Assessment of community peace accords in Kenya

Conrad M Bosire

Assessment of community peace accords in Kenya

Conrad M Bosire

Contents

Preface

Community peacebuilding processes are key in addressing persistent conflict among pastoralist communities, with the negotiation and conclusion of these accords providing a critical pathway to sustainable intercommunal peace. While numerous written and oral peace accords have been reached between communities in pastoralist regions, the success of these agreements in contributing to or maintaining peace and sustainable relations varies.

This study analyses the experience of community peace accords in seven Kenyan counties – Turkana, Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Tana River, Isiolo, and Marsabit. Rooted in a rich history of customs and traditions that have long sustained intercommunal harmony, these communities face new and evolving challenges that shape local conflicts.

The report documents different approaches to community peace accords while isolating important components of both the process or approach to conflict management, and the content of the agreements. It contains comprehensive policy proposals, based on its findings, to enhance the effectiveness of community peace accords. The findings and recommendations provide an important basis for enriching current and future community peace processes.

I am grateful to the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) for coordinating this timely and important study, and to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for supporting it. I also wish to thank the consultant who compiled the report, the technical teams at the ISS and Kenya's National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, state agencies, non-state actors, community representatives, and other stakeholders who participated in the study.

It is my sincere hope that you will find this report useful as reference material in the design, conclusion, and implementation of community peace accords and general conflict management in the communities where you work.

Mohammed Barre, OGW
Secretary
National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management

Executive summary

This monograph provides a comprehensive account of community peace accords and their contributions to local community peace in Kenya. It focuses on the experiences of seven counties: Tana River, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir and Turkana.

While the approach to the design and implementation of community peace may have changed over the years, the communities inhabiting the seven counties had customs and traditions that managed conflicts and ensured coexistence for generations before and after colonial rule.

The traditions, customs, and norms developed over the ages among the communities are an important reference for any peace processes and accords between communities in the region.

Colonial and post-colonial rules fundamentally changed the socio-political context that defines relationships between the communities, which now have the state as the organising framework for intercommunal relations. Deliberate colonial and post-colonial state intervention has served to politically, socially, and economically marginalise these regions – a persistent factor in conflict transition management.

> The traditions, customs, and norms developed over the ages among the communities are an important reference for any peace processes

A shift has occurred from a top-down approach to peace processes in the seven counties to community-led processes that make communities central to negotiation, conclusion, and implementation of peace agreements, with a view to achieving lasting peace.

Where peace actors have failed to adopt a community-led approach in developing peace accords, such processes have been impeded at implementation. Other recent peace accords have persisted with top-down approaches, often with rhetoric about being community-led.

The effectiveness of community peace accords can be determined only through the outcomes of implementation. In turn, effective implementation depends on the approach to the process that leads to the conclusion of such agreements.

This monograph outlines recommendations for national and county levels of government and non-state actors to improve the quality of the process and implementation. Recommendations are made in five areas:

• Embrace inclusive approaches to the development of peace accords, at all stages of the peace process.

• Ensure coordination and coherence of purpose among peace actors, to enhance planning and minimise potentially conflicting interests between external players.

• Ensure resources are available to facilitate implementation of peace accords.

• Stakeholders and communities should build their capacity to handle the technical aspects of peace processes as well as the ever-changing dynamics and complexities in conflict management and transition.

• National and county governments should address the various legal and policy gaps that hinder the effective development and implementation of community peace agreements.

Abbreviations and phrases

Abbreviations

CMC	ceasefire monitoring committee
IVDC	inter-village dialogue committee
ISS	Institute for Security Studies
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NSC	National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management
CSOs	civil society organisations
FBOs	faith-based organisations
NGAO	National Government Administration Officer
FGD	focus group discussion
KII	key informant interview
NGOs	non-governmental organisations
WRAI	Women Rights Advocacy Initiative

Customary/cultural phrases and words

Xeer	Somali customs
Malka(s)	Pathways set aside for access to the river/watering points in Tana River County
Maslaha	'Blood compensation' proceedings held for loss of life under Islamic practices

Chapter 1
Introduction

This monograph presents the findings of a study on the assessment of community peace accords in seven Kenyan counties: Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Turkana, and Tana River. These counties continue to experience intercommunal conflict. The study examines the role that agreements reached between the communities play in managing the conflict.

A community peace accord, generally, and as used in this monograph, refers to the agreement or consensus reached between sides in an intercommunal conflict, and which is aimed at achieving lasting peace between the communities in conflict. While the phrase 'community peace accord' has been used as a reference to the documents signed at the end of a community peace negotiation process, it broadly refers to the process as well as the outcome, whether oral or written.[1]

A community peace accord is therefore one pathway to peace, among other ways of achieving peace and stability in places experiencing conflict.

> The assessment focused on the context in which the accords enhance peaceful coexistence and the factors that contribute to their success or failure

The assessment entailed a review of community peace accords in the seven counties to understand the causes of the conflicts they are addressing, the actors involved, and the specific commitments and means to achieve peace. Research also involved county field visits, and speaking to community representatives and various key players in the community peace processes.

More importantly, it focused on the context in which the accords enhance peaceful coexistence and the factors that contribute to their success or failure. Community agreements have been used as a tool to manage community conflicts to varying degrees across the seven counties. These range from centuries-old agreements between communities, to more recent ones signed decades ago, as well as newer ones concluded more recently.

The approach to community accords, including the players, scale and scope of issues of agreement, the approach to community peace talks, the period of agreement, and the nature of responsibilities, also varies. Players range from traditional community structures to government agencies and peace actors on the ground, including non-governmental and faith-based organisations, among others.

Based on the assessment of the context, design, and implementation of peace accords in these counties, the study entailed developing policy-level recommendations on how to enhance and improve the effectiveness of community agreements as a tool for peace and stability. This both in the target-region communities, and in Kenya generally.

This monograph presents the findings of the research, which was carried out between October 2024 and February 2025. It provides a comprehensive and detailed assessment of the experience in the seven counties in the negotiation, development, and implementation of community peace deals.

The work captures the varying contexts, factors, and approaches that have either contributed to the success or failure of community accords. Furthermore, a detailed evaluation of the specific peace agreements and concrete measures and steps taken in the development and implementation of accords provides a basis for the policy recommendations contained in the report.

The work is presented in four sections. The first introduces the context and background of community peace agreements in the seven counties as well as the methodology and approach to the research and findings. The second part presents the findings from the research, while the third and fourth sections of the monograph provide conclusions and recommendations from the study.

Background

The seven counties vary contextually in terms of cultural and ethnic diversity, religion, region, and population, among others. However, several factors are also common and relevant to the assessment.

First, most communities in the seven counties are predominantly rural-based and pastoralist. Accordingly, much community conflict revolves around their way of life.[2] Scarcity of water and pastures for animals are among the foremost causes of conflict as different communities compete to access these precious resources. Prolonged droughts and unpredictable seasons and weather patterns, often attributed to climate change, intensify these clashes.[3]

Second, intercommunal competition over pastures and water is rooted in different historical and contextual factors. Disputed communal territory and boundaries escalate tension and conflict. These disputes are muddled by historical narratives and claims, from the pre-colonial to colonial and post-colonial periods.

Specific issues include claims and counterclaims of expansionism and 'mushrooming settlement'[4] by neighbouring communities, unfairness of colonial-era inter- and intracommunal boundaries, and unfair current administrative and political boundaries. These issues often overlap with resource scarcity, further compounding the conflicts.

Third, the seven counties and surrounding regions are part of historically marginalised areas of the country that are characterised by extremely low levels of social and economic development, especially remote rural areas. Deliberate colonial and post-colonial policies have placed these regions at the periphery of development and essential services.[5]

Consciousness about this exclusion from development and services often forms part of grievances that drive conflict in the region. Perceptions about marginalisation, for instance, drive aggression and hostility towards government security and administrative agencies in such regions – perceived as an extension of continued oppression and marginalisation.[6]

<div style="color:green; text-align:center">

Where oil or solid minerals have been discovered and mining activities are taking place, there are conflicts around access, control, and benefit from these resources

</div>

Underdevelopment and inadequate access to opportunities, often attributed to past policies of exclusion, have further limited opportunities to alternative livelihoods and socioeconomic development. This has compounded the vulnerability of communities in the region, driving survival conflicts among them.[7]

Fourth, in areas where there are historically farming communities, or pastoralists who have turned to farming, competition and conflict are between the pastoralist and farming communities. Farming activities occur along water points that are also needed by pastoralists to water their animals. In such areas, claims that farming communities have expanded activities to water access routes or to pastoralists' lands are common. In turn, farming communities accuse pastoralists of allowing livestock to eat their crops.[8]

Furthermore, in areas where oil or solid minerals have been discovered and mining activities are taking place, there are conflicts around access, control, and benefit from these resources. Gold mining in the Hillo area of Marsabit has triggered violent intercommunal clashes.[9]

In Garissa, gypsum mining in Balambala, Kora and Alinjugur triggered inter-clan violence that led to a ban of mining activities.[10] The discovery of oil in Turkana County and solid minerals in the Suguta Valley, Malaso, and Baragoi areas has

triggered border disputes between communities from Turkana, Samburu, Baringo, and West Pokot counties, as each seeks to access and benefit from minerals.[11]

Fifth, political and governance factors contribute to and define community conflict in the seven counties. The introduction of devolution, which led to a dispersal of powers and resources to the country's 47 counties, introduced new dynamics to local conflicts. A devolved system of governance increased and intensified competition, along local community lines, for resources and opportunities like development projects, employment, scholarships, etc.

Along with this, there is an emerging pattern of increasingly deadly intercommunal clashes, with the use of more complex weaponry, and the rise of tribal militia entrenching new levels of intercommunal violence and organised gangs and warfare.[12]

Competition for elective positions under the devolved system (specifically the seats of governor/deputy governor and members of county assemblies) has especially led to serious community conflict. This has compounded older conflicts around the election of members of Parliament. The expanded elective positions and opportunities under Kenya's 2010 Constitution have created more friction as rival candidates from various communities or clans vie for seats.

> There is an emerging pattern of increasingly deadly intercommunal clashes, with the use of more complex weaponry, and the rise of tribal militia

Sixth, security and administrative factors contribute to the dynamics of intercommunal conflict. A 'hard' security approach to managing conflict, which typically entails forceful disarmament and violent confrontation with armed groups in communities, can escalate tensions. These include perceptions of state bias and favouritism, and old grievances that associate the government with oppression. In some cases government has used a peace-seeking approach in communities, including peace accord negotiations, leading to different outcomes.

Government agencies are often in charge of the factors that drive community conflict. These include immigration, zoning of grazing lands and sharing of watering points, setting of administrative boundaries, and other general security and administrative issues. When these processes are mismanaged, or create a perception of bias and favouritism, or are seen as being subject to political and other interference, they lead to further conflict.

Often, government inaction on issues such as historical grievances over administrative boundaries, arbitrary settlement of boundary disputes, or even

the perceived way in which disarmament is carried out, can ignite conflict. Well-managed processes, though, can contribute to peace.

Seventh, the seven counties either border, or are close to the porous international borders of, Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Somalia. This porosity is mostly because of weak border controls, but is also due to local and cross-border communities sharing cultural, sometimes linguistic, and socioeconomic lifestyles.

This situation has encouraged the smuggling of small and light weapons into the regions, contributing to violence.[13] Furthermore, cross-border kinship ties in these border areas have often contributed to a spill-over of conflicts across the border, routinely affecting communities on the Kenyan side.

Many peace actors are active in the regions under study. These include the National Government Administration Officers (NGAOs) of the county commissioner, deputy county commissioners, chiefs and other national administrators. Other players include the county government departments concerned with peacebuilding, state agencies, clan elders and community leaders, non-governmental and faith-based organisations, and youth and women's groups.

The nature, implementation and effectiveness of peace agreements are impacted by the multiplicity of players in conflict areas, together with their various approaches to peace. The composition and diversity of communities, the history and trajectory of community conflicts and peace processes, and the nature of approaches taken by various players, such as government agencies, all differ significantly in the seven counties.

Furthermore, the nature of the roles of players such as political leaders, elders, and peace actors regarding conflict management (including negotiating and implementing agreements) also vary. Religious and cultural identities and their impact on conflict patterns and management processes, among other issues, also differ depending on the county or region.

Mandera

Mandera County is located in northeastern Kenya, bordering Somalia to the east and Ethiopia to the north. It is inhabited predominantly by the Somali, whose major clans are the Garre, Degodia, and Murule. Several other smaller clans also live in Mandera, including the Ajuran, Marehan, and the Corner Tribes. These Somali clans and sub-clans are spread across the Kenyan, Ethiopian and Somali territories in the region (sometimes called the Mandera Triangle) and have close kinship ties along clan lines.[14]

There is no detailed breakdown of the population per clan in Mandera, but the 2019 national census put its total population at 867 319.[15] Mandera town, the county headquarters, is fairly cosmopolitan with a growing mixed and urbanised

population. Other urban centres include Arabia, Bulla Mpya, and Elwak, among others. The county generally has low levels of development, infrastructure, and socioeconomic development, and low levels of service delivery traceable to past marginalisation.

Conflict in the county and peace agreements that have been reached in the past are mainly between the Garre, Degodia, and Murule. Conflict drivers include fights over grazing areas and settlements, dating back to the colonial and post-colonial periods. This is further compounded by security challenges related to violent extremism and terrorism. Al-Shabaab is active in the neighbouring Somalia state, and numerous incidents of terrorism have been reported in the county. Kenya shares a 681 km border with Somalia, stretching from the 'tri-point' with Ethiopia to the Indian Ocean.[16]

Al-Shabaab is active in neighbouring Somalia, and numerous incidents of terrorism have been reported in the county

Numerous accords and peace agreements have been reached between communities in Mandera over the years. These include the Garre-Ajuran Peace Agreement of 2001, which sought to address administrative and political boundary conflicts between areas in Mandera West and Wajir North; the Garre-Marehan Peace Agreement of 2005;[17] the Garre-Murule Declaration of 2008; the Garre-Degodia Banissa Peace Agreement of December 2010 reached in Banissa; and the Banissa Nine Points Declaration of 2021.[18]

Wajir

Similarly, Wajir County is dominated by the Somali community and borders Somalia to the east, Mandera to the north, Garissa to the south, and Isiolo to the west. The main clans in Wajir include Degodia, Garre, Ajuran, Murule, and the Ogaden and other smaller clans of the Somali community. The 2019 census placed the total population of Wajir at 781 228.[19] There are generally no detailed statistics of the numbers per clan in the county.

