

Evolving Traditional Practices

Managing Small Arms in the Horn of Africa and Karamoja Cluster

Introduction

Communities in the Karamoja Cluster and Horn of Africa largely depend on agro-pastoralism.¹ They lead nomadic lives in adverse environmental conditions, migrating with their herds in search of water and better pastures. Their migrations may lead them to trespass or to trigger conflicts with rival tribes. Disputes over land tenure are frequent, not least because of tensions regarding whether land should be used for agricultural or pastoral purposes. Such disputes often escalate into armed violence and conflict with security providers (Hazen, 2013). At the same time, the widespread availability of firearms heightens the risk of misuse, leading to injuries and death. These factors have led policy-makers to implement often-coercive disarmament operations among pastoralist communities, which have frequently responded with collective resistance.

Some pastoralist communities regularly engage in cattle rustling, internal and external violence, robberies, and other forms of physical aggression, whose consequences are typically more severe whenever firearms come into play (Mkutu, 2006; Leff, 2009). In a 2007 household survey conducted in Eastern Equatoria in South Sudan and Kenya's Turkana North region, 45.7 per cent of respondents reported witnessing at least one violent event in their lifetimes (Mc Evoy and Murray, 2008, p. 41). In East Africa, violent

conflict has contributed not only to the death toll and rate of injury among pastoralists, but also to the impoverishment of entire communities (Little et al., 2007, p. 17).

The use of modern weapons and violent attack strategies among pastoralist communities has increased since the 1980s, and particularly in the past decade (Little et al., 2007, p. 17).



A 20-year-old Turkana herdsman poses with his Turkana wife.
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In January 2000, for instance, firearms were used in a single attack that claimed 60 lives, including those of women and children. Firearms are prevalent in the pastoralist-inhabited areas of the Karamoja Cluster and Horn of Africa region, which have experienced decades of insecurity (Mkutu, 2006, p. 47).

This study examines local demand, use, and management of firearms in selected areas of Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, and Uganda with a view to informing national and international efforts to engage with local leadership and communities to reduce armed violence and strengthen local and regional firearms control initiatives. The study is based on desk research and the results of household surveys and qualitative research carried out in pastoralist areas of northern Kenya, Somaliland (Somalia), Eastern Equatoria (South Sudan), and the Karamoja region of north-eastern Uganda. Its main research objectives are to:

1. examine firearms holdings and circulation in local communities, specifically regarding:
 - firearms ownership;
 - the perception of security and firearms; and
 - factors behind the demand for firearms.
2. analyse experiences of theft as well as accidental death and injuries, and examine traditional practices regarding:
 - safely storing weapons;
 - avoiding accidental death or injury; and
 - preventing theft of firearms; and
3. provide examples of initiatives aimed at preventing firearms incidents, reducing armed violence, and strengthening local and regional firearms control initiatives.

The main findings include:

- Pastoralist communities have more firearms and feel less safe than non-pastoralist populations. Many pastoralists perceive a need to own firearms for protection, but they generally describe firearms as dangerous.



- Firearm theft is relatively rare among pastoralist communities, but it appears to be fuelled by both conflict and disarmament initiatives.
- Respondents called for targeted awareness raising, educational programmes, and safe storage training to reduce the rate of fatal and non-fatal accidental shootings.
- Rural communities in the Karamoja Cluster and the Horn region adopt similar traditional practices to prevent and punish firearm theft, armed violence, and accidental shootings.
- Participants in this study suggest a wide range of measures for reducing the misuse of firearms, including disarmament programmes and safe storage training, as well as broader peacebuilding activities, social policies, and education.

Firearm holdings and circulation in pastoralist communities

Firearms have been circulating in the pastoralist regions of the Karamoja Cluster and the Horn of Africa since the 1800s, when arms were actively traded out of south-western Ethiopia (Mburu, 2002, p. 5). Local and regional arms dynamics changed in the post-colonial era, as armed conflicts erupted and firearms became more prevalent throughout both regions. Sudan's North-South conflict spanned two decades—from 1983 to 2005—and tensions resurfaced after South Sudan attained statehood in 2011. After gaining independence in 1962, Uganda witnessed chronic political instability, including multiple military coups and regime changes (Wepundi, Ndung'u,

and Rynn, 2011, p. 5). Due to a variety of factors, Karamoja experienced a widespread proliferation of arms in the 1990s and into the following decade (Akabwai, 2007). Farther east, Somaliland's 1991 declaration of independence from Somalia exacerbated intra-clan conflicts among the Isaaq in the cities of Berbera, Burco, and Hargeisa, while also accentuating the fragility of broader inter-clan relations in the breakaway state (Hoehne, 2007). Tensions between Somaliland, Puntland, and the south-central region (Mogadishu) of Somalia persist to this day.

This study examines the circulation and possession of firearms in selected pastoralist areas in four countries in the Karamoja Cluster and Horn of Africa regions (see Map 1).² The areas covered by the study are:

- Garissa, Isiolo, Turkana, and West Pokot counties, northern Kenya;
- the autonomous region of Somaliland, north-eastern Somalia;
- Eastern Equatoria state, south-eastern South Sudan; and
- Karamoja, north-eastern Uganda.

Civil and regional armed conflicts and ongoing localized armed tensions among pastoral communities have accelerated the rate of arms acquisitions in the Karamoja Cluster and Horn regions. Table 1 shows estimated civilian firearms holdings in Kenya, Somaliland, South Sudan, and Karamoja.

For each of the areas under review, the research team members drew on results from previous studies by the Danish Demining Group and the Small Arms Survey; in addition, they collected new data through focus group discussions and from interviews with key informants in the four locations.

Table 1 Estimated civilian firearms holdings in selected areas

Area/country	Estimated holdings
Karamoja, Uganda	15,000-200,000
Kenya	530,000-680,000
Somaliland, Somalia	500,000
South Sudan	720,000

Sources: Karamoja, Uganda: Kingma et al. (2012, p. 63); Kenya: Wepundi et al. (2012, p. 47); Somaliland, Somalia: DDG and Small Arms Survey (2009, p. 4); South Sudan: Lewis (2009, p. 8)

Northern Kenya. The study considers four counties in Kenya: Turkana and West Pokot in the north-west, and Isiolo and Garissa straddling the north-central and north-eastern parts of the country. The counties are home to the Borana, Pokot, Somali, and Turkana pastoralist communities. The Pokot of Kenya, who owned primarily home-made small arms until 1979, seized many G3 and MK-4 weapons from the Karimojong groups, which had acquired hundreds of weapons from the Moroto Barracks after Ugandan troops abandoned weapons stores following Idi Amin's fall (Wepundi, 2013, p. 2). Not only did these weapons fuel cross-border conflict between the Pokot and Karimojong groups, but they also promoted the spread of cattle raiding and armed violence across Karamoja, including among the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian (Akabwai, 2007, pp. 15–16, 28). As pastoralist communities in Kenya are not legally entitled to possess firearms, multiple government disarmament operations have been undertaken in the northern part of the country. In 2005 and 2010, for instance, the government implemented two disarmament operations dubbed Operation Dumisha Amani (Maintain Peace) I and II, respectively (Wepundi, Ndung'u, and Rynn, 2011, pp. 27–28). Turkana and West Pokot counties are part of the North Rift region that has the highest rate of firearms possession in the country (Wepundi et al., 2012, p. 44).

Somaliland, Somalia. While not officially recognized by any countries, the Republic of Somaliland declared its independence from Somalia in 1991. Somalis living within this territory are traditionally nomadic cattle herders and are often armed to protect their livestock. As is the case for many peoples in the broader region, local norms condone the bearing of arms among pastoralist communities and endorse firearms training for herding purposes as a rite of passage for men. The clans and communities in Somaliland represent only part of the ethnic Somalis who are scattered across the Horn of Africa, with significant other populations in Djibouti, the Ogaden region of eastern Ethiopia, northern

Kenya, and, in Somalia, the semi-autonomous region of Puntland and the south-central region, including Mogadishu. Although Somaliland is known for peace and stability compared to other parts of Somalia, firearms ownership is widespread and the region is not immune to political instability in Puntland or south-central Somalia. Despite attempts to regulate ownership of firearms—which is legal if the weapons are registered, licensed, and limited in number—a large amount of illicit firearms remain in private ownership (DDG and Small Arms Survey, 2009, p. vii; Small Arms Survey, 2012a).

