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INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR PEACEBUILDING

Wajir County Note

Voices of the People:

Impediments to Peace and Community Resilience in Wajir County

Interpeace
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
FOR PEACEBUILDING

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Impediments to Peace and Community Resilience in Wajir County

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Mohamed Noor Dahir

Research Lead Facilitator

FOREWORD

This report is the outcome of a consultative research process conducted by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Interpeace peacebuilding programme in Wajir County, Kenya. The objective of the study was to identify the challenges to peace and document community resilience factors in Wajir County. This study resulted from an expansion of the preceding NCIC and Interpeace peacebuilding programme in neighbouring Mandera County, upon the realisation that the conflicts in Mandera are intertwined with those in Wajir County.

The ultimate guardians of peace in Wajir County are the people themselves. Consequently, NCIC and Interpeace only played a facilitatory role, placing the community at the heart of the process by adopting a participatory approach to the identification of both challenges to peace and resilience factors within the community. The remarkable commitment of the people of Wajir and their leadership throughout the study was a testament to their deeply held desire to find peace in diversity.

Although this study was cross-sectional, it is imperative to recognise that the quest for peace is a long-term process that involves all stakeholders. The study therefore presents an entry point for all peace actors to plug into the peace process in Wajir County. The next step of this programme will involve the joint implementation of the priorities for peace—as identified by the local population in Wajir and validated by a wide spectrum of stakeholders. Beyond Wajir, we also envision that the lessons learned will be replicated in the neighbouring counties and across Kenya.

Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia

Chairman, National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)

Dr. Theo Hollander

Senior Regional Representative for Eastern and Central Africa, Interpeace

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CSO	Civil society organisation
FGD	Focus group discussion
GTD	Global Terrorism Database
IED	Improvised explosive device
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
MCA	Member of County Assembly
MP	Member of Parliament
NCIC	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
NFD	Northern Frontier District
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
PAR	Participatory action research
SALF	Somali Abo Liberation Front
SID	Society for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Wajir County, Kenya has experienced intermittent conflict over the years. Since pre-colonial times, the county has endured frequent conflicts and counter-conflicts, as communities pit themselves against each other. Some of the conflicts are spill-overs from Somalia or neighbouring counties. Several interventions led by state and non-state actors have faced large hurdles, as conflicts continue to intensify in range and magnitude. Against this backdrop, the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Interpeace peacebuilding programme conducted a consultative community engagement process to identify the challenges to peace and document community resilience factors in the county, with the aim of building consensus and facilitating co-ordination among actors to address barriers to peace.

The research employed a participatory action research (PAR) approach by conducting 36 focus group discussions (FGDs) with about 14 participants in each group, reaching a total of 538 participants in 30 villages across the county in addition to 17 interviews with carefully selected key informants.

At the end of the research process the programme held a forum to validate and prioritise the identified impediments to peace in Wajir County. 120 stakeholders attended the forum, among them members of the local communities, key officials from both the national and county governments, elected leaders, security agencies, and civil society groups operating in the county.

The participants were divided into four groups. These were composed taking diversity into account in terms of geography, clan dynamics, professions, gender, age, disabilities, and minority clans to discuss and prioritise key issues through extensive focus group discussions.

The prioritisation exercise eventually singled out the following two priority areas to be addressed as the first step towards finding lasting peace in Wajir[9]:

i. Contestation over electoral and administrative boundaries.

ii. Partiality of government officials.

Following the successful priority setting phase, the stakeholders' forum nominated a working group to work with the NCIC/Interpeace team to further engage the communities and find solutions to these top two prioritised challenges to peace. In this study report, the remaining issues identified will be merged under the prioritised issues for programmatic engagements.

9 See Chapter 7 for details of the validation and prioritisation process.

CHAPTER 01

BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Wajir County is part of Kenya's North Eastern Province, which has been characterised by clan conflict since the colonial period. The county is situated along the country's borders with Somalia and Ethiopia. Wajir is inhabited by the three ethnic Somali clans, the Degodia, Ajuran and Ogaden (in addition to several smaller Somali clans). Originally part of the Northern Frontier District (NFD), the region was hived off from Somalia's Jubaland region in 1925 and annexed into Kenya. The NFD, which included today's Wajir, Mandera and Garissa Counties, was indirectly administered by the British colonial government from a distance because of its harsh, arid climate. The Outlying District Ordinance made the whole NFD a closed district, placing conditional prohibition on non-resident travel to and from the district (Whittaker, 2015). Since this annexation, Wajir and the rest of Kenya's North Eastern Province have been prone to periodic outbursts of interclan and state-sanctioned violence. During the 1964–1967 secessionist conflict, the Kenyan military violently crushed an armed attempt by the NFD to secede into Somalia. State security forces perpetrated collective violence against the region's civilian Somali population, followed by the marginalisation and violent intimidation of the local community. The gradual adoption of Somalis into the public sphere in the 1990s by the administration of Kenya's second president, Daniel arap Moi, slightly eased state-community tensions, but a new conflict opened up in the form of clan clashes over scarce resources, and more recently attacks by the Somali militant group, Al-Shabaab.

A long history of neglect and marginalisation of the region and a failed struggle for secession into Somalia after Kenya's independence in 1963 have left the local communities harbouring grievances against the Kenyan state. In addition, the fragility of the bordering Republic of Somalia has not only affected the status of peace in the region but has also fuelled intercommunal conflict through a spill-over effect. Analysts have attributed the cross-border spread of conflict across these international borders to the porosity of borders, transnational ethnic ties, and population movements, among other factors (Weidmann, 2015).

As a devolved entity, Wajir County still experiences sporadic intercommunal conflict and general insecurity. It is one of Kenya's five poorest counties in terms of mean expenditure (KNBS and SID, 2013) and has the lowest composite social cohesion score of 22% (NCIC, 2013). The residents of the region hold numerous grievances against the state, viewing themselves as minorities in the wider national arena.

The years since the decentralisation of government have seen various state and non-state actors make efforts to address the aforementioned conflict issues. Moreover, the devolution of government—extolled as a successful way of bringing resources closer to the people and involving the masses in the management of their own resources—has become a new area of contention for those very devolved resources. Figure 1 shows a conflict timeline of Wajir.