Wajir Town is the major settlement hub in the county. It has an international airport and has a cosmopolitan urban population. Other centres include Eldas, Bute, Griftu, and Habaswein, among others.

Wajir has a long history of conflict between the Somali clans inhabiting the county – mainly the Degodia and Garre, who are the majority, but also others like the Ajuran, Murule, and Ogaden. But conflict has also been witnessed along the border areas,

including the Wajir-Marsabit, Wajir-Garissa, and Wajir-Isiolo boundaries. Causes range from boundary to pasture and water disputes.[20]

In many cases, there has been a spill-over of these conflicts to other counties and neighbouring states.[21] Efforts to address conflicts have led to various community accords between clans in Wajir and the broader region.

Initial discussions about peace that led to the Modogashe Declaration began between educated Somali women and women in the markets of Wajir. This culminated in the establishment of the Wajir Women for Peace, and later the Wajir Peace Group.[22]

In the 1990s, during the peak of violence in the county, the Al-Fatah Council of Elders engaged in peace talks leading to accords that contributed to peace. Numerous organisations in Wajir collaborate with the national and county governments to carry out their activities in peace and development.

Currently, issues of movement and the establishment of new settlements are the cause of tensions between clans. An official ban on the establishment of any new settlements in the county is in place.[23] However, the practice persists due to incentives given by political leaders (such as the appointment of a new chief from the clan) whenever a settlement is established.

Garissa

Garissa is located south of Wajir and borders the state of Somalia on the east, and Isiolo and Tana River counties to the west and south. The county is inhabited by predominantly Somali communities, comprising the Ogaden, Auliyahan, and Abdalla clans. Others include the Marehan, Issa, and Hawiye, among other clans and sub-clans.

Garissa township is a major, fast-growing urban centre with a cosmopolitan population comprising several Kenyan communities working and doing business there. Other major urban centres in Garissa include Fafi, Balambala, Modogashe, Ifo, and Dajabula, among others. Similar to the other counties, the population estimates of each of these clans are not available, but the total population of Garissa was 841 235 as per the 2019 national census.[24]

Most communities in Garissa are pastoralists. However, many have turned to agriculture, especially along Tana River, which flows through the county. Other activities include small-scale fishing along Tana and other rivers in the county, and charcoal harvesting.

Rivalry for water and pastures, often between clans, is a major driver of conflict. As droughts worsen, communities search for water and pasture outside their living areas. Pastoralists from other parts of Garissa, even as far as Wajir, often venture into areas around Tana River for water and pastures, especially during prolonged

droughts and famines. This leads to clashes with farming communities like the Pokomo, Munyoyaya, and Ilwana/Malakote, who live and farm along the river.[25]

Furthermore, entry of animals belonging to Somali pastoralists leads to conflicts and tension with pastoralist communities in Tana River, including the Orma and Wardei. Conflict between Somali sometimes extends as far as Kitui County, which does not share a physical boundary with Garissa.

Historical claims regarding community boundaries also drive conflict between the Somali communities (mostly the Abdalla in Ijara) and Pokomo. The former claim that the colonial government drew the boundaries in favour of the Pokomo communities and excluded the Somali from access to the river.

These historical claims and grievances about boundaries along the Tana River have either been left unaddressed or worsened by poorly thought out administrative decisions. For instance, there are many Pokomo farmers in the Mansabubu area in the Fafi constituency of Garissa in the boundary area with the Bura East Constituency of Tana River, and the administrative officers there (specifically chiefs) compete to assert authority over the area, leading to tensions between the Somali and Pokomo.[26]

> Cross-border committees were established between Liboi in Garissa and Dhobley and Kolbiyo in Somalia, making Garissa town one of the safest in the region

Furthermore, clan-based competition for gypsum mining in areas such as Balambala, Kora Kora, and Alinjugur has laid the basis for further violence and insecurity in the areas, which spills over to Garissa town and other areas. This led to a state ban on mining in these areas in 2023.[27] Furthermore, proximity to the Somali border, coupled with weak border controls, has led to terrorism-related insecurity – the most severe being the April 2015 Garissa University College terror attack that killed 147 people.[28]

Like most counties in Kenya's northern and northeastern regions, Garissa has had a long presence of peace and development organisations as well as administrative and security agencies. In 2005/6, for example, a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded voluntary disarmament programme led to the surrender of more than 1 800 guns.[29]

Cross-border committees were also established between Liboi in Garissa and Dhobley and Kolbiyo in Somalia.[30] These programmes made Garissa town one of the safest in the region from 2005–2008, and the peace model was replicated in other parts of Kenya, such as West Pokot (Kapenguria).[31]

While the Modogashe agreement applies to Garissa County, there are other peace agreements that have touched on Somali communities in Garissa. These include the Mohammed Subayr-Auliyahan Peace Accord of 1998, the Auliyahan-Abudwaq Peace Accord of 2001, the Sheikh Umul Peace Accord of 2005 that addressed the Garre-Murule conflict in Garissa's Alango area, and the Abdwak-Abdalla Peace Accord of October 2010 that addressed conflict in Waberi and Iftin location in Garissa County.

Tana River

Tana River County in the eastern part of the country borders Garissa County to the north, Kitui County to the west, Lamu County to the southeast, and Taita-Taveta County to the southwest. Unlike Mandera, Wajir, and Garissa, which have a semi-arid climate and land, Tana River County has a more diverse topography that includes savannahs, wetlands, and forested areas mainly along Tana River, which is Kenya's biggest river, flowing through Tana County to the Indian Ocean.

The climate varies from arid to semi-arid, with periodic rainfall during long and short rains in the year. Hola is the county's capital and commercial hub. Other urban centres include Garsen, Madogo, Bura, and Kipini, among others.

Tana River County is inhabited by eight major communities: Pokomo, Orma, Wardei, Galjeel, Munyoyaya, Giriama, Ilwana/Malakote, and Waata; the county has a total population of 315 874.[32] Economic activities in Tana River, unlike the other northern region counties, are more diversified between farming and pastoralist communities.

The Pokomo, Munyoyaya, Ilwana/Malakote, and Giriama are predominantly farmers who reside and work along the Tana River. The Orma, Wardei, and Galjeel are predominantly pastoralist communities who have historically occupied lands away from the Tana River, but use the river and other watering points (such as irrigation channels in the area) for their animals. Other communities from Kenya also live in the Tana River Delta, with small-scale businesses in Hola and other urban centres.

Intercommunal conflict in Tana River is mainly between farming communities (mostly the Pokomo, Munyoyaya and Ilwana/Malakote) and pastoralist communities (largely Orma and Wardei). Tana River is a precious resource for both farmers and pastoralists for crop irrigation and watering animals, respectively. Furthermore, locals mine sand along the riverbed and carry out small-scale fishing in the river.

Pastoralist communities claim that the farming communities have disregarded water access points to the river, some of which (according to elders) were set from the colonial era.[33] Farmers in turn claim that pastoralists invade farms and destroy crops.

There are historical boundary disputes between the farming communities and the pastoralists that remain unaddressed. Recent talks about creating boundaries through 'cluster settlements' in the county have not been implemented, mainly

because of the emotiveness of the issue.[34] Perennial flooding and resettlement programmes of flood victims to new areas have raised tensions, with serious clashes in the county in 2023 and 2024.

Furthermore, due to prolonged droughts in the neighbouring Garissa County and the larger northeastern region, Somali pastoralists routinely enter grazing areas in Tana River in search of water and pastures, further complicating existing conflicts.

Many agreements have been reached in the past between the communities in the county. However, unlike the other counties discussed above, many of these agreements in Tana River have either been oral or are documented in the minutes of intercommunal meetings, as opposed to formal community peace accords that are published or publicised.[35]

During the assessment, only one formal agreement, signed in 2016 by county peace committee (CPC) chairs and NGAOs from Tana River and Garissa, was established. Titled the Pokomo and Abdalla Communities Reconciliation Process, the accord is dated 27 April 2016.[36]

It is couched in general terms and does not have specific obligations for implementation by members of the community, apart from committing the various sub-county chairs to take measures to ensure their respective communities refrain from habits that may disturb peace. This would include violence, theft of livestock, destruction of crops, etc.

Isiolo

Isiolo neighbours five counties: Marsabit to the north, Samburu to the northwest, Garissa to the east, Meru to the south, and Laikipia to the southeast. Isiolo is a cosmopolitan county with both rural and urban populations of myriad communities. Its dominant ethnic groups are the Borana (majority), Meru, Samburu, Turkana, Gabra, and Somali.

Kikuyu, Luo, and many other Kenyan ethnic communities also reside and carry out business or work in Isiolo County. The 2019 national census estimated the entire county population to be 267 966.[37] The main urban centres include Isiolo town (the commercial hub), Merti, Garbatulla, and Sericho, among others.

With Isiolo being a predominantly pastoralist county, community conflict among the dominant groups involves mainly access to pastures and water for animals. Livestock theft between communities is common, with Samburu morans (young men from the community who have undergone initiation rites) accused by other communities of cultural raids. Incidents of livestock raids to restock after long droughts and famine are also frequent.

Theft of livestock for commercial purposes (for sale as opposed to restocking after a famine or cultural practices like bride price) by cartels is reportedly common in

the area, especially the neighbouring Meru County. Meat from stolen livestock is reportedly supplied in towns such as Isiolo, Meru, and even as far as Nairobi.[38]

Territory and boundary disputes exist between different communities in Isiolo, between Isiolo and Meru, Isiolo and Garissa, and Isiolo and Wajir.[39] Severe droughts in Wajir sometimes push herders further down to Isiolo, making border communities in Isiolo feel displaced.[40] The Kom area, where the boundaries of Isiolo, Marsabit, and Samburu counties converge, also experiences conflict due to disputed boundaries and competition for water, pasture, and intercommunal livestock raids.[41]

In 2016, pastoralists from Garissa moved into Modogashe, Benane, Garbatulla, and Eldere in breach of the grazing rules because of severe drought, leading to conflict with the Borana people on the Isiolo side.[42] The conflicts happen with every prolonged drought, and as of early 2025, the Benane area has remained deserted because of recurring conflict between the Somali and Borana communities in the area.[43]

<div style="color:green; text-align:center;">

The Northern Rangelands Trust, which established regional community conservancies, also engages in carbon trading that brings income to the communities

</div>

In the Eldera area of Garbatulla in Isiolo, relative calm has returned after similar skirmishes between the Borana and Somalia; cross-border livestock markets are operating normally, but tensions abound.[44]

Furthermore, competition between communities has emerged in the management of community conservancies established in the region. The Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT), which established the conservancies, also engages in carbon trading that brings income to the communities. Competition revolves around access to resources and benefits accrued from rangeland management in the region.[45]

Marsabit

Marsabit County is in northern Kenya. It neighbours Turkana County to the east, Samburu to the southeast, Isiolo to the southwest, and Wajir to the east. Marsabit shares a border with Ethiopia to the north and northeast.

Communities that inhabit Marsabit include Borana (the county's dominant community), Rendille, Gabra, and Burji. Other Marsabit communities include Turkana, Samburu, Somali (mainly the Garre clan), Konso, Sakuye, Wayu, El Molo, Sidama, and Dassenach. Marsabit's population is estimated at 459 598 (2019 census).[46] The main urban centres are Moyale and Marsabit towns. Other smaller and upcoming towns include Laisamis, Sololo, and North Horr.

Intercommunal conflict in Marsabit typically revolves around access to pastures and water, and animal raids between the major communities, such as the Borana and Gabra. Conflict between the two in Jaldesa in 2020, and in other areas in the county, led to displacement and the settling of internally displaced people around Marsabit town.[47]

Furthermore, given the similar lifestyle and close ethnic and kinship ties with other communities across the Ethiopian border, there are incidents of cross-border conflicts and violence. Numerous community peace accords have been reached between the communities in Marsabit, but also with communities on the Ethiopian side, in a bid to manage conflict in the county.

Allegations of skewed allocation of county resources (employment opportunities and development projects) since the inception of devolution are common

---

Community peace accords signed in Marsabit include the Dukana-Dillo-Maikona Declaration and the Dukana-Dillo-Teltele declarations of 2009 and 2017, which involved the cross-border communities of Gabra and Borana living around Dukana and Dillo. The 2009 Maikona and Walda Peace Declaration was reached between the Borana and Gabra communities living along border areas such as Turbi, Walda, Sololo and Rawana. Clashes between communities in Moyale led to a major peace meeting in Nairobi in 2014, which saw the signing of the Boma Peace Agreement.

In Marsabit County, there are claims of an expansionist agenda driven by the political class. This includes the creation of new administrative units that overlap constituency boundaries, which has continued to put communities, mainly the Gabra and Borana, at a crossroads. Allegations of skewed allocation of county resources (employment opportunities and development projects) since the inception of devolution are also common.[48]

Turkana

Turkana County is located in the northwestern region of Kenya, and neighbours West Pokot County to the south, Baringo to the southeast, Samburu to the east, and Marsabit to the northeast. Turkana neighbours Uganda to the west, South Sudan to the northwest, and Ethiopia to the north and northeast.