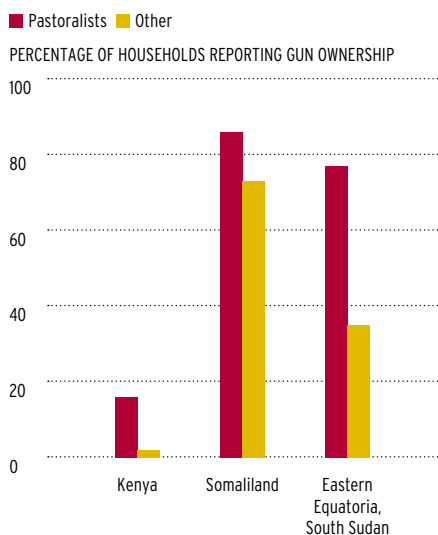
Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan. The South Sudanese state of Eastern Equatoria is populated by pastoralist communities—including the Acholi, Boya, Didinga, Dongotona, Lango, Lopit, Madi, Nyangatom, Pari, and Toposa groups—which are vulnerable to local insecurities and inter-ethnic rivalries. Eastern Equatoria borders Kenya to the south-east, Uganda to the south, and Ethiopia to the east, exposing groups to cross-border rivalries with pastoralist communities in neighbouring countries. Firearms ownership in South Sudan was declared illegal in the Penal Code of 2008 (MLACD, 2009). Military-led disarmament campaigns have brought temporary respite in some areas but have also caused conflict between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and civilian communities. At the time of writing, the Small Arms Control Bill was still under deliberation (GoSS, 2012).

Karamoja, Uganda. Karamoja comprises seven districts and is home to more than 1.2 million people. While the population is commonly referred to as the Karimojong, there is no one unified political entity or identity, but rather a series of different tribal, ethnic, and territorial groups engaged in shifting alliances. The largest of these groups—the Bokora, Dodoth, Jie, and Matheniko—are all known to hold illicit firearms, many of which are in the possession of young men involved in criminal activity, including cattle rustling (Akabwai, 2007; Carlson et al., 2012). While numerous efforts to disarm Karamoja communities have been conducted in the past decade, cattle raids

still take place throughout the region. Yet unlike in the past, when cattle raids were large-scale activities serving to redistribute wealth among communities, today's forays are smaller and commercialized, with thieves typically selling stolen animals at markets or to butcher shops for quick financial gain (KHRC, 2010, p. 8). Meanwhile, in villages where animals are no longer present, robbers more commonly steal material goods such as food and tools (Stites and Akabwai, 2009, p. 26).

Data from research conducted for this study shows that firearms are more prevalent among pastoralist communities than among the rest of the population (see Figure 1). The discrepancy is wider where the prevalence of firearms among the general population is lower, as in Kenya and Eastern Equatoria. In Kenya the rate of firearms ownership among pastoralist communities is relatively low at 16 per cent, yet almost eight times higher than among survey respondents with different occupations—with the exception of those in the military and the police (Pavesi, 2013, p. 2). The majority of firearms are found in highly volatile areas, including the northern Rift Valley, upper Eastern, and North Eastern, where pastoralist communities represent a large part of the population (Wepundi et al., 2012, p. 47).

Figure 1 Possession of firearms among pastoralist communities vs. other population groups



Note: Data for Karamoja, Uganda, was not available for inclusion in this figure. Source: Pavesi (2013)

The 2010 Eastern Equatoria survey shows that 77 per cent of households reported ownership of firearms—more than twice the rate observed among other respondents (35 per cent). Civilian arms holdings in South Sudan are estimated at 720,000, although non-state armed groups are thought to hold another 10,000 (Lewis, 2009, pp. 8–9; Small Arms Survey, 2012b, p. 9).

The Somaliland survey reveals that the prevalence of firearms was high not only among pastoralist communities, with 86 per cent of households reporting gun ownership, but also across other occupational groups (73 per cent). It has been estimated that more than 500,000 firearms are privately held throughout Somaliland (DDG and Small Arms Survey, 2009, pp. 4, 7).

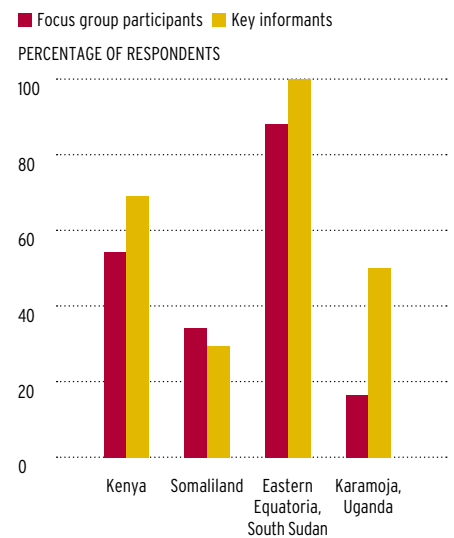
In Karamoja, the Ugandan army claims that 29,923 guns were recovered between 2002 and 2010 and that only about 1,000 guns remained in the communities (Kingma et al., 2012, p. 63). Despite the absence of direct questions on civilian ownership due to the high sensitivity of the topic, the survey and qualitative research carried out in the Karamoja region in 2011 showed that access to firearms had become very difficult following sustained coercive disarmament operations; nevertheless, a sustained level of firearm-related incidents pointed to an ongoing presence of arms in the community (Kingma et al., 2012, pp. 64–65).

Perceptions of security

Findings from all research areas show that pastoralist communities feel unsafe compared to other respondents. The perception of safety—or the lack of it—is dependent on the time of day or night, inter-ethnic dynamics, and location, as well as a respondent's livelihood.³ In Kenya and Eastern Equatoria, pastoralist respondents stated that they felt unsafe even when walking close to their homes during the day. In Somaliland, pastoralists expressed significantly more concern about becoming the victim of a crime over the following months than did other respondents.

Figure 2 shows that the majority of key informants and focus group par-

Figure 2 Percentage of focus group participants and key informants who describe their area as 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' with respect to armed violence



Sources: focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Kenya (4 August–23 September 2012), South Sudan (19–28 September 2012), Somaliland (17–24 September 2012), and Uganda (11–15 March 2013); DDG and Small Arms Survey (2013)

ticipants in Kenya and South Sudan reported feeling unsafe. Key informants reported feeling significantly less safe than did focus group participants in all areas, with the exception of Somaliland. Figure 2 also highlights that a larger proportion of respondents in Eastern Equatoria feel 'unsafe' or 'very unsafe' than in any other research area.

Perceptions of firearms

Across the four areas studied, the majority of people interviewed perceive firearms as a threat to physical safety. Survey results show that pastoralists in Kenya and South Sudan more frequently spoke of firearms as a source of security than did other respondents, perhaps reflecting their need to be armed for self-protection (Pavesi, 2013).

Figure 3 identifies the perceptions of key informants as well as results of the focus group discussions, revealing that participants in Karamoja and Eastern Equatoria seem the most aware of risks related to firearms. This may reflect stronger government intervention with respect to weapons in Uganda and Eastern Equatoria. In Somaliland, approximately 60 per cent of the focus group participants refer to firearms either as a necessity for protection or

Box 1 Perceptions of security across surveyed areas

While the majority of Kenyan survey respondents said they felt relatively safe in 2012, a greater proportion of pastoralists reported feeling frequently unsafe. Focus group discussions pointed to lack of safety in the districts of Isiolo and Turkana, while Garissa and West Pokot counties were perceived as the safest—or least unsafe—areas. Respondents identified Turkana, and particularly Kainuk—an area in Turkana South that lies on the border with West Pokot county—as the most unsafe area. The Turkana have often contended with threats of attacks from multiple directions, such as from Kenya's Pokot, Uganda's Karimojong, South Sudan's Toposa, and Ethiopia's Dassenetch communities (Wepundi, 2013).⁴ More recent violent clashes over territory and cattle raids between the Turkana and Pokot, as well as violent identity-based politics among groups in Isiolo, have tainted perceptions of security (Wepundi, 2012, pp. 6–7).

In Somaliland, the 2009 survey showed that two-thirds of non-pastoralist respondents had some safety and security concerns, in contrast to more than three-quarters of pastoralists (Pavesi, 2013). Interviews with key informants, especially those from Sheikh, confirmed that Somaliland was perceived as 'very unsafe'. Sheikh appears to be by far the most unsafe area, with all focus group respondents calling the area either 'very unsafe' or 'unsafe';⁵ in contrast, respondents described Baligubadle and Salahlay as relatively safe.⁶ Street violence and gangs, combined with mines, unexploded ordnance, firearms-related accidents, and traffic accidents, represented significant tiers of safety concerns. Male focus group participants were more positive about safety levels than were female participants.⁷

In Eastern Equatoria, survey respondents, focus group participants, and key informants all declared that they felt either 'very unsafe' or 'unsafe'. Pastoralist communities reflected an even higher level of concern than did the general population. In the 2009 household survey, only one out of five pastoralists asserted that the level of security had improved in comparison to the previous year, while one in three of other respondents made that claim (Pavesi, 2013). In addition, the same survey showed that more than two-thirds of pastoralist respondents (68 per cent) said they were concerned that household members might become victims of crime or violent encounters, compared to just over half of respondents with other occupations (Pavesi, 2013). Young women from Eastern Equatoria, where pastoralist inter-ethnic violence often occurs, explained that they did not venture beyond a 500-metre radius of their homes in search of firewood as they feared being shot at by members of rival communities.⁸

Focus group discussions and key informant interviews held in Karamoja suggest that communities in the region feel that security has improved over time, as evidenced by renewed access to some former 'no-go' areas; nevertheless, safety levels in some areas continue to reflect the dynamics of cattle raiding between groups (Kingma et al., 2012, p. 31). The Kapedo parish in Kaabong seems to be perceived as the most dangerous area, with several young men and women claiming it to be unsafe.⁹ These views can be attributed to the parish's close proximity to Kotido district, where the Jie of Kotido and Dodoth communities of Kaabong often clash. In contrast, all respondents appear to find the Watakau parish in Kotido district very safe.¹⁰ The Jie in Watakau are much larger than typical communities elsewhere in pastoral areas in Karamoja, which may partly explain why Watakau residents perceive a greater degree of safety. Respondents also identified Loroo parish in Amudat district as either safe or very safe.¹¹ Amudat is largely an agricultural zone, where fewer gun incidents take place as there are fewer animals and, as such, less cattle theft.

as promoting safety. In Kenya, more than 40 per cent of focus group participants and nearly one-third of the key informants shared this opinion.