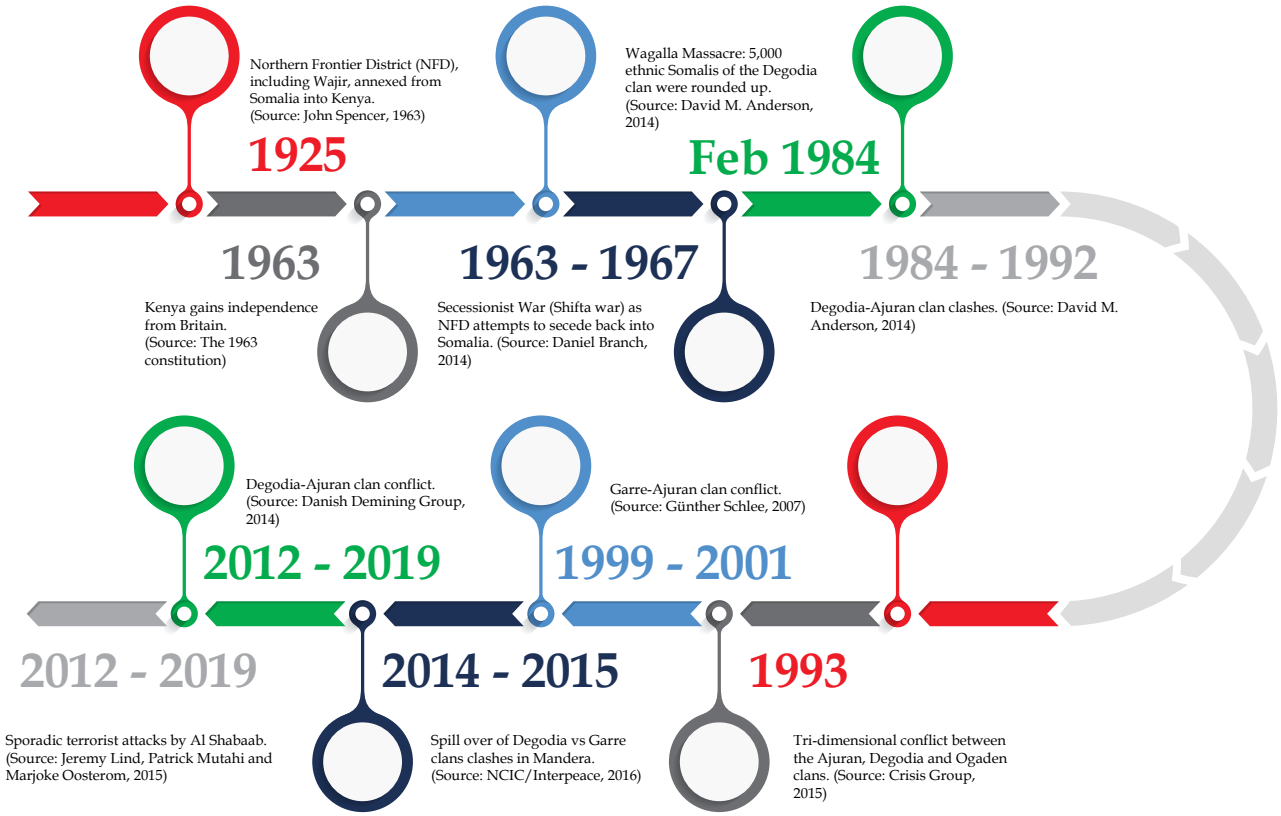


Figure 1: Wajir Conflict Timeline[2]

1.1 Problem Statement and Rationale

Although Wajir is an ethnically and culturally homogeneous county, it experiences low levels of social cohesion. The people of Wajir share a common culture, including language, religion, heritage, and ideals, that should otherwise propagate unity among the community. However, the community continues to experience incessant intercommunal violence and cross-border terrorist attacks, resulting in widespread death, displacement, injuries, and loss of property in Wajir County. Numerous peacebuilding efforts have been attempted in the region. Devolution, for instance, brought governance closer to the people and broadened the participation of local clans in the management of their own resources. However, it also accelerated intercommunal conflict over political power, because it shifted the resources from the previously centralised national government to the Office of the County Governor. Amid the various interventions carried out by both state and non-state actors in a bid to mitigate violence in the county, conflicts continue to increase in range and magnitude. Effective resolution of conflicts in this region could be impeded by the lack of consensus on the challenges to peace in the region and unco-ordinated efforts by various stakeholders and peace actors in the region. It is on this basis that the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) and Interpeace adopted a participatory approach to examine the challenges to peace and classify factors that have kept the communities together despite the tenacious conflicts.

1.1.1 Objectives

The overall goal of this study was to provide a platform for consensus on the challenges to peace and the resilience factors in Wajir County. Specifically, it sought to:

1. Identify the impediments to peace in Wajir County.
2. Document the resilience factors among the local communities in Wajir County.

1.1.2 Methodology

The methodological underpinning for this study was the participatory action research (PAR) approach, making use of a qualitative research design to explore the richness, depth, and complexity of the conflict and resilience situation in Wajir County. Careful sampling was used to identify key conflict hotspots, as indicated in Figure 2.

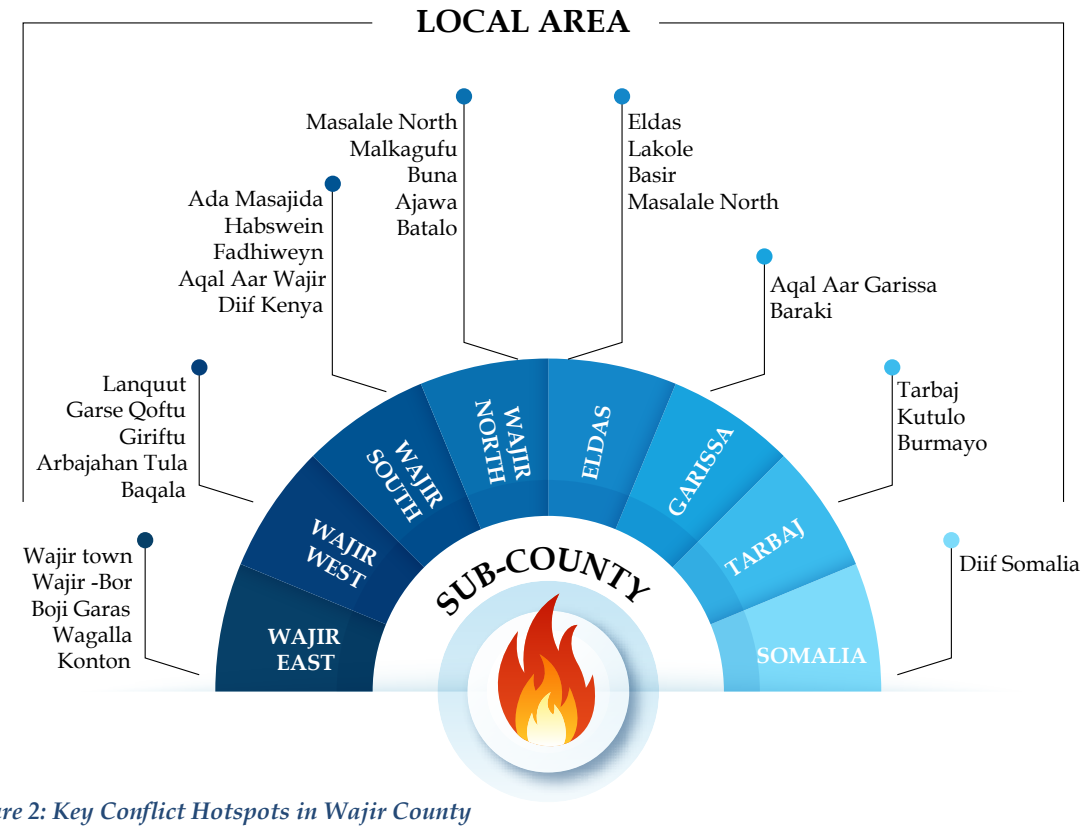


Figure 2: Key Conflict Hotspots in Wajir County

The researchers convened 36 focus group discussions (FGDs), with about 14 participants in each group, reaching a total of 538 people in 30 villages across the county. To complement and triangulate the information gathered through the FGDs, interviews were carried out with 17 key informants. The key informants were carefully chosen: individuals were selected who were known to have a detailed understanding of the conflict areas and situational contexts. The selection of participants also took into account various dimensions of diversity including gender, ethnicity, age, religion, and status. They included leaders and officials from both the Wajir County government and the national government, community leaders from across the border in Somalia, local peace actors, political leaders, local administration officers, government officials, NGO experts, members of other network and umbrella organisations, as well as targeted elites, community opinion leaders, and decision makers with a deep understanding of the conflict context and dynamics of Wajir County. The views of both grass roots communities and those of the elites were also documented in audio-visual format. Existing literature including published books, journals, unpublished conference papers, government documents, NGO reports, and electronic materials were also reviewed to enrich the understanding of the context.

During the data collection process, the researchers took notes, audio, and video recordings of all proceedings, while adhering to the necessary ethical considerations such as informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality.

1.2 Data Analysis

The data were analysed using both descriptive and narrative techniques. The exploration was carried out under a lens of fragility and resilience, to better understand the conflict dynamics and facilitate the identification of entry points for strengthening resilience to build peace. The analysis employed the pentad dimensions of peace that include an examination of the economic, environment, political, security and societal factors as espoused in the fragility and resilience framework. Assessing fragility involves identifying risks, vulnerabilities, and their underlying causes, while resilience refers to exploring diverse endogenous attributes, capacities, resources, and responses that enable individuals, communities, institutions, and societies to deal peacefully with the impact of past conflict and violence.