This county is predominantly occupied by the Turkana community. Others that have settled in Turkana County, in relatively small numbers, are the Pokot and Samburu communities that border the county. Other Kenyan communities live and work in urban areas such as Lodwar, Lokichar, Lokichoggio, Kakuma, and

Lokitaung, among other growing towns. The 2019 census put the total county population at 926 484.[49]

Being a border county that shares boundaries with three countries, there is movement and settlement across the border with communities such as the Toposa and Nyangatom of South Sudan, Ethiopia's Merille/Dassenach communities, and even the Karamojong and Ik people of Uganda.

There are two major patterns of community clashes in the vast Turkana County. First is the conflict between the Turkana, Pokot, Samburu, and Marakwet communities in the neighbouring West Pokot, Samburu, and Baringo counties. It is characterised by competition over pastures and water in the southern region and surrounding areas, which has come to be known as 'the deadly triangle'.

There are accusations of expansionism as well as raids and counter-raids of animals targeting rival communities. Cross-border conflict between the Turkana of Kenya and the Karamojong of Uganda, along the Kenya-Uganda border, is also common.[50]

In the north, conflict pits the Turkana on the Kenyan side against people on the South Sudan and Ethiopian side such as Toposa and Nyangatom of South Sudan, and the Merille/Dassenach of Ethiopia. The conflict also involves raids and counter-raids of livestock, and violent claims over the three countries' borders.

Furthermore, competition over fishing activities in Lake Turkana have led to deadly clashes over the recent past, with the latest incident being in February 2025.[51] Peace deals range from traditional agreements, such as the Lokiriama Peace Accord, which has lasted since 1973 and is commemorated yearly, to community agreements specific to conflict hotspots.

Methodology and approach

The study took the approach and assumption that community peace accords remain an important and critical part of conflict resolution, among other ways of seeking intercommunal peace. There are varying levels of success and effectiveness of community accords, mainly due to factors such as the design and approach to the agreement, and how it's implemented.

Therefore the assessment was narrowed to community peace accords and community conflict in the seven counties. However, the study did not set out to prove or disprove the role and significance of community peace accords in managing conflicts as compared to other alternatives. Rather, it was geared towards understanding the context and environment in which community agreements work in managing conflicts, or not. Also, what policy actions by peace actors and stakeholders can improve the quality of the design, approach, and implementation, to achieve the desired outcome.

This approach aligns with the assignment's broad purpose. That is, reviewing the design and implementation of past and existing peace agreements in these counties to improve community accords' effectiveness in managing peace, and ensuring sustainable peace between groups that have experienced conflict.

The assessment adopted a three-pronged methodology for collecting and analysing information related to the assignment: a desk review of available literature, interviews (key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs)), and field visits to the seven counties. Details of the three approaches and a brief description of the information gathered are provided below.

Literature review

A lot has been documented about community conflicts and the place of peace deals in Kenya generally, and in the target counties and regions covered by this assignment specifically. The literature available includes the text of community peace accords, reports of proceedings that led to the signing of agreements, government reports, media articles and reports, and academic and analytical reports on various aspects of community conflicts and peace accords.

> Existing reports on community accords and conflicts helped to understand the trajectory of community conflicts and approaches that have been applied previously

Other relevant literature for this assignment included reports and analyses of the approach and impact of peace processes (which included the signing of agreements) and subsequent implementation. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Interpeace have produced a comprehensive and unique analysis about their approach and work in resolving conflicts in the counties of Mandera, Marsabit, Isiolo, and the North Rift region.

The reports comprise preliminary assessments of the conflicts, plans and interventions, and an analysis of the interventions' implementation and impact on the region's various conflicts. These report findings form a core part of the findings and recommendations in this research.

There are other institutional reports and studies on various aspects of community accords and conflicts in the regions generally. This helped to understand the trajectory of community conflicts and other approaches that have been applied previously to manage conflicts. Field visits and interviews helped triangulate the data obtained from the desk review of literature.

Interviews and FGDs

During visits to the seven target counties (between December 2024 and February 2025), interviews were carried out with key informants involved in managing community conflicts, mostly at county headquarters. Virtual interviews were held with respondents who could not meet face to face, and physical interviews were held with key respondents in Nairobi.

Key informants interviewed for this assignment included county commissioners (or their deputies where commissioners were unavailable) and officials in the offices of county commissioners managing various aspects of community conflict, chiefs, and other administrative staff. The office of the county commissioner usually coordinates peace work in the county, and they provided important leads in identifying more key informants (and FGD participants).

Other key informants included officials of county government departments dealing with peacebuilding and conflict management, elders and community members, members of County Peace Committees (CPCs), religious leaders and representatives, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community-based organisations (CBOs) doing peace work, among others.

KIIs extended to Nairobi and included National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (NSC) head office officials, and Interpeace leadership and management. The KIIs provided key and practical insights to conflict management and complemented the desk review described above. Key informant details are provided in the annex to this report.

FGDs were carried out in Isiolo, Turkana, Garissa, and Tana River counties. FGD participants involved a mix of individual respondents, as well as county and national government officials, religious representatives, elders, youth and women leaders, and representatives of NGOs and CBOs in the respective counties. The FGD details are also provided in the annex.

Field visits

The assessment entailed a visit to all seven counties in December 2024 and January and February 2025. In all except Isiolo (due to time constraints), the field visits involved movement outside the county headquarters, mainly to interview key respondents not available at headquarters. The visits were made and planned, where necessary, with the help of NGAOs. In some counties, such as Tana River, commissioner's office staff accompanied the consultant to the places visited.

A qualitative approach was used to analyse and review the data and information collected from the three approaches above. The guiding question and central focus in the content analysis was the design, implementation, and outcome of community

peace accords. Using this as the central research question, the data and information collected were reviewed and analysed to identify the common themes, patterns, and context in the seven target counties.

Chapter 2
Findings

This section presents the assessment's findings in three parts. First, the history of community accords and pacts between the various communities in the seven counties and surrounding areas is presented. The history gives a context of the current peace deals. The second part examines the approaches that have been used over the years to negotiate and conclude community agreements in the various counties and region generally, and the third reviews the implementation and effectiveness of these accords.

History of community conflicts and peace agreements

Community peace accords in the seven counties can be traced to the period before colonial rule.[52] While colonial rule and the establishment of the modern state of Kenya brought the communities under a different framework of organising and relations, the communities had, for generations before colonial rule, entered into agreements regarding territory and use of common resources.

Indeed, many current grievances between communities are based on historical and pre-colonial claims to territory, and perceived unfairness of colonial and post-colonial policies that deny or vary their ownership.

Community agreements can thus be divided broadly into two main categories: the older agreements that existed before colonial rule, and the colonial and post-colonial community agreements that were negotiated and completed in the context of overarching government rule in the regions.

Old community agreements

Several studies have documented the dependencies that existed between communities in the seven regions before colonial rule. One study notes that:

> Indigenous conflict resolution systems have roots as old as the tribes of people who crafted them. The outside influence of trade, missions and inter-group warfare is palpable, yet for the most part, conflict resolution forums remained unchanged throughout centuries of heterogeneous cultural interaction. As long as the values of society held firm, definitions of conflict and sanctioned methods of resolution served societies well without change.[53]

Indeed, the studies show that specific aspects that define conflict, such as access to pastures and water, exchange of livestock, etc., were part of ancient community relations.[54] In the North Rift region, for instance, some of the old Pokot/Samburu oaths include the Kaplel Oath of 1850.[55] The Kaplel Oath was preceded by a whole generation of fighting between the Samburu and Pokot in 1836 and 1850. The 1850 oath and peace agreement was symbolised by the burial of a stone.[56]

Newer agreements

The Lokiriama Peace Accord was concluded in 1973 after years of fighting between the armed Turkana and Karamojong communities on the Kenyan and Ugandan sides.[57] The 1973 agreement was reached through negotiations between elders of both sides. The elders met in Lokiriama village on the Kenyan side and reached an agreement to end the prolonged conflicts between them.

With the facilitation of the Ugandan and Kenyan administration, the agreement was solemnised in a traditional ceremony. The ceremony involved burying weapons that were used in the conflict (guns, spears, bows, arrows, etc.) and an exchange of symbols of peace between the two communities, which included honey, traditional beer, and milk.

The Lokiriama Peace Accord was concluded in 1973 after years of fighting between Kenya's Turkana and Uganda's Karamojong border communities

The Lokiriama Peace Accord has been maintained by both communities to date and its commemoration has become an important national event to emphasise the need for peaceful existence in the fragile area.[58] Other pastoralist communities, including the Pokot and Samburu, as well as the Nyangatom and Toposa, and Merille/Dassenach of the neighbouring South Sudan and Ethiopia, are routinely invited to attend.[59]

In 2011, the commemoration – held in September, on International Peace Day – was attended by retired Kenyan president Daniel arap Moi. The 2019 event hosted the Ugandan and Kenyan presidents.[60]

In the North Eastern region, the Modogashe-Garissa Declaration of 2001, 2005 and 2011 have been identified as the most enduring and wide, covering Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Isiolo. The declaration was revised in May 2005 to address emerging issues. More districts joined the discussions, including Isiolo, Garissa, Marsabit, Moyale, Samburu, Meru North, Tana River, Mandera, Wajir and Ijara, and it was christened the 'New Garissa Declaration', named after the place of the meeting.[61]

While the revised declaration dealt with the same issues, more detail was provided on issues such as procedures for accessing grazing lands and watering points and the binding laws that the communities had to abide by.

The 2011 review of the Modogashe Declaration considered further issues that emerged in the region, including complementary peace agreements between specific communities and clans. A review of the declaration was done in 2010 in cluster counties (composed of the original districts that were present in the Modogashe-Garissa Declaration of 2005). The Modogashe Declaration III was completed on the basis of these cluster consultations in April 2011.[62]

The Modogashe Declaration currently deals with issues ranging from unauthorised grazing to firearm trafficking, cattle rustling, control of livestock diseases and trade, highway banditry, illegal acquisition of national identity cards, communities' socioeconomic empowerment, and the role of local peace structures, and others.[63]

While inter-clan conflict in the broader counties of Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, and Isiolo have been a constant feature over the years, conflicts that have laid the basis for the more recent community peace accords peaked in 1983, 1999–2000, 2004–2008 and 2011–2015.[64] During these years, numerous community peace accords were reached between the different warring clans. In North Eastern and neighbouring regions, some of the community accords include the following:

- The Al-Fatah Peace Declaration of 1993 was meant to address land and administrative boundaries in Wajir.[65]

- The Mohammed Subayr-Auliyahan Peace Accord of 1998 addressed inter-clan conflict around the control of Dhobley in Somalia and involved peace actors and mobilisation of resources from Garissa, Wajir, and Nairobi (Eastleigh).[66]

- The Auliyahan-Abudwaq Peace Accord of April 2001 resolved conflict between two Ogaden sub-clans and affected parts of Garissa, and extended to Nairobi (Eastleigh).[67]

- The Garre-Ajuran Peace Agreement of 2001 sought to address administrative and political boundary conflicts between areas in Mandera West and Wajir North.[68]

- The Sinai Peace Agreement of 2003 (between the Abdalla and Maqabul Xeer) sought to address the conflict between the Abdalla and Maqabul sub-clans, and involved many places in the Kenya-Somalia border areas.[69]

- The Sheikh Umul Peace Accord of 2005 between the Garre and Murule clans addressed the Garre-Murule conflict in the Alango area of Garissa. This spilt over to the neighbouring Mandera and Wajir districts and involved clans on the Somalia side.[70]

- The Garre-Marehan Peace Agreement of 2005 sought to address the Garre-Marehan conflict that affected areas in Mandera and on the Somalia side. The conflict drew support and allies from Nairobi and Moyale in Ethiopia.[71]

- The Garre-Murule Declaration of 2008 sought to complement the Sheikh Umul Peace Accord by addressing the conflict between the two clans in areas of Mandera Central and East.[72]

- The Borana-Garre Peace Agreement of August 2008 sought to address the conflict between the Garre and the Borana in the Boji Qalaf area of Moyale. The conflict drew in members of both communities in Ethiopia and Kenya, including Nairobi and Addis Ababa.[73]

- The Abdwak-Abdalla Peace Accord of October 2010 aimed to address the conflict between the Abdwak and Abdalla sub-clans in Waberi and Iftin location in Garissa County.[74]

- The Garre-Degodia Banissa Peace Agreement of December 2010 reached in the Banissa area of Mandera sought to address the conflict between the two clans that was sparked by the killing of five men from the Degodia clan.[75]

In more recent years, community peace accords in the North Eastern region were punctuated with incidents of community conflict, based on the same issues as before. Between 2016 and 2021, the NCIC and Interpeace[76] carried out assessments and peace interventions that led to the signing of two agreements in Mandera and in the Suguta Valley in the North Rift region.

The accords were preceded by detailed assessments in Mandera and North Rift that centred on five main areas – community social and cultural structures, security and the rule of law, governance and political systems, cross-border dynamics, and vulnerability of special groups in the two regions. The assessment also reviewed resilience factors in the two regions.[77]

Based on the assessments in Mandera and North Rift, the NCIC and Interpeace engaged communities to address the root causes of the conflict. In October 2019, after violence in Banissa in Mandera left 20 people dead, and two more people were killed in a peace rally, the NCIC and Interpeace negotiated the signing of the Banissa Nine Points Declaration.[78]

NCIC-Interpeace intervened with the same approach in Suguta Valley, and brought together Pokot and Turkana representatives in the Kapedo/Lomelo Corridor at a place called Orwa. This led to the signing of the Orwa Peace Accord in July 2021.[79]

In August 2024, government and community representatives from Isiolo, Marsabit, and Samburu signed the Marsabit Peace Accord in Laisamis, Marsabit.[80] The negotiation of the peace deal was facilitated by the NRT, which runs and manages community conservancies and is involved in rangelands

management, such as grazing plans, conflict resolution, and carbon market trading with community representatives.[81]

The agreement dealt with livestock theft and was signed by representatives of elders, youth, and women from Marsabit, Samburu and Meru. Elders from Rendille, Samburu, Somali, Turkana, Gabra, Borana, and Meru attended the meeting.[82] The Laisamis accord, however, deliberately left out blood money payment. The practice is still rooted in communities as a way of addressing peace after conflict.[83]

Before the signing of the agreement, there were meetings between morans, women, and elders in preparation for the negotiation. The intention was to have the participants disseminate the agreement to their respective sectors. However, some noted that there had been no follow-up on awareness and dissemination.[84]

More significantly, the two peace processes (in Mandera and Turkana/samburu) led to the establishment of ceasefire monitoring committees (CMCs) comprising representatives from the warring communities. The CMCs operate above the inter-village dialogue committees (IVDCs), composed of members who have engaged in conflict.[85]

These local structures 'own' the peace accords and implement specific agreements, including recovering stolen animals and providing information and updates to the government and security agencies. They also help when disputes arise regarding implementation or issues covered in the community accords.[86]

<div style="color:green; text-align:center;">

The Mandera and North Rift peace processes established ceasefire monitoring committees comprising representatives from the warring communities

</div>

The NCIC-Interpeace report notes that in November 2021, two years after the Nine Points Declaration of Banissa, two people were murdered in Malka Mari due to cross-border inter-clan violence. This was the first incident in the area after the declaration was signed.[87] Authorities noted that the perpetrators were followed to the Ethiopian border, and no further progress was made in apprehending them.

