

Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis (CPRA) –Pretoria



CPRA Daily Briefings

Week 44

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The **CPRA Daily Briefings** are held weekday mornings in the CPRA Pretoria's Situation Room and the Briefing Notes are the minutes of this meeting during which each regional expert of the Programme reports on the latest human security developments in his/her region, followed by general discussions around the table. An intern then compiles a summary of the meeting, which is reviewed by the respective researchers, and a senior researcher edits the report and provides quality control before returning it to the intern to prepare it for dispatch to the mailing list to which you have subscribed.

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Summary of Briefings

East and Horn of Africa

Violence in Kenya: a climate change dimension

Remark: This briefing was compiled by Ms Lucie Boucher from the Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis division of the ISS Addis Ababa office.

On 14 November 2012, 42 Kenyan police officers were killed by heavily armed cattle raiders from the Turkana tribe suspected of having stolen cattle from the Samburu tribe in Baragoi, Samburu North District. This highlights a worrying pattern of insecurity in Kenya, especially in the run-up to the March 2013 presidential elections.

Although the issue of livestock, particularly cattle, remains central in Turkana and Samburu culture, the raiders' weaponry and level of preparedness, as well as the intensity of the attacks, are new phenomena.

A critical analysis of this issue requires a multifaceted approach. One dimension is linked to the increase in resources-based conflicts over land and water as a consequence of climate change. Related to this is the assumption that these conflicts are exacerbated by competition over scarce resources, particularly considering that both the Turkana and Samburu communities share Kenya's driest region. The effects of climate change can act as triggers that worsen or fuel conflicts.

The consequences of climate change are thus a real security threat for the continent, as they affect countries and regions' socio-economic and political stability. As a result of climate change, natural disasters are becoming more frequent. This results in increased resource scarcity, with a drop in the quality and quantity of renewable environmental resources, which in turn leads to environmental and social insecurity. The immediate result of this is an increase in ethnic clashes due to the marginalisation of those communities in terms of access to resources and power.

Pastoral communities depend largely on pasture and water to feed their herds, but they are suffering because of the severe drought, which is the consequence of climate change. The traditional lifestyle of pastoralists is based on travelling during the dry season, searching for grazing areas. Afterwards they return to their home areas. However, at present the possibility of returning is unimaginable because of the drought. This nomadic way of life is not sustainable in terms of the actual environmental situation in northern Kenya. As a result, the settling of nomadic and semi-nomadic communities and restocking herds have been proposed.

Governmental authorities are discussing various solutions in order to address these resource-based conflicts. The priority should be to settle the pastoral community in a region, or what has been referred to as climate change adaptation. Adaptation should be understood in the framework of taking the right measures to reduce the negative effects of climate change or exploit the positive ones through behavioural adjustment and changes.

The settlement of pastoralist groups would require the government providing access to health and education, decent infrastructure, stronger institutions, access to information, etc. Furthermore, there is a necessity to shift pastoralist communities' economic dynamics. The implementation of adequate response mechanisms to tackle the negative impacts of climate change should involve communities in the entire process. In this sense, military responses are far from being the solution in the resolution of these disputes.

Finally, despite the fact that there has always been conflict between pastoralist communities, it is now necessary to insist on the implementation of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, which are based on negotiation and compromise, to tackle those challenges.

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