A three-day stakeholders' forum was held in Wajir town to validate and prioritise key issues. The 120 participants in attendance were divided into four groups, the composition of which gave due regard to diversity in terms of geography of origin, ethnic dynamics, occupation, gender, age, disabilities, and the representation of minority clans to discuss and prioritise key issues through extensive group discussions.

Of the many issues identified by the research and validation processes, six were identified as key through a process of prioritisation. These were in turn ranked by order of urgency by stakeholders at the validation forum.

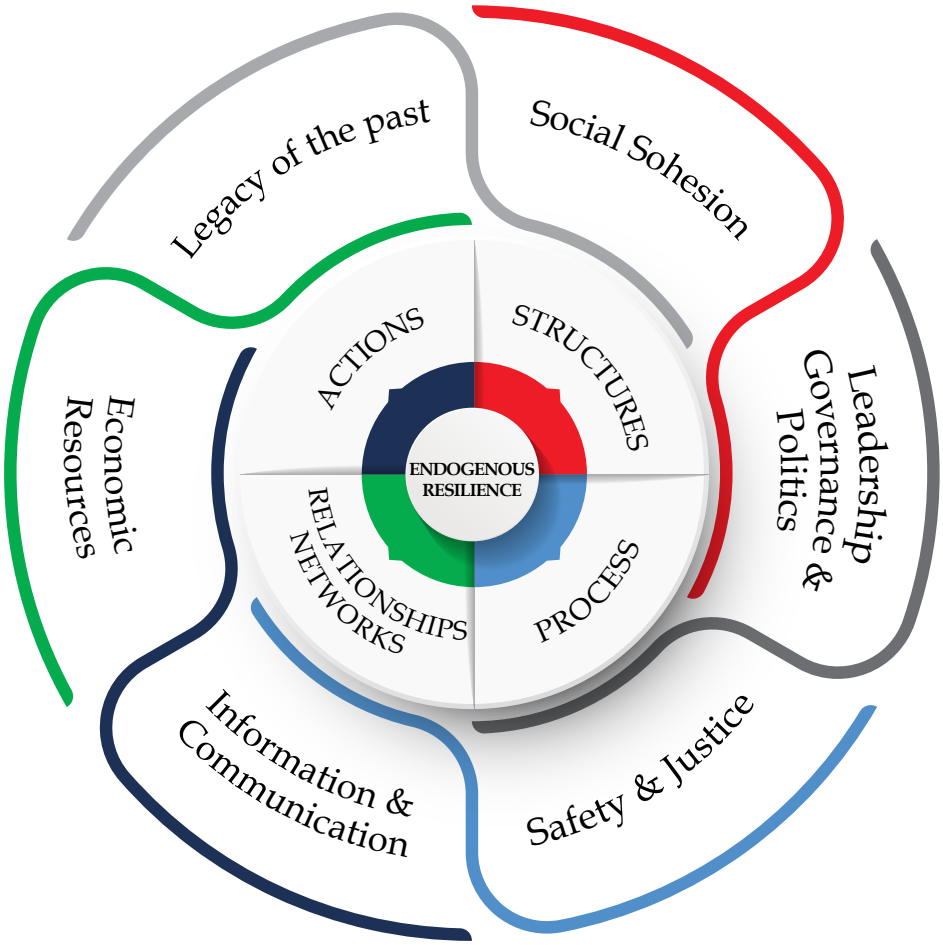
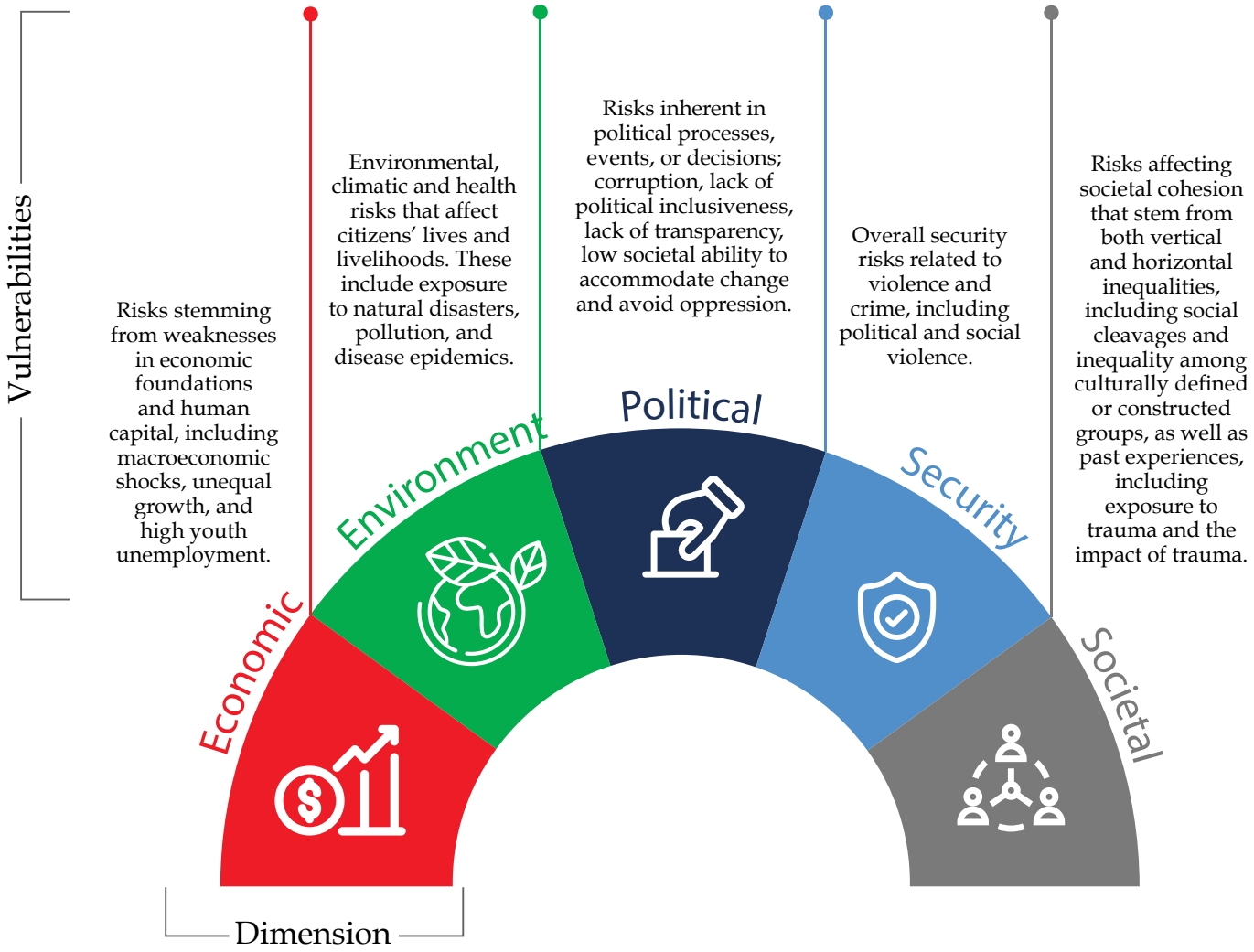


Figure 3: Framework for Analysis of Challenges and Resilience



1.3 Limitations of the Study

The study had several limitations. First, not all sampled areas were accessed due to security concerns, flooding, and active conflict. Areas that were thus inaccessible included Khorof Harar and Diif (Somalia). In addition, during the data collection phase, there was active violent conflict between the Degodia and Ajuran clans. To overcome these challenges, the research team employed the services of security escorts to access unsecure areas.

CHAPTER 02

GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL SYSTEMS

2.0 Introduction

Good governance, good leadership, and inclusive political systems are among the foundations of a peaceful society. One of the greatest barriers to peace in Wajir County is the difficulty of institutional governance in a complex context of latent interclan rivalries. This study found that contestation over clan differences, disagreements over new community settlements, electoral and administrative boundaries, negative political influence, the perceived partiality of government officials, and perceptions of skewed allocation of devolved resources are key drivers of conflicts in the county, as discussed below.