The report observes that unlike previous patterns, there were no retaliatory attacks from the clans whose members were killed. This was mainly due to mobilisation by CMC and IVDC members, and those of the Mandera Peace Actors Forum, which was established during the work of NCIC and Interpeace in the region.[88] Action by the local peace structures also led to inter-state dialogue to investigate the source of the attacks.

In the northern region, the Maikona Peace Declaration of July 2009 between the Borana community in Ethiopia and Gabra on the Kenyan side was signed by an

equal number of representatives of the two communities. The agreement was preceded by discussions between elders from the Borana community in the Dillo area of southern Ethiopia and those from the Gabra community in Dukana, Kenya, in November 2008.

After relative stability between the two communities, and supported by donor partners, the two communities revised the peace deal in 2017, which led to the Dukana-Dillo-Maikona Declaration of August 2017. Unlike the 2009 agreement, the 2017 deal had the participation of both traditional leaders and representatives from the governments of Ethiopia and Kenya (national and county government leaders).

The implementation of the Dukana-Dillo-Maikona Declaration was reviewed in 2012 during the consideration of yet another peace agreement, which was prompted by an escalation of conflict between the Borana in Teltelle on the Ethiopia side and the Gabra from Dukana. This led to another deal, the Dukana-Dillo-Teltelle Peace Agreement of 2012. The 2012 talks were initiated by the Dillo Woreda Peace Committee and Oromia Pastoralist Initiative on the Ethiopian side, and the Pastoralist Shade Initiative from the Kenyan side. The process was funded by donors.

Tana River communities have a long history of negotiations and agreements relating to control of territory and use of and access to water from Tana River

In 2014, after violence escalated in Marsabit and properties destroyed in Moyale, a major peace meeting, convened at the directive of former president Uhuru Kenyatta, was held at the Boma Nairobi hotel. It was led by Marsabit County community leaders (elders from Borana, Gabra, Burji, Sakuye, and Garre) and the 'corner communities' that had experienced past conflicts.

The moderators were the senator of Garissa and former defence minister, and a former speaker of Parliament. The meeting involved traditional leaders, community representatives, elected leaders from Marsabit, including the county governor, civil society representatives, and development partners.

Resolutions included the establishment of a multi-ethnic committee to hold joint peace rallies, reconstruction of houses destroyed by violence, humanitarian assistance and support, fair distribution of resources and opportunities, and enhancement of security and protection of lives and property.[89]

In Tana River, the historical settlements of the different communities in the area meant that communities had to negotiate over territory and access to resources such as water. With population growth over the years, there has been land pressure,

with communities having to renegotiate territory. Indeed, Tana River communities have a long history of negotiations and agreements relating to control of territory and use of and access to water from Tana River and other water bodies.

Many of the agreements have been oral between community elders. In 2016, the NCIC facilitated the signing of a formal agreement – the Pokomo and Abdalla Communities Reconciliation Process – between CPC chairs and NGAOs from Tana River and Garissa.[90]

Nature, design, and approach to community peace accords

The nature of a community agreement or the process used to develop it depends on several factors. These include the nature and scale or stage of the conflict, the players involved in leading the process of adopting the agreement, and the specific focus or issues being negotiated (for example immediate cessation of violence, or other short-term goals versus longer-term issues, etc.). A combination of these factors informs the approach or process employed.

This section evaluates the community agreements described in the preceding section by looking at the contexts and processes employed to reach them. There is an overall shift from top-down approaches to processes that are inclusive and community-led. Supporting this is the argument that sustainable peace can only be achieved when the process to find it (in this case, through negotiating community accords) is owned by the conflicted communities.

While this is true for most community peace processes, actual processes sometimes vary, even to the point of contradicting the rhetoric about inclusiveness.[91] Indeed, a scan of the agreements, as well as the processes that led to their conclusion, can reveal whether the process was truly inclusive.

A peace process that is truly rooted in the community requires time, patience, and resources to sustain it to the end. Typically, this may include an assessment of the specific conflict dynamics even before the community and stakeholders can sit around the table to talk. Furthermore, the agenda, compromises, resolutions and responsibilities, and even sanctions for breach, need to be negotiated by the communities themselves.

Inevitably, the nature and design of a peace process shape both the quality of its implementation and its impact. Where affected communities do not own the entire process, including structures of implementation and follow-up, sustainable peace may not be obtained. Many of the accords evaluated in this assignment, regardless of when they were negotiated, failed to take off due to a lack of ownership; while others had various levels of success or effectiveness attributable to their conception, design, and implementation.

While the pre-colonial agreements between communities in the counties and regions may not have been written, evidence of their resilience is found in the historical claims of communities today regarding territory, common resources, etc. Many recent agreements refer to traditional customs and rules of the people, which, in turn, have their roots in pre-colonial times.[92] While there may not be detailed evidence or accounts of the processes that determined these customs, their resilience shows that solutions were owned by generations.

Many newer peace accords are either written or the process of their negotiation and conclusion is well documented. These include deals like the Modogashe, Al-Fatah and Maikona agreements, among others. A desk review of the processes that led to these deals and the information from interviews and field visits regarding their impact reveals varying levels of effectiveness. However, it's important to note that the nature of the accords (especially the scope and focus) will determine the agreement's lifespan.

Many recent agreements refer to traditional customs and rules of the people, which, in turn, have their roots in pre-colonial times

---

In this regard, some of the deals, due to their scope and coverage, have evolved through changing dynamics and are still relevant, even as the nature of community conflicts changes. Indeed, even recent agreements only serve to complement (and not replace) older, more resilient ones. They have evolved to become founding structures for later peace processes.

Lokiriama Peace Accord (1973)

The Lokiriama Peace Accord, negotiated from 1959 and concluded in 1973 between Turkana and Karamojong elders from Kenya and Uganda, is still celebrated at annual festivals in Lokiriama. Eight celebrations were held between 2013 and 2024 to commemorate the agreement. The festival has attracted other communities from South Sudan and Ethiopia, and heads of state. However, other communities, despite sharing in the celebration, do not regard the contents of the accord as binding.[93]

The accord was entered into after years of fighting and raids among the border communities of Uganda and Kenya. While the dynamics of the conflict may have changed over the years, the agreement remains relevant to the current context, where there are incidents of conflict and livestock raids.

Features that have contributed to the agreement's resilience include that it was negotiated by the communities, who saw the need to end the conflict and achieve peace in the region. Also, the deal and symbolism that was used (such as burying weapons) bound the communities in a pact for peace, which all participating communities were responsible to uphold.

Later deals signed between communities in the region have not diluted the relevance of the Lokiriama Peace Accord. Rather, later agreements, such as the 2021 Orwa Peace Accord, seek to complement the Lokiriama agreement, and are more specific and localised to conflict issues in the region.

Modogashe Declaration (2001, 2005 and 2011)

The Modogashe Declaration, signed in 2001 and revised in 2005 and 2011, has also served as an enduring and resilient will to keep peace in northern Kenya. The agreement's strong roots can be seen in its origins from conversations between Somali women – professionals and those in the Wajir town markets – who saw the need for communities in conflict to keep peace.[94] As mentioned previously, community accords that are truly owned by members of the community are more likely to stand the test of time and realise sustainable peace than those that are not.

From the initial discussions in the markets of Wajir, the process gathered momentum throughout the region, leading to the signing of the first agreement at Modogashe in Garissa. The document's resilience is further shown by its revisions in 2005 and 2011. Plans were made to revise the declaration in 2016 and 2023, but this did not happen, due to a lack of funds to facilitate the review.[95]

The resilience of the peace accord can also be seen by the incremental number of regions and communities that have been invited to join. From the initial four areas of Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Isiolo, the reach of the agreement was expanded in May 2005 to include Isiolo, Garissa, Marsabit, Moyale, Samburu, Meru North, Tana River, Mandera, Wajir and Ijara, and was renamed the New Garissa Declaration.[96] The old name, Modogashe, however, persists.

In its early stages of implementation, the Modogashe Declaration immediately helped quell violence in Isiolo in 2005.[97] Respondents noted that even the spirit of negotiations from 1996 until 2005, when it was signed, positively impacted the conflicts it sought to address.[98]

Elders and community leaders who routinely preside over *Maslaha* (blood compensation) say it is the 'go to' document to guide discussions and settlements on compensation of lives lost or livestock stolen.[99] In Moyale, the Cross-border Peace Committee chairperson observed that the document was applicable where one party was of Somali origin.

In a recent case, the chairperson used the document when a Borana boy killed a Somali member of the Ajuran clan. The boy's family was asked to pay KSh600 000 as compensation, KSh60 000 for burial, and a further KSh160 000 to replace the motorbike that was damaged in the accident.[100]

According to the chairman, the Modogashe Declaration was found applicable as the other local agreements in Moyale usually applied to parties who were locals of Marsabit (Borana, Gabra, Burji, Rendille, etc.).

There are mixed views on the place and effectiveness of the Modogashe Declaration, despite its marked progress and resilience. Many respondents noted that the accord was not well understood and owned by communities.[101] Others said it was biased towards Islamic religion and principles, and was not recognised by non-Muslim communities.[102]

However, one respondent said communities that were predominantly non-Muslim, such as the Samburu in Isiolo, honoured the compensation ordered through the deal.[103] Many of the administrators in the seven counties were either unaware of the accord's existence, or were dismissive of its application and relevance.[104] However, some respondents observed that administrators shied away from *Maslaha* due to its unclear place in law (the formal criminal justice system does not recognise blood compensation where murder has occurred), and this could explain the unfamiliarity with the document.[105]

> There was resistance by male participants to the introduction of women-related issues in the later revisions of the Modogashe accord

Women who sought to participate in later revisions of the Modogashe accord reported that there was resistance by male participants to the introduction of women-related issues in the document, such as lower compensation for women's deaths and sexual and gender-based violence.[106]

Furthermore, some of the peace activists observed that the Modogashe Declaration never gained traction even among Muslim communities in the region.[107] Others noted that they had not seen any active invocation of the document in the peace processes they were engaged in.[108]

Al-Fatah Peace Declaration (1990s)

During the peak of inter-clan violence in the North Eastern region in the 1990s, a group of elders from the clans came together and formed the Al-Fatah Elders to negotiate peace. The process led to the Al-Fatah Peace Declaration of 1993,

among other agreements reached during this period. In the 1990s, as today, many of the clan conflicts were triggered by land and administrative boundaries between the different clans in Wajir. The declaration and agreements reached an amicable settlement on the issue and laid the basis for peace.

As noted by one administrator who served in Wajir in the 1990s and returned to serve again in 2022, the Al-Fatah Elders were instrumental in laying the foundation for peace and stability in the region. The administrator remembers the period as an extremely hostile decade to peace, and many non-state peace actors left the area due to the high levels of violence.[109]

However, the accords that were negotiated and put in place under the Al-Fatah Elders contributed to a return to peace and stability. The administrator said it was common for current local peace processes to refer to the Al-Fatah peace accords.[110] Furthermore, according to the administrator, the development of the Wajir County Peacebuilding and Conflict Management Act 2024 relied heavily on the Al-Fatah declaration and peace process.[111]

While the Al-Fatah Elders peace process has seen success, there are also misgivings about its sustainability. One local actor said there was no proper transition management in the process. Many of the elders who founded the peace process are advanced in age, and some have died. There has been no effort to ensure continuity, even as the nature of conflict evolves in the county.[112] Furthermore, the Al-Fatah peace process model relied heavily on donor funding, and the process faded as funding decreased.[113]

Despite its limitations, the Al-Fatah agreement joins other long-serving peace deals in the region whose effects have lived beyond their initial years of conclusion. Indeed, the roots and branches of the accord are now codified into law by the Wajir county government,[114] which effectively means the core principles now have a normative force in county government laws.

Banissa Nine Points Declaration (2019)

The Nine Points Declaration of 2019, which was signed to end the conflict in the Banissa area, Mandera, between the Garre and Degodia clans, was developed after an NCIC-Interpeace intervention. The two organisations decided to approach peace negotiations differently to before.