Main reasons for gun ownership

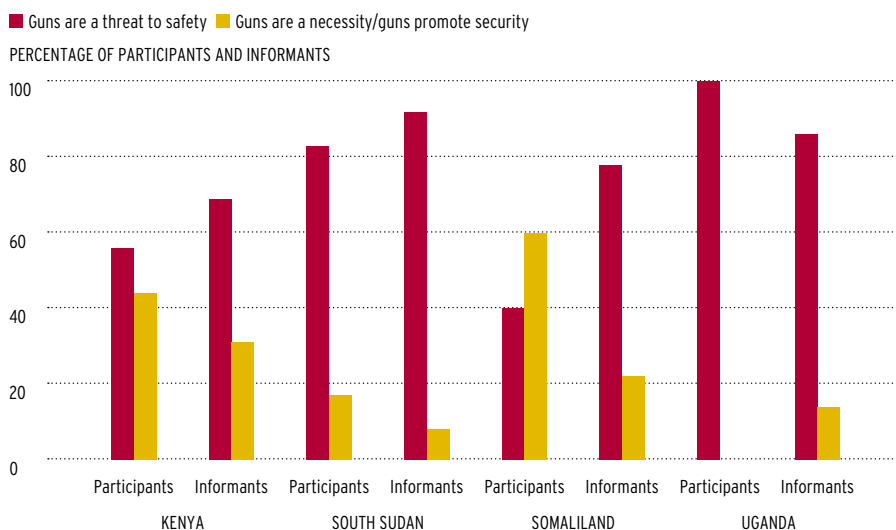
In pastoralist communities, the demand for arms tends to be linked to the need to protect livestock and people from attacks by neighbouring groups (Mkutu, 2006, p. 62). Examples of such communities include the Turkana, who protect themselves from hostile neighbours such as the Pokot and Samburu in Kenya; the Dodoth, Jie, and Matheniko in Karamoja; the Toposa in South Sudan; and the Merille in Ethiopia (Mkutu, 2003). Some observers have attributed the growing 'gun culture' among pastoralist communities to a history of social and political marginalization, noting that arms have become associated with security, livelihood, and status (Mburu, 2002, p. 7).

The results of household surveys show that in three surveyed areas—Kenya, Somaliland, and Eastern Equatoria in South Sudan—the protection of property and personal and village safety, including from attacks by other clans, ranks as the principal driver for gun ownership (see Figure 4). Such a driver appears stronger for pastoralists than for other respondents. Focus group participants and key informants also cited protection as the main reason for owning firearms. In Somaliland, focus group participants also pointed to tradition as a prominent motivation for firearm ownership. In South Sudan, the protection of property—and specifically cattle—and self-protection are two of the most frequently cited reasons for arms possession (Saferworld and SSBCSSAC, 2010, p. 2).

Firearms management, theft, and injuries

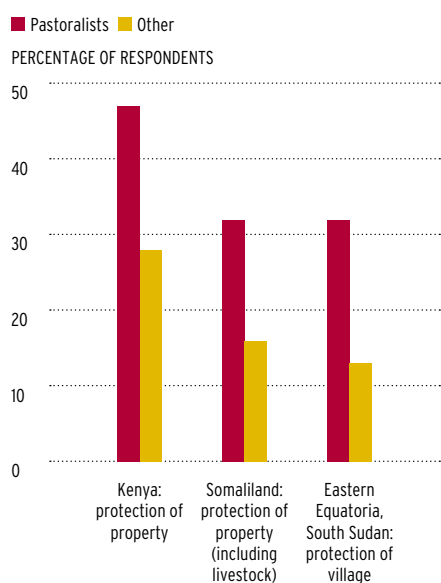
In pastoralist communities, firearms represent power and security. Possessing them can enhance a community's capacity to defend itself and to access grazing land and water. Firearms theft during raids or fights strengthens the aggressor community while weakening

Figure 3 Perceptions of firearms among focus group participants and key informants, by location



Sources: focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Kenya (4 August–23 September 2012); South Sudan (19–28 September 2012); Somaliland (17–24 September 2012); and Uganda (11–15 March 2013); DDG and Small Arms Survey (2013)

Figure 4 Main reasons for owning firearms, by location



Note: Data for Karamoja, Uganda, was not available for inclusion in this figure.
Sources: household surveys in Kenya (2012), South Sudan (2009), Somaliland (2008; 2009); Pavese (2013)

Box 2 Perceptions of firearms across surveyed areas

In Kenya, groups identified firearms both as a threat and as necessary for security. Only in Garissa county did focus group participants and key informants agree that firearms were a threat to safety. Turkana had the most responses in favour of firearms possession, partly due to insecurity caused by inter-ethnic raids on the West Pokot-Turkana border. Specifically, while all 40 participants in the Turkana focus group discussion agreed that arms were a threat to safety, 30 of them still observed that guns were a necessity in the promotion of security.

In Somaliland, respondents who said that firearms possession was a necessity hailed mainly from Baligubadle,¹² while the majority of those who called guns a threat to safety came from Sheikh.¹³ The fact that respondents from Sheikh also reported feeling unsafe may hint at a connection between strong opposition to firearms possession and heightened feelings of insecurity.

In South Sudan, the majority of focus group participants and key informants identified weapons as a threat to safety.¹⁴ Respondents from Kapoeta North and South—areas close to the Karamoja and Turkana borders—expressed other opinions, such as that weapons were promoting safety or represented a necessity for them.¹⁵

In Karamoja, all focus groups agreed that people should not own firearms. This apparent consensus may be attributed to the Ugandan government's military-led anti-weapon and disarmament campaigns, which possibly increased both the awareness of risks and a reluctance among community members to admit to the presence of civilian-held firearms.

its opponent. This is true among South Sudanese groups that view arms theft as a means of protection, including from other groups. Therefore, they consider firearms theft acceptable if the arms are stolen from rival communities.¹⁶ This view mirrors similar ones of 'crime' more generally. In Karamoja, 'crimes' perpetrated against rivals for the good of the community are acceptable and not considered offences; yet, given that communities place a high premium on the gun—even equating it to livestock— intra-group theft of firearms is rare and viewed as a grave, punishable crime (Carlson et al., 2012, p. 16).

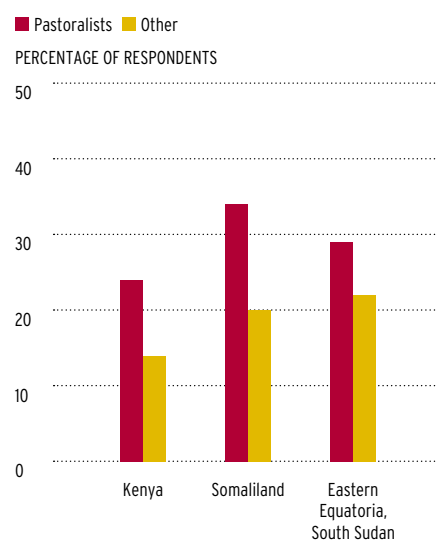
Firearms theft

As pastoralist communities rarely have safe, systematized ways of storing weapons, firearms are left vulnerable to theft. Figure 5 shows that among firearms owners in three surveyed locations—Kenya, Somaliland, and South Sudan—agro-pastoralists run systematically higher risks of theft than respondents with other occupations. Indeed, between one-quarter (in Kenya) and one-third (in Somaliland) of agro-pastoralist owners admitted they had experienced the theft of at least one firearm, in contrast to fewer than 20 per cent of other respondents.

