them. Interlinking structures and organisations dedicated towards addressing security and small arms issues should be established; these should incorporate representatives from all levels of society so as to ensure full accountability. Structures such as the inclusive National Steering Committee on Conflict Resolution in Kenya should be empowered and provided with the resources and the political support required for it to pursue its aims. Comparable structures should be established by other governments across the sub-region. Systems must be developed and institutions adapted so as to allow partnerships to develop, for example through:

- The creation, by the National Focal Point, of national databases on civilian- and state-owned small arms, as well as on illicit arms that are seized, confiscated or destroyed; the development of guidelines for exchange of information between government and civil society would also be useful, together with guidelines for exchanging information on a sub-regional basis.
- Public awareness-raising programmes should be developed jointly by government and civil society organisations in order to promote a better understanding of the problems caused by the spread and misuse of small arms and to build support for disarmament initiatives.

- Research into and monitoring of the small arms problem should be conducted on a continual basis in the Kenya-Uganda border area in order that changes in the nature of the small arms dynamic can be met in a timely and appropriate manner.
- Ensure recognition by government agencies and representatives of the role that traditional institutions and governance systems play in managing conflict and enforcing law at the local level. Where traditional structures are waning governments should support efforts to revive and strengthen local institutions such as councils of elders.

## Disarmament

The trend towards ever-increasing violence and instability on the Kenya-Uganda border cannot be countered whilst small arms are freely available and continue to flow into the area. Renewed efforts must be made, therefore, to reduce the widespread availability and use of small arms amongst the pastoralist communities and their neighbours. It is vital, however, that disarmament initiatives are pursued simultaneously and in a co-ordinated fashion across the entire border region in order to build confidence in the process and reduce the likelihood of those taking part in disarmament initiatives becoming vulnerable to attack from others who are not. Whilst the exact scope and nature of disarmament programmes needs to be tailored to specific conditions on the ground, previous experience of disarmament in the border region and elsewhere has given rise to a number of key conclusions:

- Disarmament initiatives need to incorporate provisions for “giving something back” to the communities as well as to the individuals who surrender weapons; the feasibility of undertaking “weapons-for-development” programmes, where the surrender of weapons is linked to the provision of social services and capital infrastructure, should be explored by the Kenyan and Ugandan governments in co-operation with the donor community. Notwithstanding the pursuit or otherwise of such “weapons for development” programmes, disarmament initiatives should be incorporated into broader strategies to promote sustainable development (see below).
- Disarmament initiatives need to be carried out in co-operation with local people and should go hand-in-hand with public awareness-raising programmes on the dangers of SALW proliferation and misuse. The role of women as agents for peace needs to be fully recognised and women employed in developing, building support for, and implementing disarmament initiatives.
- Disarmament programmes must be co-ordinated on both sides of the border. The absence of this in the past has led to a failure to address the small arms problem.
- Consensual disarmament programmes need to be given sufficient time to succeed and the adoption of coercive measures should be seen as a last resort.
- Provisions must be made for the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of former fighters returning from Sudan, the DRC and other conflict zones. Ex-combatants need to be provided with an alternative source of livelihood whilst effective mechanisms should be established for tracking demobilised combatants and addressing problems of re-integration.

## Reducing insecurity and increasing community safety

Arms management and disarmament initiatives will ultimately be ineffective unless they are complemented by increased security and sustained peace-building efforts at community-level in the border area. The governments should:

- Investigate and, where appropriate, prosecute the emerging businessmen/warlords in the border area who are implicated in commercialised cattle-raiding, the small arms trade and other illegal activities before they become even more powerful and a threat to state governance.
- Disband all vigilante groups, which have been shown to undermine rather than promote security. Some members of these groups could be integrated into the security forces following training.
- Establish a programme of community-based policing in the border region. The Kenyan Government is currently implementing a new pilot project in community-based policing and Uganda has a community policing policy that has not been widely implemented. There is an urgent need to build trust between security forces, law enforcement agencies and the public on both sides of the border. A new partnership approach to providing security and community safety is vital.
- Explicitly address previously 'hidden' gender dimensions of conflict in the border area, including pressures generated by steady increases in bride-price and the growing problem of domestic violence.
- Promote dialogue and peace-building initiatives within and between communities in the border area, working closely with actors such as KISP, KPIU and POKATUSA and supporting the full involvement of women in such initiatives.
- Consistently involve community representatives in processes and mechanisms for cross-border co-operation. Government officials and community representatives on both sides of the border should develop 'conflict management plans' for each district.

## Providing alternative economic livelihoods

Crucial to peace-building is the provision of meaningful economic alternatives to cattle raiding and other illegal activities for the young men, mostly between 16–25 years' old, who make up the bulk of the armed groups. This applies equally to initiatives to demobilise and reintegrate former vigilantes or soldiers, such as are taking place in Uganda today. Unemployment and social exclusion, unless tackled effectively, will continue to undermine peace and security in the border area. The governments should:

- Revive and/or strengthen the education system in the border area and encourage maximum take-up of free school places at primary level. The new Kenyan Government has introduced this measure, so free school places at primary level again exist, at least in theory, in both countries.
- Support the creation of civic-minded youth associations that can provide opportunities for social interaction.
- Establish, in co-operation with donors, micro-credit projects and skills training for young men – for example, in carpentry, welding or vehicle repairs.
- Create effective systems to ensure that the demobilisation of soldiers or reservists is also accompanied by systems for tracking and supporting them.