In their words, the process that led to the signing of the Banissa declaration in Mandera was a departure from the traditional 'script' of mediation and assumed outcomes. Rather, they facilitated and helped the teams in North Rift and Mandera to 'identify and address multiple dynamics and dimensions of the conflict.' This enabled the NCIC and Interpeace to understand the parties' 'conflict experiences' and embrace the complexities and develop outcomes through innovation and adaptability. The report from the processes summarised the approach thus:

Recounting the process helps to crystallise the nature of the teams' mediative approach, which placed conflict parties at the centre, recognised the authority of genuine decision-makers, fostered patience, and generated trust; teams navigated risks and uncertainties and honoured emergence and self-organising by the parties over the prioritisation of any pre-defined timelines, settlement outcomes, or mediator directiveness. The learning demonstrates the value of integrating such principles in co-designed processes that are informed by ethical values and social-cultural insights that teams intentionally and skilfully use to guide their steps.[115]

According to the project reports, previous agreements were not implemented in the North Rift region as they 'could not be transferred from the negotiating table to the town square.'[116]

In terms of the NCIC's approach, the first step in the negotiation was extensive research and consultation regarding the drivers of conflict in the area. Issues such as social and cultural systems, security and the rule of law, governance and politics, cross-border dynamics, and vulnerability of special interest groups were identified as impediments to peace in Mandera.[117] Subsequent engagements, including the development of the Banissa declaration, were informed by these findings, which were validated by core governance stakeholders in Mandera.[118]

Orwa Peace Accord (North Rift region)

The NCIC and Interpeace similarly carried out an assessment of the impediments to peace and community resilience in the North Rift region.[119] This led to the signing of the Orwa Peace Accord in July 2021 under the two organisations. Later assessments noted that the North Rift region experienced relative stability until the most recent events (2022 to present).[120]

Even then, the report adds that community structures established under the Orwa process were active on the ground to address triggers and drivers of conflict. More fundamentally, the report observes that the nature of the conflict in the region seems to have evolved from a typical intercommunal conflict to one of violent crime with armed youth carrying out raids with politically motivated economic interests.[121]

Assessment of peace processes in Banissa and Orwa in Mandera and the North Rift notes that 'a cursory review suggests that the content and construct of past agreements differ in specific ways from the Orwa Peace Accord. In particular, external mediators were central to past agreements, and a distinct process was adopted to frame and write both the Orwa Peace Accord and the Nine Point Banissa Declaration.'[122]

The NCIC-Interpeace process in the North Rift and Mandera, as described above, could be compared with the Pokot/Samburu Naivasha Peace Accord of 2006, which was organised by the provincial administration, away in

Naivasha, and had the participation of administrators, politicians, and elders from the two communities.[123]

The community members were not clear on the meeting's objectives, and the resolutions were shepherded by the meeting's administrators.[124] A similar meeting was held between the Pokot and Turkana under the auspices of the NSC in Nakuru in April 2007, leading to resolutions to address the conflict between the two communities.[125]

Marsabit Peace Accord (Laisamis Agreement, August 2024)

During the Isiolo field visit, key informants (mainly administrators) referred to a peace accord that was signed in mid-2024, months before the assessment. A copy of the agreement was obtained through one of the administrators. The official title is The Marsabit Peace Accord, and it was signed on 6 August 2024 in Laisamis, Marsabit County.

The deal covered peace and conflict issues in Meru, Marsabit, Samburu, and Isiolo counties. It was signed by members of the CPCs of the four counties, the four county commissioners,[126] and witnessed by the CEO of the NRT.

The deal was therefore freshly signed and just a few months old at the time of the field visit to Isiolo. Key respondents in Isiolo provided evidence of how the process was carried out. There were testimonies from the key respondents about an all-inclusive and participatory preparation of the accord in Isiolo, which reportedly involved representatives of morans, women, and elders.

> The role played by morans/young people and elders, and other community members, in the agreement process was unclear

However it is clear from the text that the agreement mainly had the primary participation of county administrators and county teams (peace committees) that work with the county commissioners in the four counties.

Furthermore, while the agreement dealt with issues such as highway robberies and attacks, and livestock theft, in the four counties, the role played by morans/young people and elders, and other community members, in the process was unclear.

The peace accord and the activities and meetings that went into the preparation were supported by the NRT and other partners. The NRT CEO is a signatory to the document. But this doesn't necessarily mean that community members and their representatives participated in the accord's negotiation and conclusion.

While CPC members are community leaders and representatives, challenges facing the CPC may sometimes affect the legitimacy of their actions in terms of being the voice of communities; especially in a process that is to be owned by communities.

Also, NRT activities, such as conservancy management, have been questioned by communities in terms of consultation and people's participation. A recent court judgment declared NRT conservancies established in the Chari and Cherab wards of Merti Sub-County in Isiolo unconstitutional, for failure to ensure community participation in their management.[127] Even county government departments in charge of peace and conflict management were not part of the process, casting doubt on the inclusiveness of the process in signing the deal.[128]

The county administrators noted that while the agreement was signed and completed, there had not been much follow-up regarding awareness creation and implementation of what was agreed in Laisamis.[129] Also, many respondents were not aware of the accord; and those who were did not have access to the document, which seemed to be mainly in the custody of administrators.

Incidents point to collusion between Turkana and Samburu raiders to allow the passage of animals stolen from Meru to Samburu

Most importantly, a general review of the situation in Isiolo and Marsabit during the field visit, based on responses during FGDs and KIIs, shows a lack of presence or impact of the accord in the two counties. This was discerned both from key respondents' statements regarding issues such as cattle raids, highway robbery, etc., and generally the way communities led in preventing or managing conflict and issues covered in the accord.

One key respondent noted that livestock theft was fairly frequent, recalling that cattle rustling had occurred in the Ngaremara area two weeks before the interview, and that 100 goats were stolen from Meru about a week prior and taken to Samburu, passing through Ngaremara.[130]

The incidents point to collusion between Turkana and Samburu raiders to allow the passage of animals stolen from Meru to Samburu.[131] There is a common saying in Isiolo that Meru is the 'ATM for Samburu raiders' and that the Turkana community has the PIN for access. To minimise the loss of animals through raids, some Meru animal owners mix their stock with those of the Turkanas; the latter are usually armed, and Samburu raiders are more reluctant to attack or raid.[132]

Generally, according to administrators and peace activists interviewed in Isiolo, community members are unwilling to volunteer information.[133] Furthermore, when

security agencies follow up on stolen animals, community members who are usually familiar with the terrain are not willing to provide them with information or to help security teams navigate the terrain in recovery efforts.[134]

There are accusations and counter-accusations of intercommunal theft of livestock and property.[135] An administrator noted that even where perpetrators were identified and reported to the police, there was usually no success with investigations and prosecutions.[136]

While most respondents noted a general drop in livestock theft, this could be attributed to the deployment of special forces such as the Anti-Stock Theft Unit along the paths where livestock movement occurs.[137] Another administrator said while the national government was more focused on the North Rift corridor (Baragoi, Kapedo, etc.), raiders could have migrated to other parts, such as Isiolo, where cattle raids for commercial purposes were fairly frequent.[138]

The observations above from key respondents in Isiolo, just a few months after signing a major agreement, reveal the disconnect between the peace process that led to the signing of the Marsabit Peace Accord, and the actual issues on the ground.

That many respondents attribute the drop in livestock raids to the presence of security agencies, as opposed to cooperation from community members and community-led processes, reveals that the solutions may not be owned by the communities. Rather, they amount to the 'hard' security approach by government and security agencies.

The hostility of the community towards security agencies, such as during animal recovery, also shows that there are no peace dividends from any earlier investments. In both Isiolo and Marsabit, too, respondents said there was little or no involvement of county peace departments in peace processes.

Other community peace agreements and accords

Besides the above major peace accords, there are numerous, possibly hundreds, of agreements between the various communities in the seven target counties. Armed Conflict Location and Event Data notes that in 2023 alone, over 25 local peace agreements were signed in the country – with 12 of these concluded in Kenya's northern region.[139]

Many of the community accords and agreements are also not documented in formal and signed deals. In Tana River, elders and officials mainly referred to community meetings between elders from both sides and even oral agreements regarding boundaries, and access routes to rivers for animals.

Almost all agreements fall into two major categories. First, there are those that are negotiated and settled through a top-down approach. This means the government

or political elite set the agenda and the pace of the talks, and negotiate outcomes, which are then taken to the communities to implement. Such agreements are signed by the political and government leaders, as well as community representatives selected by the administrators or political leaders.

Furthermore, such agreements are typically developed and signed in hotels, away from the communities or locations of the conflict, and in a short period. Usually, there is not much traction in terms of implementation after the signing. This is because community members are either unaware of the peace accord or are opposed to the resolutions, as they were not part of the discussions.

Often, participants in such meetings are tasked to go and sensitise communities about the agreement, as the communities are not involved in the signing.

The second category of agreements are those that not only have the features of being community-led, but are actually community-led in terms of negotiation and implementation. These kinds of agreements may also either be written or oral. However, the distinguishing feature here is that it is members of the community, chosen by communities (as opposed to being chosen by leaders), who negotiate and reach agreement on issues.

> Community members are often either unaware of the peace accord or are opposed to the resolutions, as they were not part of the discussions

More importantly, community peace accords that are truly owned by communities take more time to develop and conclude because getting consensus and participation of communities takes time, effort, and resources. The famous Lokiriama Peace Accord negotiations, according to accounts of community members, began in 1959, and concluded in 1973.[140]

Many of them have a more specific and localised reach in terms of scope and geography. An apt example here is the Maikona Peace Declaration of July 2009 between the Borana community in Ethiopia and the Gabra on the Kenyan side. It is signed by members of the community chosen from their communities and addresses issues specific to those people.[141]

The promoters of all community peace agreements will claim that the process was consultative and participatory and that the agenda reflects the peace needs of the community. However, the distinction between the two categories is often clear, despite accompanying rhetoric about the process and content.

Implementation and effectiveness of community peace accords

The effective implementation and success of a community peace accord is evident where there is sustainable peace and stability, during, and especially after, the conclusion of the accord. Typically, this would entail an end to violence, attacks, and livestock raids, voluntary disarmament programmes, and the surrender of illicit weapons.

Where conflict is over access to grazing lands, a successful accord ensures that access to water and pastures is regulated in a way that allows all communities to have access, for instance, through grazing/water committees.

Effective implementation of a peace accord also means that community members are not only aware and familiar with such an agreement, but actively promote its objective through community structures. They could be members of grazing or ceasefire monitoring committees or dialogue structures, or could be involved in community-led early warning and prevention, or provide information.

Effective implementation of an accord also means there is proper coordination between security and administrative structures in addressing any emerging issues or concerns. This means the community is effectively the first level of response to any issue that touches on the agreement, and security or administrative agencies step in where there is escalation. There should also be enforcement of sanctions where there is no compliance with the terms of the agreement by any party.

After the Orwa Peace Accord process (2021), the North Rift region, where the deal is applied, experienced relative stability until 2022 to date. Even then, community structures established are active on the ground to address the triggers and drivers of conflict. The nature of conflict in the region seemingly evolved from cultural raids, which the peace process sought to address, to one involving politically motivated economic interests surrounding livestock raids and violence.[142]

A scan of the processes involved in the design and implementation of peace accords in the seven counties shows that numerous factors have either enhanced effectiveness or impeded implementation, affecting peace.

Inclusiveness in implementation

The process of both negotiating and concluding a community accord needs to bring on board all stakeholders, starting with the communities experiencing conflict. In the implementation stage, sustainable peace can only be realised where the communities themselves engage in managing or preventing conflict.

In the North Rift and Banissa, the accords established inter-village dialogue committees at the lowest level. The IVDCs not only engage communities to prevent conflict, but also share information, including plans for raids and other relevant

matters. An assessment report explains the role of community-based structures in bringing about and sustaining peace in communities:

> Using motorbikes (*boda-boda*), IVDC members crisscross the rough terrain to reach grazing and borehole areas, and often defuse skirmishes between herders or serve as peace ambassadors by encouraging clan kin to offer 'other-clan' visitors first access to water, the most genuine gesture of peace by past enemies in times of scarcity and drought. IVDCs provide a model for their communities; they are slowly removing key triggers of violence from the environment and steadily reinforcing sustainable changes in relationships.[143]

Peace structures at the village level are an important part of the implementation, as various community members, including women, youth, community warriors, elders, and even traditional seers who bless warriors before raids, can be engaged at their level of operation. IVDCs can reach households involved in planning raids and other activities that disrupt peace.

For instance, one female respondent said women were usually among the first to know about impending attacks,[144] and may also encourage their husbands and sons to go out on attacks. Yet they are also the most affected when clashes break out, through widowhood, rape, injury, etc. Narratives are told to the warriors and youth about how the community suffered in past attacks, and this fuels emotions leading to revenge on perceived rivals.[145]

Indoctrination is also possible because of illiteracy levels among many communities.[146] Village dialogues, especially where they are led by community members, may help to change attitudes and ensure that all structures of the community support peace.

Resources to support implementation

Inadequate resources to support the implementation of peace accords was consistently cited as a problem during the study. For instance, the third and fourth reviews of the Modogashe Declaration in 2016 and 2023 have not been possible due to a lack of resources to convene parties.[147]

Furthermore, many of the accords have not taken off because of a lack of resources to facilitate the implementation of activities that are agreed in the accords. In Wajir, overreliance on donor funds affected the peace process by the Al-Fatah Elders, which had become one of the most effective peace initiatives in the area, especially during heightened conflict.[148]

In the past, the NSC provided funding to district peace committees, which later transitioned into CPCs. These funds helped the committees respond to threats and carry out dialogue and engagements that prevented conflict.[149] However, funding to these structures ended, and most either closed their offices or relied on donors to

carry out their operations. In Garissa, for example, the committee had to close its rented office due to a lack of resources.[150]

While the county commissioner's office and the entire NGAO machinery are involved in the negotiation and implementation of accords, resources to support their activities are usually scarce. In many counties, the county commissioner relies on NGOs and other stakeholders for basic expenses such as fuel to attend peace or consultative meetings. Often, responsibilities vested in the county commissioner or NGAO are not undertaken due to limited resources.

<div style="color: green; text-align: center;">

The use of innovation and technology can reduce the cost of implementation, especially where resources are a challenge

</div>

All seven county governments have established departments focused on peacebuilding and conflict management – but most face funding problems. Many respondents said however that the challenge was usually not the lack of resources, but the non-prioritisation of peace during the allocation of county resources.[151] In counties where peace committees are active, it's mainly because of donor-funded initiatives, or where the county governments have dedicated resources to support county or local peace initiatives and processes.