Motivations for theft of firearms range from socio-cultural factors to economic and politico-military considerations. Socio-culturally, there is some heroism attached to successful raids of livestock and the capture of 'enemy' firearms. Livestock raiders who also seize weapons have some bragging rights among their peers. In Kenya, the theft of guns in livestock raids has been described as a victory symbol,¹⁷ while in South Sudan it has served as the basis for fame.¹⁸

Economic reasons propelling firearms theft include their high cost on the illicit market in countries where ownership is forbidden, as cited in Kenya (Wepundi, 2013, p. 7). In Somaliland, wealthier respondents reported having experienced higher levels of small arms theft (DDG and Small Arms Survey, 2009, p. 55). The cost of an AK-47 in northern Kenya can be as high as KES 70,000 (more than USD 800) (Wepundi

Figure 5 Experience of firearm theft, by location



Note: Data for Karamoja, Uganda, was not available for inclusion in this figure.
Sources: household surveys in Kenya (2012), South Sudan (2009), Somaliland (2008; 2009); Pavese (2013)

et al., 2012, p. 59). In Uganda, the cost of a Kalashnikov-pattern weapon in 2008 was between UGX 300,000 and 500,999 (USD 250–310). At the time, prices in (South) Sudan were lower than in Uganda, indicating greater supply levels (Bevan, 2008, p. 49). Recent analysis of trends of the cost of 7.62 × 39 mm Kalashnikov variants in Somaliland indicate that between October 2011 and September 2012 prices fluctuated between USD 625 and USD 710. A similar range of fluctuation was observed in Puntland over the same period, while prices in Mogadishu rose to approximately USD 965 after December 2011 (Florquin, 2013, pp. 278–79).¹⁹

The dynamics of firearm theft are not well explored or understood in the Karamoja Cluster or in the Horn region, where incidents are rare—or at least not recognized as common among the observed communities. Somaliland and South Sudan are the areas where gun theft appears to be more frequent than in the other locations. In both the 2010 South Sudan and 2009 Somaliland surveys, approximately one-third of pastoralist household respondents acknowledged the loss of household guns through theft, while this rate was much lower (one-fifth) among respondents with different occupations (Pavese, 2013). Whereas focus group respondents in Somaliland²⁰ and in South Sudan confirmed that they were concerned

about firearms theft, this was not perceived as a major issue in Uganda or Kenya.

In the Kenyan case, respondents indicated that theft occurred more frequently during armed conflict situations, such as when warriors or raiders subdue armed rivals.²¹ One community elder in West Pokot county recounted the history of gun acquisition among the Pokot. In that narrative, because the Turkana were first to acquire guns in the region, the Pokot initially bought homemade arms from the Luhya community in Trans Nzoia county.²² They then used these less sophisticated arms to fend off Turkana attacks and to seize their sophisticated guns. According to the Pokot elder, the principle was to ensure 'our warriors killed as many gun-toting Turkana fighters as possible, and retrieved their guns regardless of how many of our own were lost'.²³ Other respondents confirmed that pastoralist fighters put up spirited battles to ensure they did not lose the guns of their slain warriors during combat.²⁴

On rare occasions, pastoralist warriors forcefully seize guns and ammunition from security forces. One example took place in Karamoja in 2006, when an armed group of Jie warriors attacked the local Uganda People's Defense Force (UPDF) barracks, killing all of its soldiers (Akabwai, 2007, p. 39; Bevan, 2008, p. 60). As a result, the Jie warriors acquired the UPDF firearms.

In South Sudan, the theft of firearms has been linked to increasing demand, including for personal security. Where there is such demand, stolen weapons can more easily be sold. Yet respondents in Karamoja suggested that firearms theft is actually fuelled by government disarmament operations.²⁵ Specifically, some community members who voluntarily gave up firearms or had them forcibly taken during UPDF disarmament exercises resorted to theft to rearm themselves. This response has security implications for the communities and raises questions about the positive effects of government disarmament activities, especially if communities do not consider themselves sufficiently protected by formal security providers and feel more vulnerable after the removal of their firearms.

Accidental death and injury from firearms

The misuse of firearms and poor storage practices can lead to accidental death and injury. In pastoralist contexts, traditional weapons and homemade guns have been progressively replaced by more sophisticated weapons (FEWS Net, 2005, p. 10). The result may be an increase in casualties that is not associated with an increase in violence.

Research findings indicate that pastoralist communities sometimes pay little attention to whether firearm-related death and injury are the result of an intentional act or an accident. The respondents' uneven grasp of what distinguishes intentional from unintentional killings or accidents represents a limitation to the analysis of the findings presented below. Focus group participants mentioned that, in case of accidental deaths, communities may apply the same punitive measures they would in response to an intentional crime. Further clarification of concepts among the communities may be helpful in the prevention of violence and accidental deaths.

Asked to identify the causes of firearm-related deaths and injuries, members of the pastoralist communities cited five main categories of factors:

- a lack of control, management, and safe storage of firearms as well as an absence of disarmament programming;
- conflict and criminal activity, such as cattle raiding, theft, acts of revenge, and conflicts over resources;
- problems with government services, including the administration, police, borders, and roads;
- personal behaviour, including emotional reactions, hatred, idleness, and the struggle for wealth, women, and power; and
- drug and alcohol abuse.

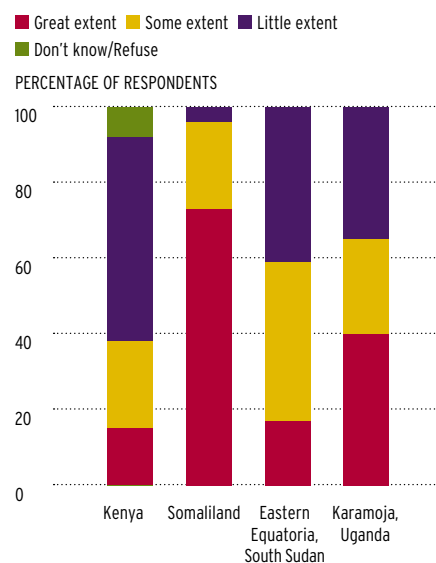
Focus groups and interviews reveal that awareness of the effects of poor management and control of firearms is higher among respondents in Kenya and Somaliland than among those in South Sudan and Uganda, with the latter mainly identifying conflict and crime-related factors as contributing to

accidents. Respondents in Somaliland first and foremost point to easy access to firearms and the fact that firearms are not safe and, hence, lead to accidents.²⁶ Some mentioned a lack of personal responsibility in weapons management, including poor training and episodes of bad temper.²⁷ Some also refer to the lack of government control as a cause for accidents.²⁸ Kenyan groups similarly blame poor storage for some cases of firearm deaths and injuries in households,²⁹ including accidents during which gun owners cleaned their weapons³⁰ or engaged in celebratory shootings.

Focus group participants and key informants largely recognized accidental death and injury by firearms as a problem in their respective communities (see Figure 6).³¹ In Somaliland almost all key informants (96 per cent) stated that it was a problem to some or to a great extent,³² followed by respondents in Uganda (65 per cent) and those in South Sudan (59 per cent).³³ In contrast, the majority of respondents (54 per cent) in Kenya indicated that accidental death and injury by firearms affected them only to a limited extent.

Most key informant interviews with law enforcement personnel revealed that, even though such deaths and injuries probably occur with some frequency, they are rarely reported since pastoral-

Figure 6 Extent of accidental death and injury as assessed by key informants, by location



Sources: focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Kenya (4 August–23 September 2012), South Sudan (19–28 September 2012), Somaliland (17–24 September 2012), and Uganda (11–15 March 2013); DDG and Small Arms Survey (2013)

ist communities hold firearms illegally and would not want to incriminate themselves.³⁴ Indeed, many groups in Karamoja confirmed that they do not tell the police about incidents that are considered crimes under Ugandan law, such as accidental deaths and injury; they cited a number of reasons, including police corruption, mistrust of the formal justice system, and payment of compensation to victims through traditional resolution mechanisms (Carlson et al., 2012).

Box 3 Reasons for firearm accidents across surveyed areas

In Kenya focus group participants agreed that communities are affected only to a limited extent by firearm-related accidental deaths and injuries. They attributed all discussed examples of such incidents to ignorance and carelessness, which were cited as the main reasons for firearms accidents. Participants in West Pokot and Isiolo raised concerns about the role of alcoholism and khat chewing in accidents.

In Somaliland, focus group respondents in Sheikh appeared more acutely affected by firearm-related incidents than those in Baligubadle and Salahlay.³⁵ In Sheikh, many respondents pointed to easy access to firearms as the cause of accidents,³⁶ which echoes previous findings showing this region to be very insecure and awash with weapons. Among the different groups of respondents, young women were those least aware and young men the most aware of the problem of accidents.³⁷

In South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state, more adult respondents cited firearm accidents as a problem than did youths.³⁸ The majority of participants in all communities agreed that cattle-raiding was the main cause of firearm-related deaths and injuries.³⁹ In Riwoto Najie and Napeatat, more women cited firearms-related incidents as a problem than did men, contrary to findings from other locations.⁴⁰

In Uganda's Karamoja region, people from Kaabong and, to some extent, Watakau in Kotido⁴¹ seem to be more exposed to accidental deaths and injuries than people of Amudat,⁴² although in Amudat eight young men refused to answer.⁴³ Their refusal suggests they may fear implicating themselves, but it should be taken into account that Amudat has significantly fewer firearms than other locations, as the community is primarily agricultural rather than pastoralist. While young men in Kotido pointed to cattle-raiding and a lack of disarmament as the causes of accidental deaths and injuries,⁴⁴ young women from Kaabong observed that accidental firearm deaths are caused by jealousy and hatred,⁴⁵ suggesting that interpersonal conflicts escalate if a firearm is present.