2.1 Contestations over Electoral and Administrative Boundaries

The findings in this study reveal that contemporary boundary contestations are founded on colonial boundaries. Through its divide-and-rule tactic, the British colonial government exercised control by ensuring that communities not unite against its rule, tactically instilling entrenched rivalry and hatred. The colonial government limited clans in the north-eastern region to communal enclaves to thwart intermittent clan warfare. It also restricted the movement of people and livestock across international borders to reduce contact, only allowing them to share fluid borders through cross-border grazing and barter trade. These and similar border lines acted as a reference to guide communities for decades. The increase in the number of electoral constituencies from 117 in 1963 to 290 in 2020 established permanent boundary points that separated different clans. Nevertheless, communities still refer to the fluid boundaries created during colonial times, notwithstanding the changes that occurred in the post-colonial period, including a population surge, boundary delimitations, and constitutional amendments as averred to by a participant:

> *It seems electoral boundaries are a rebrand of colonial boundaries with no stringent measures to address conflicts. The consequence of which is unending cycles of interclan conflict.*[2]

This study established that several electoral constituencies in Wajir experience intermittent disputes over electoral boundaries. These constituencies include Eldas, Wajir North, Wajir West, Wajir South and Lagdera Constituency along the Wajir-Garissa County border. Some of the notable conflicts include the Degodia and Ajuran conflict of 1993; the conflicts between Eldas and Wajir North constituencies; between Wajir West and Wajir South constituencies; Wajir South and Lagdera in Garissa County; as well as Wajir West and Eldas Constituencies. Study participants acknowledged that these disputes are largely wrought by contestations over the lack of clearly defined community settlement boundaries, competition for scarce resources, undefined border lines, overlapping administrative and electoral boundaries, communal land closures, and the political desire to create advantageously predictable voting patterns.

According to the study participants, there is minimal public participation on boundary demarcations carried out by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, which they say mostly interacts with the county leadership with no substantial outreach to the grass roots. Even though some extent of public participation was sought in certain boundary demarcations, some respondents indicated a lack of validation.

Findings from this study indicate that political

2 Religious leader, Key informant interview, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.

elites play a key role in instigating and sustaining boundary disputes. It was evident that the local communities have limited understanding of boundary issues and depend on the interpretations offered by the elites and professionals. Politicians seeking popular support, as well as their business partners, are known to incite the local clans against each other, sometimes skewing information on boundaries to polarise the largely uninformed populations to conflict. Meanwhile, participants opined that politicians strongly influence government officers on boundary demarcations. This belief is heightened by the lack of clarity of the national government's position on demarcations.

2.2 Political and Elite Influence

It emerged during the research that political instigation is a key contributor to the conflict in Wajir County. Respondents decried the increasing influence of politics as a conflict driver to elite-driven competition for the control of devolved resources. With the coming of devolution, traditional contestations over scarce water and pasturelands in Wajir have increasingly mutated into clan competition for political dominance as a pathway towards a bigger piece of the resource cake. Respondents felt that heightened interclan competition for supremacy is fuelled by politicians and other elites with political and business interests. Politicians were also cited for habitually influencing the outcomes of local elections, mostly by inciting chaos and violence to disenfranchise their opponents' voting blocs. Even in campaigning, they tend to consolidate their voter bases by framing the rival clans as having "expansionist" and "encroachment" tendencies. The elite class also undermines peace processes by vouching for short-term cessations of conflict at the expense of long-term solutions, resulting in the relapse of violent conflict which favours their interests. In describing such local politicians, one elder said:

> *There are three groups of people: those who earn their livelihood through the pen, those who use crude equipment, and the propagandist. The modern politician oozes all these three traits.*[3]

2.3 Disputes over New Settlements

This study revealed that there is rapid mushrooming of settlements in Wajir County, precipitated by general population growth among all the clans. The creation of new settlements—although a centuries-old practice among Somalis—has increased with the advent of devolution, resulting in displacement and balkanisation. Part of the reason underpinning this trend is the lack of robust policies to guide the creation of settlements. The subsequent rapid expansion of settlements is accelerating the depletion of natural resources due to deforestation and human activity. There is also a lack of effective modalities for sharing county resources, thus the more settlements are created, the scarcer the resources become. This trend has seen resource feuds cascade down from the primary clan level to sub-clans and even to extended families from within the same subclan.

According to study participants, creation of new settlements occurs with the aim of increasing the quantity of resources allocated to each and for the purpose of competing with larger clans. This novel phenomenon has created a decentralisation of political presence—for instance by creating the capacity to elect local ward representatives that hail from minority clans—as a new strategy for obtaining additional resources. Some FGD participants stated that smaller clans tend to strategically transfer their kin and resettle them within newly created settlements, posing a problem for the larger clans by threatening to alter voting patterns. It was further noted that politicians have been on the front line of labelling new arrivals as "settlers" and inciting communities against each other, triggering violent clashes among the respective clans.

The rush to create settlements has negative implications beyond the obvious conflict it stirs up. For instance, shrinking grazing lands have generated protracted conflicts between herding and settled communities. The proliferation of schools with the new settlements, although a positive move, has been undermined by the conflicts. As one county administrator put it:

> *Creating these settlements might appear strategic in the clan calculus, but that is only for the immediate term. In the long run it impedes sustainable development. It creates more conflicts than benefits, and there are going to be less and less resources to be shared equitably if these settlements continue to mushroom.*[4]

3 Religious leader, Key informant interview, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.
4 Assistant County Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, Anoole, 12 September 2019.

2.4 Perceived Partiality of National Government Officials

Most respondents felt that both the national and county government have marginalised the county. Some FGD participants strongly believed that national government administrators deployed to Wajir were beholden to clan leaders and tended to favour their own clans rather than remain neutral. They blamed the security agencies for alleged inaction in managing violent conflict, as well as for being more lenient on militia groups as compared to terror suspects, while both groups caused security problems within the county to an equal extent.

> *The national government has neglected the region. It does not seem to care whether our people fight or not. It treats the region as if it is a part of Somalia. This selective inaction spreads mistrust. We are Kenyans who love and respect the government, but honestly, we are yet to feel the commitment…that the government truly cares for us.*[5]

FGD participants claimed the government's alleged failure to act has weakened its ability to resolve the rampant clan conflicts. Other participants argued that national government administrators were persistently under duress from local elected leaders, alleging that the leaders tended to organise the transfer or even demotion of non-compliant administrators. This, they suggested, rendered most administrators complacent to avoid being unfairly targeted by powerful local leaders. Participants also contended that such inaction could be the result of demoralisation within the ranks of security officers who perceive work placement in the north-eastern region as punishment due to the arid climate, hardship conditions, and lack of many basic services.

2.5 Lack of Equity in the Sharing of County Resources

To most of the participants, devolution is both a blessing and a curse. Devolution is lauded for bringing services and a reasonable fraction of resources from the national to the local level. Respondents alleged a lack of conflict sensitivity in the implementation of development projects. Many claimed that resources are not adequately distributed, and equitable development is not adequately factored into Wajir's County Integrated Development Plans (CIDP).[6] The CIDP has a five-year timeline, meaning that any point of contention will have long-term implications considering that clan competition is no longer just about pasture and water; capital resources are now the primary focus of competition. This evolution of the nature of resources has completely overhauled the conflict dynamics in Wajir, for instance further deepening the marginalisation of minority clans. Respondents noted that clans perceive all political posts as being relevant to their level of access to resources. From the County Governor, the Senator, and MPs, to the MCAs at the ward level, the occupation of each of these posts is expected to increase the channelling of resources to the clans.

Multiparty democracy brought open divisiveness to Kenya as ethnic groups competed for elective positions. Devolution has widened this competition, now for direct resources. The "It is our turn to eat" mentality has cascaded from Nairobi to us at the grass roots and minority clans are grossly marginalised.[7]

Participants however noted that the county government has recently acknowledged the skewed allocations in the CIDPs and has launched efforts to remedy the approach. According to the county administration, adherence to conflict sensitivity in the implementation of development projects is currently a work in progress. It remains to be seen if this will become evident in the coming years.[8]

5 Community Member, focus group discussion, Lakole, 13 September 2019.
6 The County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) is a plan prepared by each of Kenya's 47 counties to guide development over a five-year period. The Public Finance Management Act, 2012 precludes the appropriation of any public funds outside of the approved CIDP.
7 Community member, key informant interview, 4 September 2019.
8 Member of County Assembly, key informant interview, Wajir Town, 5 September 2019.