Innovativeness and the use of technology can reduce the cost of implementation, especially where resources are a challenge. In Banissa, Mandera, the Conflict Early Warning System is run through WhatsApp, with non-state and state representatives members of the group.[152] A small communication facilitation, currently provided by programme donors, is usually given to IVDCs and CMCs to buy airtime for communication.[153] Community members have also been provided with motorbikes from donors to respond quickly to local hotspots.

Coordination and coherence in implementation

Coordination and coherence between the different players and actors are important for the effectiveness of peace accords. Where there are varied interests and no forums to balance such interests, there is bound to be incoherence in implementation, which could impede community peace accords' effectiveness.

In many counties, especially where coordination structures have not been established, there is a lack of clarity on national vs county government peace responsibilities. In some cases, county governments have labelled such work as 'security', which they argue is national government's responsibility.[154] Some county governments use this as a basis for failure to plan or allocate resources for peacebuilding and conflict management.

However, experience from the seven counties, especially those with harmonious relations between the two levels of government, shows that each level of government plays a vital role.

The national peacebuilding architecture, too, requires coherence and coordination. While there are multiple national agencies and institutions working for peace, there is no effective coordination and harmony in the sector. Respondents from both the NCIC and NSC indicated a need for more effective coordination between agencies, with a mandate that involves peacebuilding.[155]

The National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management[156] seeks to provide policy direction on peace and conflict management, including local conflicts. The scope of the policy includes cattle rustling, local resource conflicts, and agro-pastoral conflicts, among others.

The policy calls for the development of a national legal framework that provides resources for conflict management and ensures that institutions working on peacebuilding have the capacity to make interventions to address local conflicts.

_____

Counterparts in South Sudan are elected by their communities, and sometimes their responses to security and administrative issues are influenced by local politics

_____

It further calls for cooperation between national and county governments in planning for peace and conflict management.[157] However, while the policy seems a good starting point in peacebuilding work, the document is hardly known in the seven counties. None of the respondents (including government officials) made any reference to the policy.

NGAOs have always been in charge of coordinating peace and security efforts. In Mandera, the non-state peace actors came up with the idea of the Mandera Peace Forum, which brought together all organisations working for peace in the county. The forum is co-chaired by the national government (represented by the county commissioner) and the county government (either represented by the relevant CEC member in charge of the peacebuilding department or the department's chief officer).[158]

The forums provide a meeting point for all stakeholders, and a platform for all strategies for peace, including the implementation of the community peace accords, to be discussed and agreed on. More importantly, the forum helps identify priorities and approaches to engagement with communities regarding peace issues.

The county peace forums were first established in Mandera and then replicated in Wajir, Marsabit, and Turkana. Other counties are busy establishing and operationalising a similar approach, for coherence.

Coordination and coherence will also ensure that administrative decisions and other issues affecting communities, especially in conflict environments, are made in a way that's sensitive to the situation. For instance, NGAOs have in the past created new administrative units in areas disputed between communities and transferred control of one or the other areas for administration and control. Such action is biased as the government favours a certain community.

One such incident happened where Onsalat Sub-location on the Isiolo/Wajir border was placed under Wajir, creating tension between the local Somali and Borana communities.[159] The location's transfer was allegedly influenced by political figures from Wajir,[160] and was challenged in court by Isiolo residents who got an interim court order halting the transfer awaiting a decision.[161] However, the sub-location remains under the administration of Wajir NGAOs.[162]

In cross-border areas, collaboration is required between the actors on both sides. The national government leads cooperation mechanisms with its counterparts in the respective border regions. This is necessary where measures are needed to address conflict spill-over or where cross-border raids occur.

However, according to an administrator, counterparts in South Sudan are elected by their communities, and sometimes their response to security and administrative issues are influenced by local politics.[163] Many respondents said government agency presence in cross-border peace issues was weak and mostly reactive after incidents of insecurity.[164]

The gap left has been filled by peace organisations that work on cross-border peace relations – for example Deris Wanaag, which works on cross-border programmes in Kenya and Somalia. Peace organisations working in the Marsabit-Ethiopian border area routinely organise bonfire meetings between communities on both sides.[165] These meetings help review the implementation and challenges that members face in realising cross-border peace deals.

Political leaders can play an important role in the implementation of peace deals. In communities where politicians espouse peace, they are part of community negotiations to attain it. In Mandera's Banissa area, for instance, political leaders interested in community peace initiatives are part of the WhatsApp groups. Information about activities that may disrupt peace is verified by local chiefs before action is taken. This ensures that politicians play a positive role, as opposed to a disruptive one, such as through misinformation and incitement.

However, politicians can also play a disruptive role, routinely opposing disarmament programmes and politicising legitimate peace-making processes.[166] They also

interfere with the work of administrators and prevent them from executing their duties.[167] In Tana River, politicians prevented the freezing of boundaries to allow pastoral communities' permanent access to the river. Over the years, different administrators shied away from permanently securing these routes, including through gazettement, for fear of reprisals from local politicians.[168]

Furthermore, perceptions of ethnic bias by county politicians in creating 'cluster settlements' in the county continue to drive the conflict between pastoralists and farmers.[169]

Monitoring and review of implementation

Conflict is not static. It evolves, and the context and dynamics change with time. An accord's success or failure depends on how its implementation adjusts to the changing dynamics. The Modogashe Declaration, concluded in 2001, was revised in 2005 and 2011, with proposals for more revisions in 2016 and 2023. The Marsabit Peace Accord signed in Laisamis in mid-2024 is set to be reviewed in 2026, according to an administrator.[170]

The annual commemoration of the Lokiriama Peace Accord also allows for communities to review the status of their peace and relations to keep the pact alive.

Thus, effective implementation of community peace accords is routinely accompanied by measures to review the implementation and, where necessary, adjust the process to ensure the pact remains relevant and effective. In many regions, culture-based cattle raids by community warriors or youth have evolved into organised crime, with cartels stealing livestock for commercial purposes. Peace deal implementation processes must adapt to these changing dynamics.

Capacity of peace actors

Several technical processes go into ensuring the effective design and implementation of peace accords, and those doing the work must be sufficiently capacitated to do this. These include proper analysis and assessment of conflict dynamics, training of community members and leaders, and skills in supporting the negotiation process and content of the agreement. All these processes occur while allowing communities to define the agenda and resolutions – for ownership and sustainability of implementation.

Such skills require specialised training and experience, which many peace workers may lack. This ranges from the administrators and security officers who are tasked with overseeing peace processes in conflict hotspots to officers working with peace and development organisations. Inadequate technical capacity can affect the quality of peace negotiations, the content of community peace accords, and the implementation process.

For example, while peace processes target groups such as community warriors as a way to end raids and attacks, warriors sometimes feel 'meeting fatigue', especially when such meetings don't offer up alternative livelihoods or other practical and meaningful transitions from current activities.[171] Such needs and dynamics can only be identified and addressed through a peace process where the people facilitating the process have the capacity to develop appropriate responses to the short-term and long-term needs to attain peace.

In many cases, administrators and security agencies focus on immediate outcomes, such as cessation of violence, and then equate the absence of violence to peace. Government and security agencies often pacify the sides engaging in violence, only for clashes to recur. While this may be attributed to the need to end violence and achieve calm, which is important, failure to focus on long-term peace solutions is symptomatic of the lack of capacity to engage in peace processes that can achieve longer-term stability through conflict transformation and transition.

Chapter 3
Conclusion

This research report provides a comprehensive account of community peace accords and these accords' contribution to community peace. Specifically, it provides the experience of the seven counties covered in the report (Tana River, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir and Turkana).

The report first provides a comprehensive general and specific background for each of the seven counties, describing the environment and context in which conflicts occur, as well as the context in which peace is pursued. The report then reviews and examines specific community peace processes and their effectiveness in terms of managing the various conflicts.

The thinking and approach to local peace processes has evolved with the changing dynamics and contexts of such conflicts. The evolution of the conflicts, and the responses in terms of their management, have also been dictated by the changing contexts and dynamics.

> Intercommunity relations, including conflicts, were managed through customs and traditions that were developed and defined over generations

As mentioned, communities in the seven counties lived together long before and after colonial times. Intercommunity relations, including conflict, were managed through customs and traditions that were developed and defined over generations. Many of these customs continue to inform relations between the communities when peace accords are being developed or implemented.

Colonial and post-colonial rule fundamentally changed the context of these communities in profound ways. First, the introduction of state structures brought the communities under a different organising political and social framework from the one they had employed for generations before colonial rule.

Indeed, and as described under the second section of this report, colonial and post-colonial policies on access to resources such as land and water continue to frame the rights of access to such resources.

Second, the governance and growth policies adopted by colonial and post-colonial states have affected the development of the region's communities – including those in the seven counties studied. This has affected communities' socioeconomic transformation, and includes policies of social exclusion and marginalisation from development and access to services.

These factors are not merely history or academic discourse; they define and affect current approaches to local peace processes. Recognising the negative role that 'hard' security approaches and exclusionary policies have had in these regions calls for inclusiveness and participation rather than confrontation with communities.

The various peace accords and agreements discussed in the preceding section demonstrate the difference between a top-down approach to peace solutions versus an all-inclusive process of design and implementation. It is in this context that the report identifies important points the design, approach and implementation of community peace accords.

When parties on the ground are not involved in designing and agreeing on compromises, there is no guarantee that a peace deal will hold

First, there are community agreements whose process and content are led by the government, security agencies, peace organisations, or other external players. While such processes ensure the participation of the communities in conflict, the manner of participation, including venue, facilitation, and even agenda, is set and managed by non-community parties.

Some of these agreements are negotiated and concluded in hotels or venues, away from the conflict sites and the communities involved. Such processes usually have the participation of community representatives, representatives from the administration and security agencies, political leaders, and peace organisations. Many of the accords reviewed in the seven regions were negotiated and concluded this way.

The second category of agreements are those whose need, agenda and negotiation method are identified, and discussions led, by the communities in conflict. While peace organisations and government officials may facilitate such community agreements, they play a background role.

Typically, this kind of agreement focuses on one conflict (or an aspect thereof), and the implementation is designed and actioned by members of the conflicting communities.

The third broad category is a mixture of the above two approaches.

The intention of all community peace accords is to manage conflict between communities. However, as demonstrated by the experience of the various community peace accords discussed in the preceding sections, design and implementation often affect the outcome. Community members must be involved in the process.

The search for peace often involves compromising on both sides. Where parties on the ground are not involved in designing and agreeing on these compromises, there is no guarantee that such a peace deal will hold. On the other hand, when community members commit to peace and are involved in designing these compromises, peace can be achieved.

While structures such as CMCs and IVDCs have shown positive results in Mandera and parts of the North Rift, their reach is limited because of the large areas of pastoralist conflict.

Peace and stability often lie in relatively simple things – trust in leadership (which is born out of commitment to genuine local peace), and a framework for common access to the community resource that must be shared.

Chapter 4
Recommendations

The following recommendations could help improve the quality of the process of developing community accords, their content, and implementation.

Inclusive and community-led approaches to peace accords

Government (both national and county), non-state peace actors, and communities should embrace inclusive approaches to the development of peace accords, at all stages of the process.

National government

- Ensure the involvement and meaningful participation of communities in setting up community structures for consultation in conflict management and peacebuilding processes. Meetings should take place at conflict hotspots where possible.

- Coordinate community structure and representative involvement at all stages and levels of conflict management and peacebuilding. This includes coordination of security responses, monitoring and early warning, and other state interventions.

- Implement a community-led approach to all forms of state response to community conflict, prioritising communities as the first point of response in preventing or managing conflict.

- Develop and operationalise a localised peace strategy that allows replication of effective strategies for sustainable intercommunal peace.

- Ensure inclusivity and diversity in forming deliberative local and community-level structures to nurture inclusiveness and intercommunal dialogue.

County governments

- Decentralise peacebuilding and conflict management structures to community level and embrace community consultation and input in any peace strategies and initiatives by county governments.

- Establish coordination and complementary mechanisms with national government agencies and other non-state peace actors for coherence of purpose in community conflict management.

- Allocate adequate resources for community-based consultation and participation in peace and conflict management processes.

- Pursue inclusivity and diversity in community-level peace structures.

Non-state peace actors

- Involve communities in the design and implementation of peace programmes and activities aimed at addressing intercommunal conflict.

- As much as possible, incorporate community-led thinking, design, and strategies of community peace activities, including development of key commitments for community peace, such as compromises and sanctions for breach.

- Foster inclusiveness in community peace structures and processes.

Ensure coordination and coherence of purpose among peace actors

Coherence of purpose and coordination of approach and activities among external stakeholders will not only enhance planning and coordination of peace work, but will also minimise and manage various potentially conflicting interests between external players.

National government

- Establish structures (such as county peace forums) and others proposed in the National Policy on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management (2015) to ensure a coordinated approach to implementing peace agreements and other community conflict management strategies for coherence of purpose.

- Clarify, in consultation with county governments, the respective roles of the two levels of government in peacebuilding in the communities, to facilitate effective planning and budgeting of resources and other governmental logistics and processes.

- Establish response systems that enable seamless coordination and flow of information from the village or community levels to the administrative and security agencies in a particular area.

- Community representatives chosen to community consultative structures, including community-based security structures such as National Police Reservists, must be vetted by communities to build trust needed for effective community-led peace structures.

- Security and administrative agencies should plan and coordinate conflict management strategies with community structures in a way that enables support from communities.

County governments

- Engage national government to clarify responsibilities in community peace strategies and county government plans.

- Embrace consultation with national government in the planning and budgeting of resources for community building.

- Ensure coordination with national government agencies and other peace actors in community engagement strategies to ensure effective outcomes.

Non-state actors

- Establish a forum for non-state actors to consult and develop consensus on a common approach and strategies to conflict management, including optimal use of resources and community peace projects.