Traditional practices to deal with firearms theft and injuries

The management of small arms in the areas covered by this study has progressively become culturally integrated. Many of the interviewed pastoralists—including almost all respondents in South Sudan—were not aware of any local practices specifically aimed at preventing or dealing with firearm theft or gun-related deaths and injuries. Still, many respondents associate some local dispute-settling and -sanctioning mechanisms with firearm theft and accidents involving injuries or death.

Local practices, often based on traditional rituals, rely on the adherence of members of the community to belief systems shared by their group, for example, about the power of curses. Crimes across ethnic groups are often condoned, while those within a group are severely sanctioned. In focus group discussions, participants mentioned that local practices were considered a powerful deterrent to wrongdoing, due not only to the severity of the penalties, but also to the fact that fines are meted out to extended family or clan members.

Pokot practices

Pokot communities share a strong belief in the power of the curse. Participants in the study mentioned two types of practices used in the case of theft, including of firearms: *mutat* and *muma*. *Mutat* involves tracing a thief by tracking footprints and cursing the soil, some of which is expected to have remained attached to the offender's feet. Pokot community members believe that the power of the curse leads the perpetrator to confess and will result in his or her death.⁴⁶ The practice of *muma* involves elders gathering the community in the area where the crime occurred and asking the perpetrator to confess. If everyone denies stealing, the elders pick a black goat. They suffocate it by tying a rope around its nostrils and mouth and take turns at inflating its belly by blowing into its rectum as they pronounce curses on it. The curse is believed to ensure that the thief will

face a similar death within three months of its pronouncement.⁴⁷ If the culprit confesses within three months, however, he or she is fined to reverse the curse. The person has to pay for four goats, each representing a limb of the goat that was killed in the cursing ritual, and a bull for elders to meet and reverse the curse. Then an extra commensurate fine is levied for the stolen items.⁴⁸

With reference to firearm-related killings and injuries, Pokot respondents talked about *leketio*—a traditional belt worn by pregnant women but also used to invoke a curse against someone who is involved in criminal activities or any form of violence. The Pokot, who revere pregnancy as a means of channelling life into the world, use *leketio* to administer binding oaths that empower women to intervene if intentional transgressions threaten to cause an escalation of tensions or violence.⁴⁹

Pokot respondents also described the *lapay* compensation system, whereby fines are levied for murder, saying that it was also applicable in the event of an accidental firearm injury or death.⁵⁰ Killing a young man is subject to a fine of 60 cattle, while killing an elder is punishable by a fine of 30 cattle. The levy has been known to go up to as high as 90 cattle.⁵¹ Such fines are levied on the entire clan of the offender. The system serves as a deterrent, as community members know that the harsh repercussions are levied not only on the individual perpetrator, but also on his or her clan.⁵² Therefore, for an individual to maintain good relations and status within the clan, he or she is accountable to every other member and must not put the clan at risk. *Lapay* is also used in reconciliation through cleansing ceremonies. Respondents argued that this local mechanism was more effective than a judicial approach.⁵³ Someone who accidentally kills or injures a person will pay the requisite compensation and will be cleansed to avoid curses.

Turkana practices

Study participants from Turkana, Kenya, mentioned *etali*, a rule regarding the treatment of and respect for elders. Based on an age range system, male

community members are afforded status and privileges, with the oldest men enjoying the highest standing. Age ranges are used to enhance discipline as elders enforce community values. The local population generally adheres to cultural values, with the understanding that any breach of these values leads to some form of curse or punishment. Someone who steals is fined at least one goat;⁵⁴ someone who kills a fellow tribesman, however, faces harsh punishment that extends to the family,⁵⁵ whose entire herd of livestock will be confiscated based on the *ekwer* system. The perpetrator's bull is slaughtered and the bull's front legs are broken as a symbol of reconciliation and cleansing. The Turkana believe that prior to cleansing, a perpetrator's body shows physical signs that the person killed someone and that the body only normalizes after the ritual. In extreme cases, the perpetrator can also be killed.⁵⁶

The Turkana also have a widely accepted mechanism called *etachit*, which involves tracing a thief by footprint tracking⁵⁷ and fining an identified offender's family. For example, for each goat, cow, or camel stolen, ten or 20 of the same shall be paid. A stolen gun is valued in terms of the number of livestock necessary to purchase it.

Somali practices⁵⁸

Somali groups in Kenya implement the *xeer* traditional system, whose criminal law is known as *dhiig*, meaning blood. *Dhiig* laws address crimes such as robbery, manslaughter, and murder; they are applied with respect to firearm theft⁵⁹ as well as accidental firearm injury and death.⁶⁰ A suspect is subjected to a trial in which evidence is presented and witnesses are called.

Respondents explained that *dhiig*—a compensation mechanism based on Islamic law—is used in relation to *dhiig*. For each boy or man killed, the perpetrator must pay 100 camels as compensation (or money of an equivalent value); for each girl or woman killed, the perpetrator must pay 50 camels or its equivalent in cash.⁶¹ In cases of injury, the perpetrator must cover the survivor's medical expenses, and, once he or she heals, negotiations on appro-

priate compensation are held. To prevent acts of revenge, elders are the ones who determine the amount of compensation due in all cases of death and injury. If a victim takes revenge, no compensation is paid; instead, negotiations are held to reconcile the two families or clans.⁶²

Like other groups, the Somali also track footprints to locate thieves. This approach involves ensuring that the culprit acknowledges wrongdoing through a process called *saben* (apologizing).⁶³ As part of *saben*, the thief offers a symbolic item as an apology. The item can be a turban, *tusbah* (a Muslim rosary), a goat, or any number of physical, material things. Once that is done, the offender returns what has been stolen or pays its value.⁶⁴ The Somali consider the practice of *saben* effective theft prevention since it relies on communal guilt; that is, if the perpetrator does not take responsibility, then the immediate relatives are held accountable and have to pay the compensation on his or her behalf.⁶⁵

Karamoja practices

Karamoja groups rely on theft deterrence methods that are similar to those of the Turkana, including for firearms theft. The system is based on the admission of guilt on the part of the perpetrator, followed by the return of the stolen item or paid compensation equal to its value. Whereas most compensation used to be paid with animals, the overall reduction in the number of animals owned by pastoralist communities has led to the acceptance of money and other material possessions of an equal value to the stolen item. Like the Turkana, the Karimojong hold the clan or the family of the perpetrator to account if compensation is not paid. In Karamoja, perpetrators of theft or other violent crimes sometimes avoid local punishment by going straight to the police. In these cases, the offender may be able to bribe the police to obtain the double benefit of avoiding both traditional and judicial punishments (Carlson et al., 2012).

As in other pastoralist communities, Karimojong traditional mechanisms are mostly meant for punishing criminal

acts rather than preventing accidental death and injury. Under the customary laws of many of the Karamoja groups, *ameto* is a form of punishment inflicted upon a perpetrator of a crime. Central to *ameto* is the physical beating of the perpetrator by his or her peers. Such methods serve a dual purpose: not only is the perpetrator punished, but his or her peers are also involved in inflicting the punishment, thus becoming aware of what would await them if they were to violate the Karimojong customary codes (Carlson et al., 2012). In this sense, traditional mechanisms can also be seen as deterring firearms misuse.

While it is common for members of a community to know who holds illicit firearms, it is unusual for them to report such possession to the authorities—as long as the weapons are used for defensive purposes or, under some circumstances, to steal cattle from rival groups (Carlson et al., 2012). Yet it is becoming more common in Karamoja for local elders to report misuse of firearms to state authorities, usually to the police. The adherence to traditional methods, such as *ameto*, has weakened because of the very proliferation of firearms. Weapons give young men—who are usually the ones who possess them—increased power, and this increase in youth power has not only weakened the authority of elders and their ability to control firearms use, but has also led youths from different groups to conspire and attack their own groups or state security providers indiscriminately (Carlson et al., 2012). Hence, as elders lose their authority, communities are increasingly resorting to the police and military to arrest and disarm young men who are beyond the influence of local leadership.

Ultimately, the Karimojong share a preference for resolving issues of firearms misuse within the community, without involving the formal justice system. They tend to view punitive forms of justice, as administered by the police and formal courts, as interfering with traditional forms of justice, whereby compensation paid to victims is paramount. Within the formal courts, compensation is secondary to the punishment of perpetrators, who, once incarcerated or otherwise removed

from the community, are no longer in a position to pay compensation as they may no longer have access to income (Carlson et al., 2012).

Practices in South Sudan

Although there is a dearth of primary sources describing the practices of South Sudanese communities, the fact that many of the Karamoja Cluster groups share the Nilotic heritage suggests that their customs may be similar to the ones observed in Kenya and Uganda. Indeed, most members of the Karamoja Cluster speak mutually intelligible languages and see each other as having the same ancestral lineage (Yntiso, 2012, p. 352). The Nyangatom of South Sudan and southern Ethiopia, for instance, recognize the Karimojong as the earliest tribe from which all sub-groups—including the Bokora, Dodoth, Jie, Kumam, Matheniko, Pian, Tepeth, Teso, Toposa, and Turkana—originated (p. 356). Based on the abovementioned practices, it may thus be inferred that South Sudanese norms and practices also inform deterrents against offences, including firearm theft.