WAJIR PEACE BUILDING PROJECT
MAIN STAKEHOLDERS FORUM
VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER 03

MANIPULATION OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL SYSTEMS

3.0 Introduction

There is an inherent paradox in the concept of the clan within Somali culture. Much of the Somali population shares the same language, culture, and customs. Solidarity in kinship underpins family-clan relations, yet the concept of clan primordially offers itself as a rallying vehicle for conflict. As the renowned historian I. M. Lewis asserted in 1961:

> *The segmented clan system remains the bedrock foundation of the pastoral Somali society and "clannishness" - the primacy of clan interests - is its natural divisive reflection on the political level.*

This assertion finds credence in Wajir, where clan has become easily manipulable in the pursuit of power and control of county resources. This chapter presents the views of the research respondents on how the concept of identity has been instrumentalised within a largely homogenous ethnic community.

3.1 Cross-border Migration and Politicisation of Clan Identity

The outbreak of civil war in 1991 in neighbouring Somalia exacerbated clan rivalries in Wajir County. The influx of clans fleeing the war into Kenya escalated clan feuds as local clans sought to protect their kin from collective punishment, and shielded perpetrators of the war from prosecution. Migration and displacement resulting from the inflow of refugees from Somalia posed a new challenge for local political and socio-cultural systems. Claims of the transportation of voters and "settlers" from across the border in Somalia made many local communities feel threatened. In the words of one FGD participant:

> *Most of the current residents in some local communities are not the original inhabitants of the land. Many clans were invaded and consumed by more aggressive and assertive foreigners from across the borders.*[9]

People moving into Wajir from Somalia gain easy access to Kenyan identity cards through their relatives and assert what they see as their right to be stakeholders within the Kenyan branches of their respective clans.[10]

Somalia's civil war heightened clan and sub-clan supremacy contests, thereby transforming clans from structures of cohesion into hard-line formations for political gain.[11] In fact, one of the community elders observed as follows:

> *Intra-clan conflict was non-existent among the Ogaden before the civil war in Somalia forced clan members to cross the border and learn clan animosity.*[12]

The consequence of the resulting clan animosity and hatred has been the fragmentation of social relations that erodes the development of a common identity and sustainability of decades of interdependence.

9 Clan elder, focus group discussion, Fadhiweyne, 8 October 2019.
10 County Commissioner, key informant interview, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.
11 Community member, focus group discussion, Habaswein, 6 September 2019.
12 Ibid.

3.2 Drought, Migration, and Displacement

Heightened pastoral movements occur during the dry season, with nomads from Wajir County moving their animals as far as Isiolo and Marsabit Counties, and sometimes across the border into Somalia. These movements increase the scramble for scarce resources and friction over ideological differences induced by decades of civil war in Somalia.

There is also the legacy of displacements that occurred in the 1990s, when Kenyan politics suffered increased ethnic rivalries amid the escalation of the civil war in Somalia, which provoked vengeance among communities. Some of the notable displacements as mentioned by the study participants include Gunana, Bute, Ogorlale, Mansa, Harawa, and Burrmayu, among others.[13] Another contributing factor is the deliberate transportation of voters and settlers from other counties to boost clan numbers, especially during national censuses and elections, making the host communities feel threatened.

3.3 Negative Impact of Urbanisation

Traditional Somali societies have been characterised by an interconnected fabric of social relationships such as kinship, a shared Islamic faith, and largely pastoral economic livelihoods. Gradual urbanisation has brought a wave of cultural change, as rising numbers of former pastoralists settle into urban life. These new urban-dwelling populations have a more individualistic and materialist way of life, which runs contrary to traditional configurations. Manipulation of Somali customary law (*Xeer*)[14] has become commonplace, the traditional spirit of volunteerism for the common good is diminishing, and traditional peacebuilding structures are often decried as outdated. Capitalism has increased greed, and unorthodox methods in the competition for devolved resources and exacerbated by a constantly bulging population due to urbanisation and high birth rates. While this phenomenon does not directly trigger conflict, the new cultural undercurrents greatly impact community relations.[15] There is a considerable decrease in cultural and spiritual interaction within such urban communities, significantly weakening overall cohesion.

The existence of school dropouts among these new urbanites is another important challenge as they become streetwise and learn to make ends meet through connecting people and processes. Some of these former herders evolve into influential entrepreneurs and align themselves with political actors who facilitate access to government contracts and other economic favours. An elder in Ada Masajida clustered the emerging urban community into three categories: *Qaw kunool* (labourers who live by the sound of their machines); *Qalin kunool* (educated elites who earn a living using the pen) and *Qayli Kunool* (political brokers who wheedle out money by raising their voices on controversial issues).[16]

The manipulation of *maslah*, the traditional Somali system for solving disputes and conflicts, was also cited as a challenge to peace. Respondents alleged that the system is severely distorted, going as far as freeing murderers; this has normalised killings, causing retaliations and counter-attacks during clan clashes.[17]

13 Elder, focus group discussion, Fadhiweyne, 8 Sept 2019.
14 *Xeer* is an age-old social contract through which Somali clans mobilise resources to assist their kin in times of difficulty. In contemporary times, *Xeer* is often invoked negatively to mobilise clan militia and resources for violent conflict, as well as voter transfer from clan members in Somalia and Ethiopia to boost electoral prospects.
15 Community member, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 5 September 2019
16 Elder, focus group discussion, Ada Masajida, 6 September 2019
17 Focus group discussion with county officials, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.

3.4 Violence Against Women

The use of violence against women as a weapon of war was underscored during this study. Although women are in some cases known to perpetrate conflict by provoking their menfolk to wage war against the "other", it is they who ironically bear the brunt of violent conflict. Women experience rape, murder and are commonly subjected to early marriage. Sometimes false rumours are spread of a non-existent rape incident to instigate conflict. This is because in Somali culture, male clan members assume responsibility for the security of their womenfolk. Failure to protect their women is considered disgraceful. Clans intending to start a conflict use this concept to allege rape as a pretext for launching attacks.

The reported increase in cases of graft within the judicial, police and local administrative systems has impeded justice for women who have been violated. Study respondents held that perpetrators use both the police and government administrators to intimidate the victims' parents and buy their way out of trouble. One case to which participants referred was that of a convicted rapist who received a 25-year prison sentence but bought his way out of jail within a few months.[18]

Beyond such obvious criminal acts, female respondents cited a biased traditional justice system that disadvantages women. There are societal norms that have been guiding clans for centuries, benefiting men at the expense of women. Most communities in Wajir prefer the traditional justice system when handling abuses against women, including cases as serious as rape and murder. Due to a patriarchal society where women have no voice in decision making, many are disadvantaged at all levels. Economically, women have no wealth of their own; culturally, they do not inherit any wealth from their fathers. Instead, they principally depend on their husbands, fathers, or brothers for sustenance. A most troubling narrative involved the case of a widow who married a man without the approval of her family. The family wanted her to be inherited by her brother-in-law, as demanded by custom. When she married a different man of her choice, her own blood brother decapitated her, killing her and her unborn child.[19]

3.5 Drug and Substance Abuse

There is a secret trade in outlawed drugs, among them marijuana smuggled from across the border in Ethiopia, into Wajir County. Local communities frown upon the trade, which is mostly carried out by women under the guise of selling *khat*, a milder stimulant that is more acceptable on the Kenyan side. Respondents alleged that radical groups had taken advantage of the drug trade to radicalise unemployed youth. The radical groups are said to have developed systems and networks through which they accrue drug supplies and make them available to young people. The strategy consists in getting vulnerable youths addicted to the drugs and eventually trapped in a symbiotic relationship where they have no choice but to either become informers or active militants to sustain their addiction.[20]

3.6 Unemployment and the Youth Bulge

Wajir County has a large population of youth from poor backgrounds who can hardly access education. The quality of education in the county was affected following the massive flight of non-local teachers for fear of targeted killings by terrorist groups. The current state of the education sector does not prepare Wajir's youth for self-sufficient adulthood.