- Engage national and county governments regularly to develop a complementary approach to peace and conflict management.

Resources to facilitate implementation of peace accords

All stakeholders must plan and prioritise resources that are essential for the sustainable implementation of peace accords.

National government

- Allocate adequate resources to NGAOs to enable the county commissioner to facilitate and coordinate peacebuilding activities effectively.

- Coordinate county governments and other peace actors in resource mobilisation for peace activities.

- Coordinate the process in enhancing transparency and accountability to communities in the use of resources dedicated to peace processes.

- Employ innovative means to ensure cost-effectiveness of achieving peace objectives – e.g., where possible, use digital platforms to coordinate activities, plan, and share information.

- Ensure during planning that resources are allocated for the review, updating, and modification of community agreements for better implementation.

County governments

- Beyond establishing departments for peacebuilding, county governments should plan and prioritise the budgetary and resource needs for community-led peace processes.

- Consult with national government and other peace actors in identifying budgetary and resource priorities for conflict management.

- Employ innovative means to ensure cost-effectiveness of achieving peace objectives – e.g., where possible, use digital platforms to coordinate activities, plan, and share information.

Non-state peace actors

- Consult with national and county governments, and other peace actors, in identifying and prioritising resources for peace.

- Ensure that community peace agreements that are negotiated clearly identify the resources needed, the source, and responsibilities for the mobilisation, management, and use of such resources.

Capacity building for community-led peace processes

Stakeholders and communities should build their capacity to handle the technical aspects of peace processes as well as the ever-changing dynamics and complexities in conflict management and transition.

National government

- Employ and deploy officers who have competence, experience, requisite skills, and commitment to peacebuilding to areas affected by community conflicts.

- Allocate resources for training and capacity building for serving officers to equip them with the skills and capacity needed for their duties.

- Ensure that community-led strategies for peacebuilding are preceded by building the capacity of communities, especially community representatives, to understand and undertake their duties.

County governments

- Retain and deploy people with relevant skills and competence to run programmes and engagements in county peace departments.

- Work with communities, national government, and other peace actors to identify capacity gaps and develop strategies to build the respective capacities for overall effectiveness.

- Allocate resources for capacity development of county officers and community members engaged in community-led peace processes.

Non-state peace actors

- Carry out capacity gap assessments before implementing any community-led peace activities.

- Retain competent staff with experience and capacity in community-led peace strategies and processes.

- Jointly identify capacity gaps (with communities and government departments and agencies) and strategies to address gaps.

Alignment of legal and policy frameworks to support peace accords and conflict management processes

National and county governments should address the various legal and policy gaps hindering effective development and implementation of community peace accords.

National government

- Develop and finalise a law and policy to address emerging issues regarding community involvement in rangelands management.

- Finalise the proposed national laws and policy on county and local peace structures to streamline and entrench community peace structures.

- Develop and consider a national law and policy on the place and status of community peace accords – specifically regarding their legal enforcement.

- Develop a national legal framework and policy to guide how practices such as *Maslaha* (blood compensation) relate to the law and what approach should be used for such practices in the community. The judiciary's effort to recognise and work with traditional justice systems offers an innovative way to ensure integration.[172]

- Develop and implement a framework to guide the delimitation of administrative and political boundaries, and a framework to guide the handling of community grievances regarding boundaries.

County governments

- Develop and implement county-level laws and policies to complement proposed national frameworks.

- Coordinate community structures to provide feedback and contributions to the development and implementation of identified laws and policies.

Non-state peace actors

- Contribute to development of laws and policies at national and county level to enhance community peace processes.

- Ensure the involvement of communities in the development of the national and county legal and policy frameworks, and community feedback and input in the development and implementation.

Notes

1 Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED), Kenya Situation Update: December 2023 | Examining Local Community Agreements as Alternative Routes to Peace, https://acleddata.com/2023/12/15/kenya-situation-update-december-2023-examining-local-community-peace-agreements-as-alternative-routes-to-peace/ (accessed 29 April 2025); UNDP, Community Dialogue for Sustainable Peace: A handbook for generating citizens' engagement for sustained dialogue on conflict prevention, social cohesion and integration, www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/migration/tz/UNDP-DIALOGUE-BOOKLET_English-Version.pdf (accessed 29 April 2025).

2 AR Gakuria, Natural Resource Based Conflict Among Pastoralist Communities in Kenya, Unpublished Master of Arts in International Relations Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2013, 28–49.

3 CGIAR, How does climate exacerbate root causes of conflict in Kenya?, https://cgspace.cgiar.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/11d679f2-ae01-4a2f-95e1-a89b298cdf02/content#:~:text=Pastoral%20Communities,-The%20effects%20of&text=The%20"spiral%20of%20violence"%20between,et%20al.%2C%202014 (accessed 29 March 2026).

4 A term used by respondents to refer to a process where communities are encouraged to set up settlements in new areas, followed by assignment of administrative status, such as the gazettement of administrative divisions and appointment of a chief, etc.

5 Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Regional disparities and marginalisation in Kenya, 30–45, 2012, https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/09859.pdf.

6 Interpeace, Approaches to fostering peace in the North Rift region of Kenya, 14 April 2023, www.interpeace.org/2023/04/approaches-to-fostering-peace-in-the-north-rift-region-of-kenya/#:~:text=There%20has%20been%20a%20rise,)%2C%20effective%2014%20February%202022 (accessed 25 April 2025).

7 Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Regional disparities and marginalisation in Kenya, 30–45, 2012, https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/09859.pdf.

8 Climate Diplomacy, Farmer-herder violence in the Tana River Delta, Kenya, https://climate-diplomacy.org/case-studies/farmer-herder-violence-tana-river-delta-kenya (accessed 22 April 2025).

9 A Wako, Deadly clash over a gold mine leaves two people dead in Moyale, *The Eastleigh Voice*, 20 July 2024, https://eastleighvoice.co.ke/hilo%20gold%20mine/60084/deadly-clash-over-a-gold-mine-leaves-two-people-dead-in-moyale.

10 Kenya News Agency, Garissa Leaders Urge Govt To Lift Gypsum Mining Ban, 25 August 2024, www.kenyanews.go.ke/garissa-leaders-urge-govt-to-lift-gypsum-mining-ban/.

11 S Lutta, Gold mining sparks renewed tensions on Turkana-West Pokot border, *Daily Nation*, 5 June 2025, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/gold-mining-sparks-tensions-on-turkana-west-pokot-border-5070020.

12 ACLED, Kenya Situation Update: March 2023 | Government Operation Against Pastoralist Militias in North Rift Region, 31 March 2023, https://acleddata.com/2023/03/31/kenya-situation-update-march-2023-government-operation-against-pastoralist-militias-in-north-rift-region/ (accessed 15 June 2025); F Maelo and GT Harris, Conflict policing in the pastoralist communities in Isiolo County, *Journal of Conflict Management* (Vol 1, Issue 1, 1–13, 2021).

13 M Mavenjina, Proliferation of small arms fuelling North Rift attacks, Kenya Human Rights Commission, 1 July 2024, https://khrc.or.ke/news/mavenjina-proliferation-of-small-arms-fuelling-north-rift-attacks/ (accessed 24 April 2024).

14 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 14.

15 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18.

16 Sovereign Limits, Kenya-Somalia, https://sovereignlimits.com/boundaries/kenya-somalia-land#:~:text=The%20Kenya%E2%80%93Somalia%20land%20boundary,Ethiopia%20to%20 the%20Indian%20Ocean.

17 NSC, Modogashe Declaration (2011) Annex III, 45.

18 Banissa Declaration between the Garre and Degodia Communities (19 October 2019).

19 KNBS, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18.

20 NCIC, NCIC in Concerted Effort to Solve Border Crisis in Wajir County, https://cohesion.go.ke/index. php/media-center/latest-news/551-ncic-in-concerted-effort-to-solve-border-crisis-in-wajir-county (accessed 28 April 2025).

21 NSC, Modogashe Declaration (2011) Annex III, 43–48.

22 S Krätli and J Swift, Understanding and managing pastoral conflict in Kenya: A literature review, IDS, University of Sussex, UK, 1999; D Ibrahim and J Jenner, Wajir community-based conflict management, presented at USAID Conference on Conflict Resolution in the Greater Horn of Africa, June 1996.

23 KII with Kepha Kegeni, Deputy County Commissioner – Wajir South, 24 January 2025.

24 KNBS, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18.

25 FGD, Garissa, 13 January 2025.

26 Ibid.

27 Kenya News Agency, Garissa Leaders Urge Govt To Lift Gypsum Mining Ban, 25 August 2024, www.kenyanews.go.ke/garissa-leaders-urge-govt-to-lift-gypsum-mining-ban/.

28 *BBC News*, Kenya attack: 147 dead in Garissa University assault, 3 April 2015, www.bbc.com/news/ world-africa-32169080 (accessed 28 April 2025).

29 KII with Hassan Osman, Chair of the Garissa County Peace Committee (Garissa town, 13 January 2025).

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 KNBS, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18.

33 KII with Abdi Dere Bocha, King of the Wardei Community, Tana River County, 16 January 2025.

34 Bangale residents in Tana River protest against cluster programme, *The Star*, 5 February 2024, www.the-star.co.ke/news/2024-02-06-bangale-residents-in-tana-river-protest-against-cluster-programme (accessed 29 April 2025).

35 Tana River FGD with 'Kings' of Pokomo, Orma, and Wardei (Hola, 16 January 2025).

36 Tana 1 Declaration, Pokomo and Abdalla Communities Reconciliation Process, 27 April 2016, www.peaceagreements.org/media/documents/ag1918_5b2c8450b5fe0.pdf.

37 KNBS, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18; Interview with Moses Maloba, Assistant County Commissioner, Ngaremara, Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

38 Interview with Moses Maloba, Assistant County Commissioner, Ngaremara, Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

39 KM Agade and BA Halakhe, Isiolo County, Kenya: Rapid Assessment of the institutional Architecture for Conflict Mitigation, March 2019, 9.

40 V Jebet, Borana and Somali elders resolve to end pasture dispute on Isiolo-Garissa border, *Daily Nation*, 16 June 2016, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/isiolo/borana-and-somali-elders-resolve-to-end-pasture-dispute-on-isiolo-garissa-border-1210782.

41 Minority Rights Group International (MRGI), Peace or into pieces: Conflict analysis and mapping for Isiolo and Marsabit counties, 19, https://minorityrights.org/app/uploads/2023/12/peace-or-into-pieces.pdf (accessed 29 April 2025).

42 FGD, Garissa, 13 January 2025.

43 Ibid.

44 FGD, Garissa, 13 January 2025.

45 Interview with Moses Maloba, Assistant County Commissioner, Ngaremara, Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

46 KNBS, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18.

47 S Mwende, Over 500 families displaced in Marsabit, CS Murkomen says, *The Star*, 5 March 2025, www.the-star.co.ke/news/realtime/2025-03-05-over-500-families-displaced-in-marsabit-murkomen (accessed 27 April 2025).

48 I Harun, Devolution and Peacebuilding in Kenya, fact or illusion? The case of Marsabit County, *Perspectives on Federalism* Vol. 11, Issue No. 3, 2019, 38–66, at 54–55.

49 KNBS, 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census: Analytical Report on Population Dynamics, Volume VIII (July 2022) 18.

50 O Sana and A Oloo, Between the Borders and Internal Control: The Evolving Character of the Nation State in a Transnationalist Pastoralist Zone: A Case Study of the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda, *Open Access Library Journal*, 6, 1–22, 2019.

51 S Lutta, 22 people missing after deadly attack on Kenya-Ethiopia border, *Daily Nation*, 24 February 2025, https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/turkana/22-people-missing-after-deadly-turkana-attack-on-kenya-ethiopia-border-4939688.

52 VM Ogot et al., Indigenous mechanism of conflict management and resolution from 1850 to 1963 among the Pokot and Turkana communities in Kenya, *African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences* 10 (2) 2023.

53 M Wahome and D Nga'ang'a, The effects of colonialism on indigenous conflict resolution systems among the Pokot and Turkana communities, *Chemchemi International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol 11, No 1 (2020) 3.

54 Ibid.

55 NSC, Report of the Pokot/Samburu Peace and Reconciliation Meeting (October 2006) 20.

56 NSC, The Pokot/Samburu Naivasha Peace Accord, 2006: Report of the Pokot/Samburu Peace and Reconciliation Meeting (16-19 October 2006) 18.

57 S Lutta, How a 49-year-old deal has promoted peace on Kenya-Uganda border, *Daily Nation*, 19 September 2022.

58 NCIC and Interpeace, Voices of the people: Impediments to peace and community resilience in Kenya's North Rift Region, January 2021, 43.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

61 Office of the President/National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, 2005.

62 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 1.

63 Office of the President/National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, The Modogashe-Garissa Declarations, May 2005, 11-20.

64 NCIC and Interpeace, Voices of the People: Challenges to Peace in Mandera County, 18.

65 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 44.

66 Ibid.

67 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 45.

68 Ibid.

69 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 46.

70 Ibid.

71 Ibid.

72 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 47.

73 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 47–48.

74 NSC Secretariat, Modogashe Declaration III, April 2011, 48.

75 Ibid.

76 The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, Interpeace, 2023, www.interpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NCIC-Mediation-in-Mandera-N-Rift-Web.pdf (accessed 1 December 2025).

77 NCIC and Interpeace, Voices of the people: Impediments to peace and community resilience in Kenya's North Rift Region, January 2021; NCIC and Interpeace, Voices of the People: Challenges to Peace in Mandera County, 2021.

78 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 37.

79 Ibid, 18.

80 Signed at Laisamis, Marsabit, 6 August 2024.

81 Interview with Josephine Ekiru, Programme Officer at NRT, 11 December 2024.

82 KII with Stephen Chizhodi, Assistant County Commissioner, Isiolo Central, 9 December 2024.

83 Interview with Moses Maloba, Assistant County Commissioner, Ngaremara, Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

84 KII with Stephen Chizhodi, Assistant County Commissioner, Isiolo Central, 9 December 2024.

85 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 18.