Initiatives for management of firearms in pastoralist communities

This section looks beyond traditional methods to review ‘standard’ control mechanisms designed to prevent the misuse and criminal use of firearms. The research conducted for this study reveals that communities are increasingly adopting such programmatic measures to complement traditional practices. Many of these measures are part of civil society organizations’ initiatives. In particular, respondents identified two approaches for avoiding and preventing firearm-related accidents:

- the integration of direct disarmament measures to prevent mismanagement; and
- the use of education and dialogue.

In all research areas, communities observe traditional practices that promote the safe storage of firearms.

Communities in the broad region of the Karamoja Cluster and Horn appear to share similar cultural practices, which are principally aimed at preventing the criminal use of guns. Norms governing firearms safety have evolved from older practices around punishing crimes and deviance. Participants in this study suggested that actions should centre on firearms control measures, including peaceful disarmament, such as buy-back programmes with cash payments for guns; registration; restrictions on firearms handling; safe storage; and the regulation of police and military weapons.⁶⁶ While key informants tended to place an emphasis on direct disarmament measures, focus group participants offered a more diversified range of responses. Most respondents across all areas agreed that accidents could be prevented.⁶⁷ The preventive actions they suggested may be grouped into four main categories (see Figure 7):

- **conflict resolution and mitigation:** peace, reconciliation, and conflict management as well as mitigation measures, including employment, redistribution of resources, improved services, and the demarcation of land;
- **educational programming:** education, sensitization campaigns, awareness raising, and safe storage training;
- **disarmament programmes;** and
- **enhanced government control measures:** legislation, gun registration, and police and military deployment.

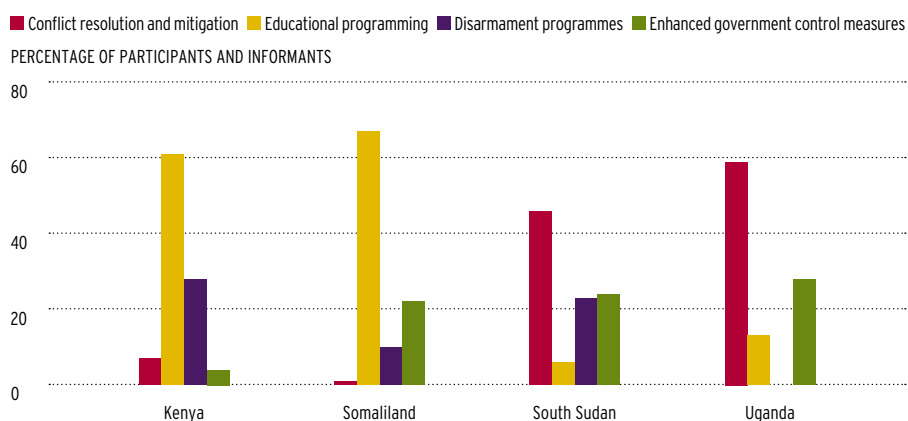
In both Uganda and South Sudan, participants recommended broader peace and reconciliation interventions;⁶⁸ respondents in South Sudan also cited the provision of basic services and grants for businesses⁶⁹ among efforts that could help prevent gun theft.

In Kenya, the most common approaches stated across all groups were public education on firearms safety and the integration of disarmament programming in peacebuilding. The women’s focus group in West Pokot⁷⁰ and women and men’s groups in Isiolo highlighted the unexploded ordnance in their respective counties as one of the safety problems to be urgently addressed.⁷¹

In Kenya and Somaliland, respondents focused largely on awareness raising and safe storage training,⁷² whereas in Uganda and South Sudan more respondents called for indirect actions, such as peace and reconciliation programming. In general, there were no significant differences between focus groups in Somaliland and Uganda. In Budi, South Sudan, all men were of the opinion that police deployment and disarmament would prevent accidents; meanwhile, young women said that broader programmes of education and training would be helpful.⁷³ This disparity shows a gender difference in the placement of emphasis on ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ interventions.

Box 4 summarizes the local practices proposed by respondents to address and prevent firearm misuse that could lead to death and injury. They range

Figure 7 Suggested actions to prevent accidental death and injury by firearm, as cited by focus group participants



Sources: focus group discussions in Kenya (4 August–21 September 2012), South Sudan (19–27 September 2012), Somaliland (17–23 September 2012), and Uganda (11–15 March 2013); DDG and Small Arms Survey (2013)

Box 4 Local practices recommended by respondents to address and prevent misuse of firearms

Northern Kenya:

- youth education on firearms safety;
- training of the Kenya Police reservists in gun handling skills;
- the use of traditional approaches to violence reduction and safety (among the Pokot, Turkana, and Somali); and
- stricter penalties for firearms misuse.

Somaliland:

- firearms safety measures, such as locking guns in a box, storing arms without a magazine, burying firearms underground, and storing them in a secret place in the house.

Eastern Equatoria, South Sudan:

- general safety measures, such as not cocking the gun in the house;
- use of traditional structures, such as the council of elders in peace and reconciliation and peace pacts; and
- community mobilization for participation in local projects, such as road work or area patrols.

Karamoja, Uganda:

- community meetings to discuss firearms-related incidents;
- awareness raising on the dangers of guns;
- local peacebuilding meetings;
- theatre-based approaches to education on the dangers of firearms;
- local regulatory mechanisms, such as tracking and punishing offenders; and
- traditional practices, such as spiritual cleansing.

Sources: focus group discussions and key informant interviews in Kenya (4 August–23 September 2012); South Sudan (19–28 September 2012); Somaliland (17–24 September 2012); and Uganda (11–15 March 2013); DDG and Small Arms Survey (2013)

encourage arms surrender with serving the same goal of minimizing accidental firearms injury and death as fully fledged firearms safety programmes.⁷⁵ Some of the initiatives mentioned by focus group participants and key informants in West Pokot included efforts to reform warriors; advocacy for the voluntary surrender of firearms; awareness raising; government-led disarmament; and the establishment of District Peace Committees.⁷⁶ Respondents commonly cited awareness raising, disarmament, and peacebuilding programmes as interventions that could successfully reduce accidental firearms injury and death; they also endorsed initiatives designed to curb firearms theft.

A significant number of respondents indicated inter-community dialogue across county and country borders as essential to preventing firearms theft.⁷⁷ This may not be surprising given that most firearm theft occurs in the context of violent inter-ethnic confrontations, such as through cattle rustling. Respondents referred to government-implemented disarmament programmes—especially comprehensive and sustainable ones—as effective since the removal of firearms is likely to reduce the risk of gun-related accidents.⁷⁸ Most of Kenya’s disarmament exercises have been controversial, however, raising concerns about human rights violations, the selective nature of the exercises, and their failure to address the root causes of insecurity (Wepundi, 2011, pp. 21–28).

Somaliland

In the early 1990s most safety programmes in Somaliland were focused on mine clearance and removing the threat represented by privately held explosive remnants of war. These concerns were addressed through awareness raising, advocacy, and risk education, as well as through the destruction of landmines and explosive remnants of war (DDG and Small Arms Survey, 2009, p. 3). Yet despite the progressive elimination of mine-contaminated areas, safety levels were not improving, notably because of a large number of accidents caused by

from broad safety and awareness raising measures to traditional practices, such as the spiritual cleansing rituals employed in Karamoja, Uganda.

There have been several initiatives aimed at reducing or completely removing illicit firearms from civilian possession in pastoral areas. These efforts have been coupled, to varying degrees of effectiveness, with development initiatives in marginalized areas, with a view to improving security.

Most of these interventions have already been designed and implemented by stakeholders outside of the targeted communities; they focus on peacebuilding and violence reduction, firearms collection, firearms danger awareness campaigns, and the reformation of warriors. Very few interventions are explicitly focused on the safe management of weapons, such as the securing of weapons stockpiles.⁷⁴ Programmes designed to disarm the communities—either voluntarily (by both government and civil society) or forcefully (by the government)—are more common. Yet although few specific programmes ensure firearms safety, focus group participants in all four research areas observed that civil society

sensitization programmes that encourage arms surrender served the same goal of minimizing the risk of accidental firearms injury and death.

Kenya

Civil society sensitization programmes that have focused on the threat of firearms in Kenya have generally aimed to discourage illicit gun ownership and encourage the surrender of arms to the government. Perhaps the most comprehensive of such initiatives—excluding disarmament efforts—is the armed violence reduction programme. Initiated by the UN Development Programme–Kenya in partnership with the government in 2005, the pilot project was implemented in Garissa district (now Garissa county) and subsequently in the districts of Isiolo, Mandera, Marsabit, Moyale, and Wajir. The programme integrated traditional dispute resolution, peacebuilding methods, and development initiatives, including the strengthening of livelihoods, with arms collection, storage, and destruction efforts (Wepundi, 2011, p. 62).

Kenyan respondents credited civil society sensitization programmes that

firearms, which required a broader approach within local communities.