In general, school-going youth from Wajir and other parts of the North Eastern Province score poor results in national exams in comparison to the rest of the country. Most of those who sit their national exams fail to qualify for higher education, and with an economy that hugely depends on pastoralism, they are left with few prospects for success. Therefore, when these young people fall out of the education system, a gap is created in the proper transition into adulthood. Several participants attributed the high rate of unemployment among the youth to their vulnerability to exploitation by criminal groups. Some are recruited into criminal gangs, while others are used by the political class as fodder to drive clan militia and terrorism.

18 Female community member, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 4 October 2019.
19 Local administrator, focus group discussion, Diif, 6 October 2019.
20 Elder, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.

As a government official stated:

> *Terror groups recruit young people, including women, and pay them as little as $200 a month to fight alongside them or carry out suicide attacks. Those who escape the drag net of these organised groups resort to drug abuse to drown their sorrows and frustrations.*[21]

3.7 Marginalisation of Minority Clans

Clan supremacy is to a large extent sustained by poor leadership and injustices against marginalised communities. Job opportunities are divided among the larger, more assertive clans that dominate the decision-making table. In the words of two participants in an FGD with minority groups:

> *We are merely used as a tool to ascend to power. We do not have the numerical advantage to impact elections. When one does not get what rightly belongs to you, it breaks one psychologically.*[22]

> *Terror groups equally target minority groups because we are marginalised, our population is small and therefore we do not matter. State security operations are also more common at town centres, where minorities often live. We lack effective political representation, and our land plots are sold to the highest bidder. I am a member of my constituency's CDF Committee, but even then, I am never called to meetings. It is no wonder bursary applications from minorities are discarded despite my having submitted them to the constituency office.*[23]

21 Assistant County Commissioner, key informant interview, Griftu/Wagalla, 11 September 2019.
22 Minority youth representative, focus group discussion with minority groups, Wajir town 5 October 2019.
23 Minority women representative, focus group discussion with minority groups, Wajir town, 5 October 2019.

CHAPTER 04

SECURITY AND RULE OF LAW

4.0 Introduction

Decades of injustice, collective punishment, and intimidation by state security agencies have eroded the trust between the public and security agencies in Wajir and other parts of north-eastern Kenya. When violent extremism proliferated, insurgent groups instrumentalised this pre-existing mistrust to recruit community members, resulting in an unending circle of insecurity and mistrust. This chapter highlights the findings of the research on the topic of security and rule of law.

4.1 Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons

This study registered that there has been an easy inflow of illicit arms into Kenya and all the more so in border counties such as Wajir (Wepundi et al., 2012). A senior government official admitted that hundreds of thousands of firearms might be in civilian possession.[24] In Wajir County, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is linked to the collapse of the Somali Abo Liberation Front (SALF), a separatist rebel group that was supported by the government of Somalia in the 1970s. SALF comprised ethnic Oromo, Somali and Sidama fighters from Ethiopia, with the objective of obtaining self-rule during the 1977–1978 Ogaden War between Somalia and Ethiopia. SALF supported the invading Somali army (Hagmann, 2014). Following the end of the Ogaden War, many ethnic Somali SALF rebel fighters fled to Kenya to avoid retribution, bringing their guns with them (Matshanda, 2014).

The situation has been worsened by the porosity of the Kenya-Somalia border, which makes it easy for arms and ammunition to reach readily available markets. It has emerged that smugglers sneak in arms on the backs of livestock, *bodabodas* (motorcycle taxis) and on cargo trucks, particularly those that smuggle sugar and other foodstuffs from across the border in Somalia. Research participants expressed concern over the laxity of security agencies in addressing the influx of arms. Several instances of arms passing through security checkpoints were reported.

According to several FGD participants, certain politicians play a key role in facilitating the acquisition of weapons. There are also instances where herders purchase guns on their own in Somalia, particularly during the drought when they move a lot more in search of water and pasture.

24 Senior government officer, Wajir County

4.2 Historically Strained State-Society Relations

This study established that there is a strained relationship between the public and security agencies that is informed by historical occurrences. The breakdown of trust between the local population and security agencies began at independence, when the ethnic Somali population in the Northern Frontier District (NFD) overwhelmingly expressed their wish to secede into Somalia in a plebiscite organised by the outgoing British colonial administration. Kenya's newly independent government ignored the results of the vote, forcing the local population, which had endured 60 years of administrative isolation and political disenfranchisement as a closed district under British colonial rule (Matshanda, 2014), to declare a secessionist war. The disproportionate use of force by the government during the war led to mutual suspicion, whereby the public fear the security agencies, while the security agencies perceive the public to be sympathisers who hide and feed terrorists.[25] The net effect of this is a lack of information sharing by the public with the security agencies. There is also the problem of delayed information where sources relay information through intermediaries to remain anonymous for fear of their identity being revealed, which would make them targets for retribution by terrorist groups.

i. The Shifta War

The Shifta War was a secessionist conflict between 1963 and 1967 when the north-eastern region unsuccessfully attempted to secede from Kenya into Somalia (Karienye & Warfa, 2020). The government's response to the Shifta pressure was to move civilians in the affected areas into secured sites – a forced villagisation of a nomadic pastoralist community. Respondents felt that the community still suffers the brunt of the onslaught from the insurgency and the Kenyan security agents' counterinsurgency.

ii. The Wagalla Massacre

The 1984 Wagalla massacre occurred when Kenyan troops, deployed to quell a raging clan conflict in Wajir, rounded up about 5 000 ethnic Somali men from the Degodia clan, took them to an airstrip, and starved them of water and food for five days before executing them in what the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission of Kenya described as possibly the worst human rights violation in Kenya's history (TJRC, 2013). Approximately 500–1 000 men were murdered (Anderson, 2014). To date, participants are still waiting for a government apology for the atrocities meted out against them. According to one of them,

> *The government is yet to visit the scene of the massacre, let alone admit to the massacre or compensate us.*[26]

They say that so far, no perpetrators have been brought to justice, and no family has been compensated.

iii. Government Response to Terrorism

As already indicated, Wajir County suffers from major terror attacks from Al-Shabaab, which continues to recruit locals from the county. The use of tough approaches to fight terrorism in the county has generated grievances as communities have felt targeted. In fact, one FGD participant termed it "*Fighting terror with terror*".[27] Some of the harsh documented actions by security officers include the raiding of homes (including at night), compounds, business premises, and schools to arrest suspected Al-Shabaab supporters. As result, over 120 human rights violations have so far been documented, among them 25 extrajudicial killings and 81 forced disappearances (KNCHR, 2015).

All these factors have gradually nurtured a climate of mistrust between the public and the security agencies, as summarised in table 1.

25 Security officer, key informant interview, Kutulo, 9 October 2019.
26 Survivor of Wagalla massacre, FGD, Wagalla town, 5 October 2019.
27 Member of the county government, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.

Table 1: Misperceptions Between Citizens and Security Agencies

Misperceptions of the Public about Security Agencies	Misperceptions of the Security Agencies about the Public
• Security agencies are corrupt and sometimes leak identities of sources of information or brand them as suspects. • The security agents are outsiders who have minimal understanding of cultural and religious principles of the local community. • Security agents are transferred to Wajir as a punishment, so their commitment is questionable.	• Local community members are sympathisers of Al Shabaab • Local community members are hard-headed/ difficult to deal with • The local community segregates the security agents who do not share their culture and/or religion

4.3 Manipulation by Radical Groups

The menace of radicalisation and violent extremism in Wajir County and the broader North Eastern Province has been exacerbated by a change in recruitment tactics by terrorist organisations. Insurgents are progressively exploiting local populations by decrying communities' low standards of living in a context of misgovernance, systemic marginalisation, limited availability of economic opportunities, inequitable distribution of resources and, above all, human rights abuses such as the history of harassment by security agencies, collective punishment, historical massacres, enforced disappearances, and extrajudicial killings.