## Supporting sustainable development

It is, of course, important to ensure that increased economic opportunities are provided to all members of communities lest a sense of injustice grow that only ‘ex-combatants’ are being provided for. The provision of alternative economic livelihoods to those currently involved in armed cattle raiding and other illegal activities should form part of broader strategies for promoting sustainable development in the border area.<sup>3</sup> The governments should:

- Improve strategies for managing and allocating scarce resources in the border area, in particular access to water and grazing land, to reduce the intensity of competition for scarce resources and help to manage crises such as extended droughts. Traditional strategies should be actively encouraged where they remain potentially effective.
- Adopt development policies and land tenure arrangements that appropriately recognise the needs and interests of pastoralists as well as those of agriculturalists, ranchers and urban communities.
- Actively explore possibilities for the diversification of pastoralists’ livelihood strategies, whilst not ending the pastoralist lifestyle. For example:
  - **commercial livestock rearing (as opposed to raiding) on a ‘small-owner’ basis** At the moment, the main beneficiaries of livestock sales on a commercial basis at local markets are the bigger operators, including the emerging businessmen/warlords. Improved veterinary services could help to ensure a steady increase in the numbers of livestock in the border area. In addition, livestock could be the basis for small-scale micro-enterprises in spheres such as meat production, hides, horns and other derivatives.
  - **harvesting of gum Arabic or acacia gum** Gum Arabic is used to make glue and medicine, is used in the textile and food industries and in the preparing of paints and printing ink. In the Karamoja region, gum Arabic is largely produced from Acacia Senegal. This species constitutes more than 60 per cent of the vegetation of Kotido, Moroto and Nakapiripirit districts in Uganda.
  - **expanding farming activities** Not all the potentially good agricultural land is being properly exploited at present, for example in parts of the Karamoja region such as Namalu, Irimi and Karita. Many Karimojong and Pokot have indicated they are prepared to become farmers, particularly those who have partially or totally lost their livestock. However, security levels would have to improve first.
  - **developing a mining industry** There are mineral resources in the border area that could be exploited, such as gold, rubies and marble, although some have questioned how far local communities would benefit if ‘outsider’ corporations were given the go-ahead
  - **petty trade and small enterprises** Women have always been particularly quick to take advantage of economic opportunities presented by petty trade and small businesses. One possible area for encouragement in the border area is bee-keeping.
- Reduce levels of military expenditure as security improves, and channel freed resources into development.

## The role of the donor community

Most of the funds needed to combat the illicit small arms trade, strengthen security and end conflict in the Horn of Africa, including the Kenya-Uganda border area, will have to be provided by international donors. Donors can bring a great deal more than just financial resources – they can also bring invaluable experience and expertise developed through support for conflict prevention, disarmament and development

<sup>3</sup> A number of these suggestions on possible alternative sources of income are based on interviews conducted in 2001 for this report. Special thanks are due to Father Bosco at Amudat and to Simon Egadu, head of the KPIU.

initiatives around the world. However this experience can also be a double-edged sword in that donors can also skew the provision of assistance according to their domestic concerns and priorities, regardless of the imperatives of a particular region or locale. Broadly speaking, there are a number of principles that should guide the provision of donor assistance for the purposes of conflict prevention and small arms control in the Kenya-Uganda border area and elsewhere:<sup>4</sup>

- Ensure that existing development assistance programmes contribute to efforts to prevent conflict by helping to tackle 'root causes'. Peace and conflict impact assessments should be applied at the planning, implementation and evaluation stages of development interventions. At an absolute minimum, such programmes should do no harm in this respect.
- Encourage effective measures by the national and local authorities and policy-making groups in Kenya and Uganda to identify and understand the factors contributing to conflicts involving pastoral communities and to prioritise measures to tackle these conflicts. This includes recognising that some existing policies, laws and practices are contributing to the problem and need revision.
- Recognise that the efforts of the Kenyan and Ugandan Governments to tackle the root causes of conflict in the border area can only be effective if there is a commitment to long-term engagement on the part of the donor community.
- Promote disarmament initiatives in which the emphasis is on voluntary co-operation and community involvement.
- Ensure that any disarmament or demobilisation initiatives funded by them do not simply displace small arms elsewhere and ensure that they provide adequate opportunities for the construction of viable alternative livelihoods.
- Seek to improve overall co-ordination, communication and co-operation among donors in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.

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<sup>4</sup> We have not provided a detailed set of recommendations for donors here. For an indication of what a fuller set might look like, see Part 3 of Saferworld's December 2001 report, Pastoralism and conflict, which provided recommendations for action by the EU.

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**COVER PHOTO:** Kenya – Men walking behind their cattle.

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