Since they are perceived as necessary for protection, firearms are widely available among the civilian population in Somaliland. Firearms accidents continue to claim victims and there is no evidence that disarmament initiatives have been successful. The government-led large-scale firearm registration campaign of 2006–08 identified and registered some 10,000 weapons but had to be closed earlier than intended because of a lack of funds (Leff, 2012, p. 152). The 2010 firearms legislation requires civilians to have a permit and to be registered to own weapons, but enforcement will be difficult in the absence of extensive awareness raising campaigns.

Still, the overall security situation in Somaliland has improved despite the widespread presence of firearms, including military firearms, in private hands (Balthasar and Grzybowski, 2012, p. 147). The improvements may partly reflect the impact of basic firearm safety initiatives that have been in place for several years, including ones focused on the distribution of safe storage devices and community-level awareness raising.

South Sudan

While civilian disarmament has been one of the government's favoured approaches in dealing with gun violence in South Sudan, early efforts were mainly ad hoc and not comprehensive. In 2006, for instance, a government arms collection effort in Jonglei turned violent after a clash between the local White Army and the SPLA. One SPLA member and 113 White Army militia members died. The clash occurred in the context of a lack of clarity over terms of disarmament and fears among the Lou Nuer and their militia—the White Army—that the surrender of arms would leave them vulnerable (Saferworld, 2012, p. 9).

Countrywide disarmament was attempted between June and November 2008, following a presidential decree. But the campaign was poorly planned, highly decentralized, and inadequately supported by the government, with

the result that it had little or no impact on civilians (O'Brien, 2009, pp. 11–12).

South Sudan has also witnessed international and domestic civil society interventions focused on the reduction of civilian arms, conflict prevention, and the clearance of mines and other explosive remnants of war. The South Sudan Action Network on Small Arms is a domestic network of local civil society actors involved in the campaign against the illicit proliferation of firearms in the country. The impact of civil society interventions in South Sudan needs further study.

Karamoja

In December 2001, the Ugandan government began to pursue peaceful disarmament; initial efforts proved comparatively successful, with 9,472 guns surrendered voluntarily and only 1,339 recovered forcefully (FEWS Net, 2005, p. 47). But the gains in arms collection were negated by a rearmament drive that was facilitated by regional arms trafficking and the sale of government guns by rogue military officers (Muhereza, 2011, p. 53). The government relaunched forceful disarmament in September 2004, only to intensify the drive after the February 2006 elections. This phase evolved into a longer-term approach under the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme, established to address security and development challenges alongside a disarmament strategy, whereby the 'removal of illegal weapons is seen not as an end in itself but as a means to an end' (OPM, 2007, p. 45).

Although aspects of the local and national attempts to secure weapons stocks among pastoralist communities have applied locally and internationally recognized principles, this programme was not immune to criticism. In fact, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Uganda found the disarmament exercise to have been fraught with human rights violations (UNHCHR, 2007, pp. 11–26).

Besides state interventions, there are civil society initiatives that mostly focus on peacebuilding and armed

violence reduction. These include the Women's Peace Crusades initiative among the Karamoja, which encourages women to take on roles as peace ambassadors to promote dialogue and to try to find common bonds to unite conflicting groups (Switzer and Mason, 2006, p. 6).

Initiatives in review

An examination of the abovementioned practices reveals that arms reduction has been the predominant approach in the regions under study. The disarmament exercises conducted in Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda have all come under criticism, be it with respect to the use of excessive force and the violation of human rights by security forces or regarding the initiatives' failure to redress insecurity.⁷⁹ While such criticism suggests that governments may be misunderstanding—or at least overlooking—pastoralist communities' reasons for gun ownership, it also serves to highlight the need for more effective violence reduction approaches.

Conclusion

This study finds that the circulation of arms remains widespread in the regions under review—northern Kenya, Somaliland, Eastern Equatoria in South Sudan, and Karamoja in Uganda. Inadequate state security is partly responsible for the prevalence of firearms, which, in turn, have contributed to the deterioration of security among pastoralist communities. Confirming this assessment, this study shows that the perception of insecurity is higher among pastoralists than among other respondents in the four regions.

In addition to heightening the risk of violent conflict between and within communities, the easy availability of firearms raises the risk of accidental gun-related deaths and injuries. The study reveals that South Sudan suffers most from such incidents, followed by Somaliland, Kenya, and Uganda. To control these risks, community safety and security initiatives should integrate small arms issues in all four regions.

Firearm theft is more common in South Sudan and Somaliland than it is

in Kenya and Uganda. It is critical to acknowledge that pastoralist communities occasionally acquire arms through theft, not only from rival communities, but also from state security forces. For state actors, this threat underscores the importance of effective weapons management.

Finally, the study finds that there is a mix of traditional and formal programmatic interventions in pastoralist areas. Traditional arms management mechanisms are indicative of the historical prevalence and normalization of arms among pastoral communities. Yet these traditional mechanisms are weakening, especially as youths reject or disregard communal practices. Where traditional mechanisms have weakened or are insufficient, outside support—from either national or international actors—should be considered. Adequate security provisions, stringent arms control measures, and community safety initiatives can serve to reduce the demand for firearms. Since violence reduction efforts are long-term processes, however, policy-makers and practitioners should bear the following suggestions in minds when designing and implementing current and future initiatives among pastoral communities:

- Integrate traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. Many pastoral communities function beyond the influence of state legislative measures and state security provision. Local elders, as custodians of customary law and traditional practices, are the first point of contact for pastoralist populations. Their role and support for outside interventions is imperative.
- Utilize community-based firearms safety management knowledge. Many pastoral communities have traditional codes that are applicable to the restriction of firearms possession and use. Understanding these rules will better inform outside interventions to strengthen extant controls and identify areas where arms control is needed at the local level.
- Employ participatory approaches to arms management. Local leaders, community-based organizations,

and other groups, such as women's groups and peace committees, are advocating armed violence reduction programming. Interventions to decrease armed violence and arms proliferation need to be an inclusive process through which such local population groups are involved and encouraged to participate at all levels of programming.

- In planning state disarmament initiatives, acknowledge the link between security and development needs. Disarmament operations have inadvertently fuelled rearmament as disarmed communities have been left without effective local or state-supported security and have found livelihoods and economic viability under threat. ■

Methodological annexe

The methodological annexe is available at <<http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/publications/by-type/issue-briefs.html>>

List of abbreviations

DDG	Danish Demining Group
FGD	Focus group discussions
MCH	Maternal and child health
SPLA	Sudan People's Liberation Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defense Force

Notes

- 1 The Karamoja Cluster refers to the border regions of south-western Ethiopia, north-western Kenya, south-eastern South Sudan, and north-eastern Uganda. Many of the communities in this area—such as the Turkana of Kenya, Toposa of South Sudan, Nyangatom and Merille of Ethiopia, and the Karimojong of Uganda—speak closely related dialects (Siefulaziz, 2004, pp. 10–11; Matthysen et al., 2010, p. 6). The Horn of Africa region comprises Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, although it is sometimes seen as extending into parts or all of Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. To sustain their livelihoods during the dry season and periods of drought, some agro-pastoralist groups in these regions have little choice but to cross international borders in pursuit of resources (Lambroschini, 2011, p. 1). This Issue Brief uses the terms 'agro-pastoralist', 'pastoralist', and 'pastoral' interchangeably.
- 2 The study is based on household survey data collected in 2008–12 and qualitative research carried out in 2012–13. For details,

see the online methodological annexe to this Issue Brief.

- 3 Respondents' perceptions of safety were surveyed in all study areas apart from Karamoja, for which the survey design differed somewhat.
- 4 One view holds that the Turkana–Dasse-etch communities have been in violent conflict for more than a century (SCCRR, 2013, p. 1; Ng'asike, 2013).
- 5 Male and female youth and adult focus group discussion (FGD), Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012.
- 6 Male and female youth and adult FGDs, Baligubadle and Salahlay, Somaliland, 18–19 September 2012.
- 7 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012.
- 8 Female youth FGD, Budi, South Sudan, 19 September 2012.
- 9 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Kaabong, Uganda, 11 March 2013.
- 10 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Kotido, Uganda, 12–13 March 2013.
- 11 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Amudat, Uganda, 15 March 2013.
- 12 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Baligubadle, Somaliland, 19 September 2012.
- 13 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012.
- 14 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Budi, Kapoeta North, and Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 21–27 September 2012.
- 15 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Kapoeta North and Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 21–27 September 2012.
- 16 Male youth FGDs, Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 21 September 2012, and Budi, South Sudan, 19 September 2012.
- 17 Male adults FGD, Kapenguria, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 18 Key informant interviews with a military officer, Budi, South Sudan, 20 September 2012, and one civilian and one military representative, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 28 September 2012.
- 19 Gun prices are very high for the pastoralist communities under review, given that more than half of the population lives below the poverty line. Specifically, 50 per cent of the population in South Sudan's Eastern Equatoria state, 82 per cent in Uganda's Karamoja, and 94 per cent in Kenya's Turkana county live below the poverty line (NBS, 2011, p. 4; Adoch and Ssemakula, 2011, p. 2; CRA, 2011, p. 43).
- 20 The only exception in Somaliland was in Baligubadle, where all FGD participants said that theft was not a problem (men's FGD on 18 September 2012 and female adult, female youth, and male youth FGD on 19 September 2012).
- 21 Adult and youth FGDs, Isiolo, Kapenguria, and Kainuk, Kenya, 21–23 August 2012, 12–14 September 2012, 21–22 September 2012, respectively.
- 22 Key informant interview, Kapenguria, Kenya, 14 September 2012.