The historical legacy of strained state-society relations provides ready fodder for these radical groups. Reminders abound of the state violence and collective punishment meted out during the Shifta War, the Wagalla massacre, and the war against terror. According to FGD participants, terror groups exploit three key dynamics in radicalising individuals: (1) the low standard of living (2) the vulnerability of their communities, and (3) any negative impact of government actions and policies.[28] As one of participant alluded:

> *Terror groups craft beautiful narratives around past state actions that resulted in the Wagalla massacre, the Shifta War, and the government's harsh response to fight terror, to recruit new fighters.*[29]

This study laid bare a rise in radicalisation and violent extremism based on the increasing socio-economic vulnerability of the population and the change of recruitment tactics. A 2019 report by the Global Terrorism Database indicates that the absolute number, prevalence, and lethality of terrorist incidents has decreased around the world by 43% since its peak in 2014 (GTD, 2019). Despite this positive global outlook, radicalisation and violent extremist attacks remain a major challenge in Wajir County. Recent terror incidents perpetrated in Wajir by Al-Shabaab militants from Somalia include a 2019 passenger bus attack, when 10 non-locals were killed; a June 2019 IED attack on the road between Khorof Harar and Konton that killed 12 police officers; a 2018 attack on Qarsa primary school that left three people dead; as well as the more recent 2020 attack against the National Police Reserve base in Khorof Harar, resulting in six deaths, among others.

28 Youth representative, key informant interview, 5 October 2019.
29 Member of the county government, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 5 September 2019.

CHAPTER 05

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

5.0 Introduction

Growing pressure on diminishing water and land resources is a principal source of communal tension and clashes in Wajir County. This is attributed to agricultural expansion, the privatisation of water and other natural resources, and urban growth. Competition over the control of entry ports, airstrips, security checkpoints, and other resource access points are key conflict drivers. Commercial interests reinforce clan divisions in an effort to gain an advantage.

5.1 Persistent Drought and Famine

The study revealed that drought and famine exacerbate intercommunity conflict in the following ways.

5.1.1 Pastoral-Pastoral Conflict

The people of Wajir are predominantly pastoralists. The region faces a scarcity of natural resources and rains are erratic, making communities prone to competition. Drought forces clans to migrate from one place to another in search of water and pasture. This exerts pressure on the minimal resources as the host communities also have plans for their use. Nomadic pastoralists are very fluid in their adherence to grazing borders. They generally move towards areas with water and pasture, resulting in clan conflict, particularly between pastoralists and settled villagers.

5.1.2 Deforestation

While communities initially fought over water and pasture, climate change has brought with it new conflict triggers. There is a seemingly drastic change in the climate pattern that has led to worse droughts and more persistent famines. The depletion of forested areas and the commercial felling of trees continue to increase competition over scarce resources and conflict.

5.1.3 Vegetational difference

In the pastoral economy of Wajir, land is owned by the community. People have the freedom to graze their animals wherever they wish despite the existence of contemporary constituency boundaries. Differences in vegetational density in areas with boundary conflicts, notably Wajir North and Eldas sub-counties, have seen community clashes over pasturelands. Pastoral greed has led to a new trend whereby animals that cross into rival community grazing land are either taken as booty or shot dead. The underlying strategy is that of local communities preserving their pasturelands as much as possible while simultaneously encroaching into other communities' pasturelands.

Conflict during drought season is exacerbated by the worsening drought situation, in addition to the emergence of capitalism and materialism, which have eroded traditional cultural values of reciprocity where clans historically shared water and pasture resources.

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CHAPTER 06

RESILIENCE FACTORS

6.0 Introduction

Alongside the focus on the challenges to peace in Wajir County, there are resilience factors that bring the communities together and that can provide concrete foundations for sustainable peace. These resilience factors anchor on the commonalities that exist between the near-homogenous ethnic Somali communities living in Wajir. They include the largely nomadic lifestyle, a similar history of underdevelopment, and rootedness in the *Xeer* tradition, which compels Somali clans to mobilise resources to assist fellow kin in times of difficulty. This section looks at some of the prominent resilience factors that respondents identified among the communities in Wajir.

6.1 The Shared Islamic Faith

This study noted that the Islamic faith is a major connecting factor among the feuding communities of Wajir County. The Islamic faith has been present for approximately 14 centuries among Somalis in the Horn of Africa (Lewis, 1961). Peace is a central aspect of Islamic theology and society. Muslims are encouraged to strive for peace and peaceful solutions to all problems. The word "Islam" originates from the same root as the word "*Salaam*" ("peace"). The ideal society according to the Quran is described as *Dar as-Salam*, literally "the house of peace."

Wajir County has a ubiquity of mosques, which provide common points of worship and bring people together. In following with Islamic teachings, even parties in conflict still meet at the mosque and worship together, as this helps preserve the oneness of humanity and encourages people to pursue forgiveness and forge brotherhood. The Quran states that peace starts with the individual, then spreads towards others.[30] As such, understanding one's own soul is the beginning of the sustenance of societal peace. In this context, religious guidance is an important component in advancing the cause of peace in Wajir, which is a predominantly Muslim county.

Islamic identity can be seen among the population in various aspects, including their style of dress, local cuisine, and adherence to the prayers that form part of daily life. This implies that the desire to live peacefully is strong within the local population as they see themselves as one people, but this has been interfered with by contemporary challenges, most notably political and commercial calculations.

6.2 Common Ancestry

This study established that there is a strong bond holding the people of Wajir together amid the various challenges they face. The bond is premised on a common language, Cushitic ancestry, clan-based identity, similar historical and cultural events, a widespread adherence to Islam, and largely pastoralist livelihoods. These similarities have enabled the development of common cultural treaties between clans to deal with disputes, including those governing grazing rights, shared access to essential services like water, and judicial redress mechanisms, including for livestock theft and human killings.

30 Quran 10:25.

At the local community level, the clans have mitigated criminal and other major cases, including the loss of life, through the *Maslaha* reconciliation process. *Maslaha* is a form of alternative dispute resolution mostly used to resolve conflicts, based on finding consensus on an agreed solution that serves the public interest of the wider Muslim community. It is an important part of Islamic jurisprudence. Depending on which clan is a neighbour, is closely linked to, or has had past disputes with a certain clan, there are often mutual agreements between them to deal with various levels and forms of crime. These range from rape, physical fights with bodily harm, or loss of teeth, to death. Although many cases are resolved using a corrupted version of the Islamic penal code,[31] some clans have their own commonly agreed-upon reference terms to deal with judicial issues. The administration of these alternative dispute resolution mechanisms offers swift justice that has at times helped prevent retaliation or the escalation of conflict.

6.3 The National Government as a Unifying Factor

This study highlighted the presence of government administrative structures in Wajir County as a key unifying factor. National administrative agencies provide security, arbitrate clan conflicts, facilitate the delivery of education during conflicts, and ensure schools are well managed. Many respondents pointed out the role of the national government of Kenya as a unifying factor across the clans in Wajir. They cited the national flag, the Office of the County Commissioner, the security apparatus, and the education offices, all of which report to the national government in Nairobi, among non-partisan symbols of unity. Most respondents believe that if some of these essential functions were to be placed under the county leadership, they would fall under manipulation and clan partisanship. Although several challenges and the demeanour of the security institutions have led to a low level of public trust among the local population, they are also seen as a neutral conduit for non-partisan dialogue during internal clan conflict.

6.4 Shared Somali Culture

This study revealed that despite a history of strong clan rivalries, the local population shares a common language, culture, and other similarities. Wajir County is one of Kenya's few uniquely homogenous counties. The use of the Somali language is an important tool for local peacebuilding because when adversaries speak to each other in their shared language, chances of mutual understanding increase. Furthermore, the communities intermarry, and live in an extended family configuration, building on it to celebrate family unity and to resolve differences.