86 Ibid.

87 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 31.

88 Ibid.

89 The Boma Peace Agreement, ReliefWeb, https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/boma-peace-agreement (accessed 28 April 2025).

90 The Presidency, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, Tana I Declaration, Pokomo and Abdalla Communities Reconciliation Process, 27 April 2016, www.peaceagreements.org/media/documents/ag1918_5b2c8450b5fe0.pdf.

91 KII with Hassan Ismail, Country Representative, Interpeace (Kenya), 3 March 2025.

92 In the Pokot/Samburu Peace Accord, for example, the negotiating parties were keen to renew the 1913 Peace Covenant that was reached between the two communities. See: NSC, The Pokot/Samburu Naivasha Peace Accord, 2006: Report of the Pokot/Samburu Peace and Reconciliation Meeting (16-19 October 2006), 6.

93 Interview with Guyo Turi, Research Officer (East Africa Peace and Security Governance Programme), Institute for Security Studies, Nairobi, 13 April 2025.

94 N Abdullahi Abdi, *Forced by Fate & Driven by Faith: The true story of the Wajir peacebuilding process*, 2023, 60–66.

95 FGD, Garissa, 13 January 2025.

96   Office of the President/National Steering Committee on Peace Building and Conflict Management, 2005.

97   FGD, Isiolo, 11 December 2024.

98   Ibid.

99   KII with Sheikh Ahmed Set, Chair of the interfaith National Council of Elders.

100 KII with Mohammed Nur Korme, Chair of the Moyale Cross-border Committee, 15 December 2024, Eastleigh, Nairobi.

101 Interviews with various respondents.

102 FGD, Isiolo, 11 December 2024.

103 KII with Stephen Chizhodi, Assistant County Commissioner, Isiolo Central, 9 December 2024.

104 KIIs with NGAOs in the seven counties (9 December to 25 February 2025).

105 FGDs, Isiolo and Garissa, 11 December 2024 and 13 January 2024.

106 KII with Abdia Mahmud – Executive Director, Regional Pastoralists Peace Link (RPPL), Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

107 KII with Nuria Gollo, Executive Director, Marsabit Women Advocacy and Development Organization, 12 December 2024.

108 KII with Fatuma Abdullahi, Women Rights Advocacy Initiative (WRAI), 24 January 2025.

109 KII with Kepha Kegeni, Deputy County Commissioner, Wajir South, 24 January 2025.

110 Ibid.

111 Ibid.

112 KII with Fatuma Abdullahi, WRAI, 24 January 2025.

113 Ibid.

114 KII with Kepha Kegeni, Deputy County Commissioner, Wajir South, 24 January 2025.

115 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 8.

116 Ibid, 18.

117 NCIC and Interpeace, Voices of the People: Challenges to Peace in Mandera County, 21.

118 Ibid.

119 NCIC and Interpeace, Voice of the people: impediments to peace and community resilience in Kenya's North Rift Region, 2021.

120 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 8.

121 NCIC, Stabilising the North Rift: Lessons learned from the peacebuilding experience of NCIC and Interpeace, March 2023, 3.

122 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 50.

123 NSC, Report of the Pokot/Samburu Peace and Reconciliation Meeting (October 2006) 20.

124 Ibid.

125 NSC, Record of Proceedings of the Pokot/Turkana Peace Dialogue, April 2007.

126 Only one county commissioner (Marsabit) signed the copy availed.

127 Osman & 164 others (Suing on Their Behalf and Behalf of Residents of Merti Sub-County, Chari, and Cherab Wards in Isiolo County) v Northern Rangelands Trust & 8 others [2025] KEELC 99 (KLR).

128 KIIs in Isiolo and Marsabit, 11 and 12 December 2024.

129 KIIs in Isiolo, 11 December 2024.

130 KII with Abdia Mahmud – Executive Director, Regional Pastoralists Peace Link (RPPL), Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

131 Ibid.

132 Ibid.

133 KII with respondent.

134 KII with Abdia Mahmud – Executive Director, Regional Pastoralists Peace Link (RPPL), Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

135 KII with county administrator, 11 December 2024.

136 Ibid.

137 KII with Abdia Mahmud – Executive Director, Regional Pastoralists Peace Link (RPPL), Isiolo, 9 December 2024.

138 KII in Isiolo, 11 December 2024.

139 ACLED, Kenya Situation Update: December 2023 | Examining Local Community Agreements as Alternative Routes to Peace, https://acleddata.com/2023/12/15/kenya-situation-update-december-2023-examining-local-community-peace-agreements-as-alternative-routes-to-peace/ (accessed 29 April 2025).

140 S Lutta, How a 49-year-old deal has promoted peace on Kenya-Uganda border, *Daily Nation*, 19 September 2022.

141 Maikona Peace Declaration, 2009.

142 NCIC, Stabilising the North Rift: Lessons learned from the peacebuilding experience of NCIC and Interpeace, March 2023, 3.

143 NCIC and Interpeace, The Mediation Experiences of NCIC and Interpeace in Mandera County and the North Rift Region, May 2023, 23.

144 KII with Habiba Ailo, Marsabit Women Mediation Network, 12 December 2024.

145 KII with Stephen Chizhodi, Assistant County Commissioner, Isiolo Central, 9 December 2024.

146 Ibid.

147 FGD, Garissa, 13 January 2025.

148 Interview with various key informants in Wajir County.

149 FGD, Garissa, 13 January 2025.

150 KII with Hassan Osman, Chair of the Garissa County Peace Committee, 13 January 2025.

151 KII with Ibrahim Shabo, Regional Manager (North Eastern) REINVENT, Isiolo; Isiolo FGD; Garissa FGD, 10 December 2024.

152 FGD, NORHEPCO/Interpeace Offices, Mandera, 21 January 2025.

153 Ibid.

154 FGD, Isiolo, 10 December 2024.

155 Interviews with officials from NSC and the NCIC, various dates between October and June 2025.

156 Sessional paper No. 5 of 2014 (adopted on 27 August 2015).

157 Ibid, 8, 26–32.

158 FGD, NORHEPCO/Interpeace Offices, Mandera, 21 January 2025.

159 KII with Ibrahim Shabo, Regional Manager (North Eastern), REINVENT.

160 Ibid.

161 A win for 11 Isiolo petitioners as high court stops the operationalization of Onsalat sub county as an administrative unit in Hadado within Wajir county, www.facebook.com/angaafradio/photos/the-isiolo-high-court-has-temporarily-stopped-the-operationization-of-onsalat-su/1223453552587935/.

162 Ibid.

163 KII with Ooko Anyumba, Deputy County Commissioner, Lokichoggio, 13 February 2025.

164 KII with Habiba Ailo, Marsabit Women Mediation Network, 12 December 2024.

165 KII with Fatuma Abdullahi, Executive Director, WRAI, Wajir, 24 January 2025.

166 Interview with key respondents in Isiolo and Marsabit, 11 and 12 December 2024.

167 Interview with NGAOs in the seven counties, various dates from December 2024 to February 2025.

168 KII in Tana River County, 16 January 2025.

169 KIIs in Tana River County, 16 January 2025.

170 KII with Stephen Chizhodi, Assistant County Commissioner, Isiolo Central, 9 December 2024.

171 FGD, Isiolo, 10 December 2024.

172 Judiciary, Alternative Justice Systems: Baseline Policy, August 2020, https://judiciary.go.ke/download/alternative-justice-systems-baseline-policy-and-policy-framework/ (accessed 01 December 2025).

Appendix

List of interviewees

Isiolo County	
Name	**Affiliation/position**
Christopher Sirma Siele	Deputy County Commissioner
Moses Maloba	Assistant County Commissioner Ngaremara
Stephen Chizhodi	Assistant County Commissioner Isiolo Central
Collins Bett	Administrative Officer 1 Isiolo County Commissioner's Office
Abdia Mahmud	Executive Director Regional Pastoralists Peace Link
Ibrahim Shabo	Regional Manager (North Eastern) REINVENT
Josephine Ekiru	Peacebuilding Officer Northern Rangelands Trust

Isiolo focus group discussion	
Hussein Abdullahi	Youth for Humanity
Halima Ali	Programme Coordinator Regional Pastoralists Peace Link
Sheikh Daudi Guyo	Adviser to the Governor on Religious Affairs Imam
Idris Forole	Board Member RPPL Elder
Dhahab Daud	Independent Consultant Associate – NURSUD
Irene Ntinyari	Woman Peace Activist
Joyce Nairesi	Woman Peace Activist

Marsabit County	
James Kamau	County Commissioner
Hassan Ibrahim	Administrator County Commissioner's Office
Sora Guyo Huka	Chairman County Peace Committee
Habiba Ailo	Marsabit Women Mediation Network
Nuria Gollo	Executive Director Marsabit Women Advocacy and Development Organization
Hussein Kadida	County Peace Committee (Moyale) Member, National Heroes Council
Mohammed Nur Korme	Chairman Cross-border Peace Council (Moyale)
Hassan Mulata	Youth Representative MWADO

Garissa County	
Sebastian Okiring' Alaat	Deputy County Commissioner
Hassan Osman	Chairman, County Peace Committee
Mohammed Minhaj Dahir	Secretary, County Peace Committee
Yakub Sahab Ismail	Fafi Representative to the County Peace Committee
Salat Mohammed	Retired Chief
Muhibo Ahmed Omar	Former MCA Garissa Women Peace Movement

Tana River County	
David Koskei	County Commissioner
Peter Makau	Assistant County Commissioner, Walden Sub-County
David Kasait	Assistant County Commissioner, County Headquarters

Tana River County cont.	
Yakub Sahab Ismail	Fafi representative to the County Peace Committee
Peter Ndambo	Assistant County Commissioner, Tana Delta
Mohammed Dube Barisa	King of the Orma Community
Mohammed Akare Berhe	King of the Pokomo Community
Abdi Dere Bocha	King of the Wardei Community
Mohammed Abdullahi	Director of Programmes, Pastoralists Girls Initiative
Sammy Gatheru	Programme Coordinator, Pastoralists Girls Initiative

| Mandera County	
Henry Ochako	County Commissioner
Peter Wambugu	Assistant County Commissioner, County Headquarter
Mahat Omar	Director, Network for Peace, Cohesion and Heritage Trust (NEPCOH) Interpeace Implementing Partner
Abdinassir Ali	Head of Conflict Analysis, Design, Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning (DMEAL), (NEPCOH)
Jamal Ibrahim	Assistant Conflict Analyst
Yusuf Ibrahim Mohamed	Sultan of the Garre Community, Mandera
Adow Harun	Sultan of the Degodia Community, Mandera
Aftin Muktar	Sultan of the Murule Community, Mandera
Abdiya Abdirahman	Director, Mandera Women for Peace Movement
Hussein Yusuf	Chief Officer, Peacebuilding Department, Mandera County Government

Turkana County	
Julius Kavita	County Commissioner
Ooko Anyumba	Deputy County Commissioner, Lokichoggio
Pastor Rachael Kamurake	Representative of County Peace Committee, Loima Area
Rev Samuel Ekles	Representative of County Peace Committee, Kanamuker Area
Hon Emmanuel Imana	Former MP Peace Activist
Sarah Lochodo	Chief, Kainuk

Wajir County	
Kepha Kegeni	Deputy County Commissioner, Wajir South
Farah Hassan	Acting Assistant Director, Peace Directorate, Wajir County Government
Dekow Hassan	Coordinator, Deris Wanaag
Fatuma Abdullahi	CEO, Women Rights Advocacy Initiative

Others	
Hassan Ismail	Country Representative, Interpeace (Kenya)
Liban Guyo	Deputy Director, Peace Building and Reconciliation, National Cohesion and Integration Commission

ISS | INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

Visit our website for the latest analysis, insight and news

The Institute for Security Studies partners to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future
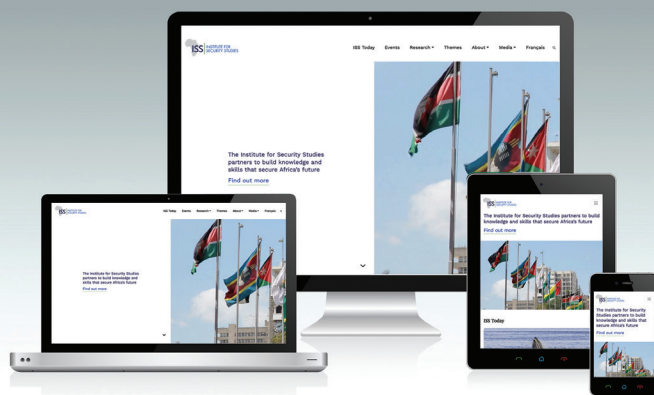
Step 1 Go to www.issafrica.org

Step 2 Go to bottom right of the ISS home page and provide your subscription details

ISS | INSTITUTE FOR SECURITY STUDIES

About this monograph

Sustaining peace in northern and north-eastern Kenya remains challenging. Long-standing intercommunal tensions persist, shaped by historical marginalisation and changes in state governance. Communities in Tana River, Garissa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Mandera, Wajir and Turkana have long relied on customs and traditions to manage conflict, yet many externally driven peace initiatives have weakened these mechanisms. Limited coordination among peace actors and the continued use of top-down approaches often constrain impact, underscoring the need for genuinely community-led peace accords.

About the author

Dr Conrad M Bosire is a Consultant, Researcher, and Teacher in the areas of law, governance, democracy, and development. He is currently an Adjunct Lecturer at Strathmore University School of Law.

About the ISS

The Institute for Security Studies (ISS) partners to build knowledge and skills that secure Africa's future. The ISS is an African non-profit with offices in South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia and Senegal. Using its networks and influence, the ISS provides timely and credible policy research, practical training and technical assistance to governments and civil society.

Development partners

Sida
SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY

ISSN 1026-0412

9 771026 041001