- 23 Key informant interview, Kapenguria, Kenya, 14 September 2012.
- 24 Male youth FGDs, Isiolo, Kapenguria, and Kainuk, Kenya, 21 August 2012, 13 September 2012, and 22 September 2012, respectively.
- 25 Women's FGD, Kotido, Uganda, 12 March 2013.
- 26 Women's, female youth, and male youth FGD, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012; men's FGDs, Baligubadle, Somaliland, 18–19 September 2012; men's FGDs, Salahlay, Somaliland, 17–18 September 2012. Key informant interviews with one traditional leader and one businessman, Baligubadle, Somaliland, 18 September 2012; one businessman, one member of the maternal and child health (MCH) programme, and one civil society representative, Salahlay, Somaliland, 18 September 2012; and two MCH members, two civil society representatives, one traditional leader, one military representative, and one teacher, Sheikh, Somaliland, 24 September 2012.
- 27 Men's and female youth FGDs, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012.
- 28 Men's FGDs, Baligubadle, Somaliland, 18 September 2012. Key informant interviews with one traditional leader, Baligubadle, Somaliland, 18 September 2012; one MCH member, Salahlay, Somaliland, 17 September 2012; and two MCH members, one traditional leader, one military representative, and one teacher, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012.
- 29 Men's FGD, Kapenguria, Kenya, 12 September 2012, and male youth FGD, Isiolo, Kenya, 21 August 2012.
- 30 Male youth FGD, Kainuk, Kenya, 21 September 2012.
- 31 The following proportions of respondents in male and female, youth and adult FGDs recognized accidental death and injury by firearms as a problem: 104 of 114 in Somaliland (17–24 September 2012), 71 of 120 in South Sudan (21–27 September 2012), and 52 out of 116 in Uganda (11–15 March 2013).
- 32 Key informant interviews with two traditional leaders and one businessman, Baligubadle, Somaliland, 19 September 2012; one police, one MCH member, and one businessman, Salahlay, Somaliland, 17 September 2012; and one traditional leader, one MCH member, two civil society representatives, one police officer, one military representative, and one teacher, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23–24 September 2012. Very similar responses were provided in Somaliland by male and female adult and youth FGDs in Sheikh on 23 September 2012 and in Baligubadle on 18–19 September 2012, as well as by women's and male youth and adult FGDs in Salahlay on 17–18 September 2012.
- 33 Key informant interviews with one civilian, Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 22 September 2012; two civilians, Budi, South Sudan, 20 September 2012; and two civilians, one military representative, and one police officer, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 28 September 2012.
- 34 Key informant interviews with law enforcement agents, Dadaab, Isiolo, and Kainuk, Kenya, on 8 August, 23 August, and 21 September 2012, respectively.
- 35 Women's and female and male youth FGD, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012.
- 36 Women's and female and male youth FGDs, Sheikh, Somaliland, 17–23 September 2012. Key informant interviews in Somaliland: with one traditional leader and one businessman, Baligubadle, 18 September 2012; with one businessman, one MCH member, and one civil society representative, Salahlay, 17 September 2012; and with two MCH members, two civil society representatives, one traditional leader, one military representative, and one teacher, Sheikh, 17–24 September 2012.
- 37 Female youth FGDs in Somaliland: Baligubadle, 18 September 2012, and Sheikh, 23 September 2012. Men's FGDs in Somaliland: Baligubadle, 18 September 2012, and Sheikh, 23 September 2012.
- 38 Male and female youth FGDs, Budi, South Sudan, 21–28 September 2012.
- 39 Men's and female youth FGDs in South Sudan: Budi, 19 September 2012; Kapoeta South, 21 September 2012; and Kapoeta North, 27 September 2012. South Sudan key informant interviews with three civilians, one traditional leader, one businessman, one civil society representative, one police officer, and one military representative, Kapoeta South, 22 September 2012; three civilians, two leaders, two military representatives, one businessman, one civil society representative, one police officer, Budi, 20 September 2012; and seven civilians, one police officer, one military representative, and one businessman, Kapoeta North, 28 September 2012.
- 40 Female youth FGD, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 27 September 2012, and women's FGD, Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 21 September 2012.
- 41 Male and female youth and adult FGD, Kaabong, Uganda, 11 March 2013, and male youth FGD, Kotido, Uganda, 11 March 2013.
- 42 Male and female youth and adult FGDs in Uganda: Kaabong, 11 March 2013; Kotido, 12–13 March 2013; and Amudat, 15 March 2013.
- 43 Male youth FGD, Amudat, Uganda, 15 March 2013.
- 44 Male youth FGDs, Kotido, Uganda, 13 March 2013.
- 45 Female and male youth FGDs, Kaabong, Uganda, 11 March 2013.
- 46 Elders' FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 47 Elders' FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 48 Women's FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 49 The use of *leketio* in cases of accidents is limited. Women's FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 50 Elders' FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 51 Elders' FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 52 Women's FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 53 Elders' FGD, Kapenguria, West Pokot, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 54 Women's FGD, Kainuk, Turkana, Kenya, 21 September 2012.
- 55 Key informant interview, Kainuk, Turkana, Kenya, 21 September 2012.
- 56 Elders' and women's FGDs, Kainuk, Turkana, Kenya, 21 September 2012.
- 57 Elders' FGD, Kainuk, Turkana, Kenya, 21 September 2012.
- 58 Information on Somali practices was collected from respondents in Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya.
- 59 Key informant interview, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 4 August 2012.
- 60 Key informant interview, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 4 August 2012.
- 61 Elders' FGD, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 4 August 2012.
- 62 Women's FGD, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 5 August 2012.
- 63 Key informant interview, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 4 August 2012.
- 64 Elders' FGD, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 4 August 2012.
- 65 Women's FGD, Dadaab, Garissa, Kenya, 5 August 2012.
- 66 Women's FGD, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012; male youth FGD, Budi, South Sudan, 19 September 2012; men's and female youth FGD, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 27 September 2012. Key informant interviews with one teacher and one civil society representative, Salahlay, Somaliland, 17 September 2012; one MCH member, Sheikh, Somaliland, 23 September 2012; one military representative, Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 22 September 2012; one military representative and one police officer, Budi, South Sudan, 20 September 2012; and two civilians, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 28 September 2012.
- 67 The following proportions of respondents in male and female, youth and adult FGDs agreed that accidents could be prevented: 105 of 107 in Somaliland, 87 of 107 in South Sudan, and 34 of 50 in Uganda. The following proportions of key informants shared that opinion: 24 of 27 in Somaliland, 24 of 27 in South Sudan, and 21 of 30 in Uganda.
- 68 Male youth FGD, Kapoeta South, South Sudan, 21 September 2012; women's FGD, Kotido, Uganda, 12 March 2013. Key informant interviews with seven civilians, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 28 September

- 2012, and with one civilian, Kaabong, Uganda, 11 March 2013.
- 69 Male youth FGD, Budi, South Sudan, 19 September 2012. Key informant interviews with one military representative and one civil society representative, Budi, South Sudan, 20 September 2012, and with one civilian, Kapoeta North, South Sudan, 28 September 2012.
- 70 Women's FGD, Kapenguria, Kenya, 12 September 2012.
- 71 Women and men's FGDs, Isiolo, Kenya, 22 August 2012.
- 72 In Somaliland, the Danish Demining Group implemented community safety programmes—including safe storage devices and firearms safety education—in Sheikh (2008–09), Baligubadle (2010), and Salahlay (2011).
- 73 Men's FGD, Budi, South Sudan, 19 September 2012.
- 74 See, for instance, Wepundi (2011, pp. 61–64), which covers arms collection and violence reduction initiatives that are considered success stories in Kenya. The action plans of national focal points of Kenya and Uganda focus on civilian arms reduction and the management of government stockpiles; see Ndung'u and Wepundi (2011, pp. 8–14).
- 75 FGD participants and key informants, Kenya, 4 August–21 September 2012.
- 76 FGD participants and key informants, West Pokot, Kenya, 12–16 September 2012.
- 77 FGD participants and key informants, Kenya, 4 August–21 September 2012.
- 78 FGD participants and key informants, Kenya, 4 August–21 September 2012.
- 79 See, for example, Muhereza (2011, pp. 73–92); UNHCHR (2007); O'Brien (2009, pp. 23–48); and Wepundi, Ndung'u, and Rynn (2011, pp. 15–18).
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Danish Demining Group (DDG) is a unit in the Danish Refugee Council. Its mission is to recreate a safe environment where people can live without the threat of landmines, unexploded ordnance, and small arms and light weapons. DDG works to achieve this through Humanitarian Mine Action activities and Armed Violence Reduction programmes addressing both physical and societal consequences of small arms and explosive remnants of war with a view to

assisting successful transitions towards economic and social development.

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