Essential pillars of *Xeer*, such as the concept of *Sabeen xir* (relaying pardon to a repentant conflict party) and *Wilaaya Qaad* (giving consent to a mediator or arbitrator) have always provided space for dialogues and reconciliations when invoked.[32] *Maslaha* (the traditional reconciliation process) provides unique mechanisms that reconcile conflicting parties.

Generally, the people are socially interconnected, as two FGD members said using traditional sayings:

> *"Dhalyo hadaay kala goi lahayd dhul ayaa kala goi lahaay (If relatives were to be permanently separated, the earth would permanently split). "*[33]

> *"Hal iyo candho caanaha kujiraa isma qoomaan (Just as the breast and its milk cannot be separated, so are the people)."* [34]

In one FGD, government chiefs related their experiences resolving conflict issues daily. As one government chief maintained:

> *"We cannot do without [the rival community], and they can do without us. It just happens that we are in a period of conflict. Our conflict is manageable, even when it scales to crisis, we still have unique ways of coming back to each other."*[35]

31 Religious leader, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 8 October 2019.
32 Religious leader, focus group discussion, Wajir town, 8 October 2019.
33 Participant, focus group discussion, Basir, 13 September 2019.
34 Griftu assistant county commissioner, Key informant interview, 11 September 2019.
35 Local government chief, Masalale North, 13 September 2019.

6.5 Existence of Local Peacebuilding Structures

This study highlighted that community resilience is reinforced by local peacebuilding structures. In Kenya, Wajir County is recognised as the home of vibrant local peacebuilding structures such as the Wajir Peace and Development Committee, established in 1995, whose commendable work spawned the creation of several other peace committees across the county. Other peace structures include the Al-Fatah Council of Elders, the Wajir's Women Association for Peace, youth associations, and several interfaith religious groups. However, the diminishing spirit of volunteerism for peace has reduced the impact of these groups on local peacebuilding. Several peacebuilding initiatives have been rendered irrelevant by a new trend of commercialised peacebuilding efforts. Certain unscrupulous "peace actors" are alleged to perpetuate conflict in order to secure funding for peacebuilding. Some have been accused of subjectivity in conflict resolution processes, compromising their credibility in the long run. Subsequently, communal contracts are routinely neglected, fomenting sustained grudges and vengeance among communities. The fact of their continued existence, however, reaffirms the possibility that locally led peacebuilding infrastructures can be revived and assisted to thrive.

6.6 The Role of Negotiated Democracy ahead of Elections

This study observed that negotiated democracy enhanced platforms for peaceful coexistence. In the 2013 and 2017 general elections, community consultations, dialogues among clan elders, and political leaders' engagements resulted in community agreements on the equitable representation of the various clans and communities. Nevertheless, negotiated democracy has been criticised for marginalising minority communities as the negotiated terms are not legally binding, allowing room for some politicians and clans to contravene them with impunity.

CHAPTER 07

CONCLUSION AND WAY FOWARD

7.0 Conclusion

The objective of this phase of the NCIC and Interpeace peacebuilding programme was to listen to the voices of the people of Wajir and to identify the impediments to peace in the county. This consultative phase, carried out using a participatory action research (PAR) approach, was designed to gain an in-depth understanding of the conflict from a grass roots perspective. Since it is the local populations that suffer most when violent conflicts erupt, it is they who are best placed to identify the key impediments to peace and the priority interventions for resolving the root causes of these recurrent conflicts. The PAR also went beyond the local population of Wajir and involved the views of the elites and community members living in Nairobi, key informants, and communities living along the county's international borders with Somalia and Ethiopia. A stakeholders' forum was held in Wajir town at the tail end of the research, gathering over 100 participants to validate the findings of the consultative phase of the PAR process and to collectively prioritise the identified challenges to peace in Wajir.

The next phase of the programme—similarly using the PAR approach—will focus on finding and implementing solutions to the impediments to peace identified during the consultative phase. NCIC and Interpeace will continue to facilitate the search for solutions to lasting peace in Wajir County, guided by the identified priorities and featuring the active participation of the local population.

7.1 Validation and Prioritisation of Interventions

The programme held a workshop to validate and prioritise the identified impediments to peace in Wajir County. The forum had the participation of 120 stakeholders, among them members of the local communities, key government officials from the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Security, the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, the National Police Service, the Kenya Defence Forces, Commissioners from the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, the Wajir County Commissioner, the county government of Wajir led by the governor, senator, constituency MPs, the women's representative, MCAs and CSOs operating in the county.

The participants were divided into four groups, taking into account diversity in terms of geography, clan dynamics, professions, representation from women, youth, people wih disabilities, and minority clans to discuss and prioritise key issues through extensive focus group discussions. The prioritisation was later tallied for easy prioritisation by order of urgency according to the participants. Figure 4 gives an overview of the process.

Table 2:The Validation and Prioritisation Process

	Day 1	A	B	C	D	Average	Priorities
	Issue: Leadership, governance and political systems						
1	Contestation over electoral and administrative boundaries	1	2	2	2	1.75	**1**
2	Mushrooming of settlements	3	5	5	5	4.50	5
3	Political and elitist incitement	2	3	1	4	2.50	3
4	Partiality of government officials	5	1	3	1	2.50	**2**
5	Devolution as a new trigger	4	6	6	6	5.50	6
6	Inequitable distribution of resources.	6	4	4	3	4.25	4

Where there was a tie between two issues, a vote by hand was done to break the tie.

	DAY 2: Issue 1	A	B	C	D	Average	Priority
	Issues: Manipulation of social and cultural issues						
1	Social fragmentation and politicisation of clan identity	2	1	1	4	2.00	**1**
2	Migration and displacement	3	4	5	2	3.50	4
3	Cultural changes and urbanisation	5	3	3	1	3.00	3
4	Weak peacebuilding infrastructures	1	2	2	5	2.50	**2**
5	Unemployment and the youth bulge	4	5	4	3	4.00	5

	DAY 2: Issue 2	A	B	C	D	Average	Priority
	Issues: Security and rule of law						
1	Past legacies of state violence and punitive punishments	1	2	1	4	2.00	**2**
2	Radicalisation and violent extremism	4	3	3	3	3.25	3
3	Weak relations between the public and security agencies	2	1	2	1	1.50	**1**
4	Proliferation of Small arms and light weapons	3	4	4	2	3.25	4

	Final prioritisation						
		A	B	C	D	Average	Priorities
	Issues						
1	Contestation over electoral and administrative boundaries	2	1	1	2	1.50	1
2	Partiality of government officials	1	4	2	1	2.00	2
3	Social fragmentation and politicization of clan identity	4	3	4	6	4.25	4
4	Weak Peace building infrastructure	6	5	3	4	4.50	5
5	Weak relations between the public and security agencies	3	2	6	3	3.50	3
6	Past legacies of state violence and punitive punishments	5	6	5	5	5.25	6

The prioritisation exercise eventually narrowed down to the following two priority areas to be addressed as the first step towards finding lasting peace in Wajir:

i. Contestation over electoral and administrative boundaries.

ii. Partiality of government officials.

Following the success of the prioritisation process, the stakeholders' forum nominated a working group to work comprising of 6 eminent community members with the NCIC and Interpeace peacebuilding team to further engage with the communities to find solutions to these top two priority challenges to peace. The remaining issues will be subsumed under the main two priority issues for programmatic engagement.

7.2 The Way Forward

i. Organisations, policy makers, and development partners investing in peace in the region should work towards addressing the highlighted challenges and reinforcing the resilience factors.

ii. Participants at the county stakeholder's forum nominated members to a working group and a steering committee that will lead the research on solutions to these impediments to peace and spearhead the advocacy for these solutions to be implemented (steering committee), accompanied and supported at all times by the programme's peacebuilding team.

iii. The joint NCIC and Interpeace peacebuilding programme in Wajir, whose ultimate goal is to achieve an effective, locally owned peacebuilding architecture for sustainable peace among the communities of Wajir, will continue to facilitate the search for solutions to peace. In line with the identified priorities and through the active participation of community members and other relevant stakeholders throughout the process, the key focus of the next phase will be to gather the recommendations for peace, as identified by the people of Wajir through participatory action research.

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