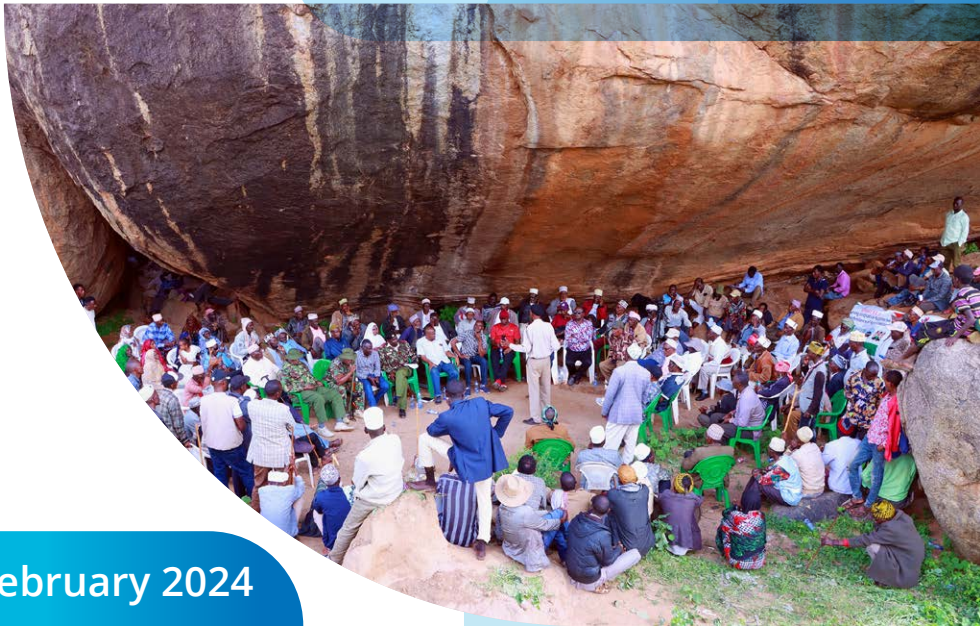




# Voices of the People: Impediments to Peace and Community Resilience in Marsabit County



February 2024

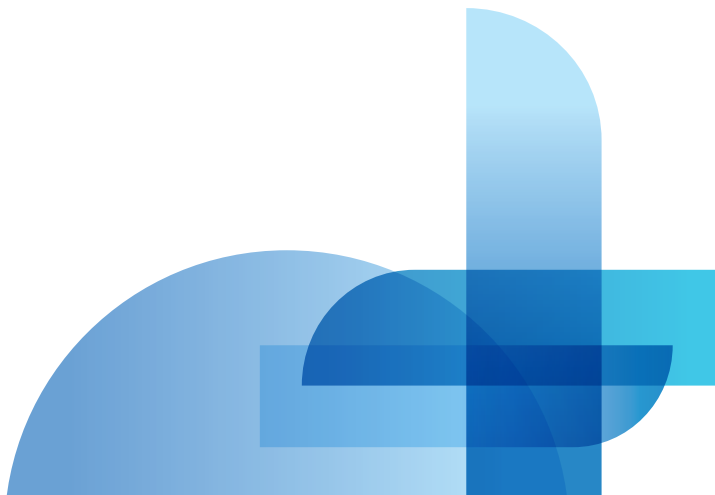




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February 2024






*Cover photo: Community members participate in a peace consultative meeting in Elle-Bor on 13th May 2023. Copyright: Interpeace 2023.*

*Back cover-Focus group discussion session in Elebor on 6th Dec 2022. Copyright: Interpeace, 2022.*

*This report has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and represents the views of the people of Marsabit and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the contributing partners or donors.*



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# Acknowledgements

This research was a consultative effort that engaged various stakeholders, including government officials, civil society representatives, media professionals, and local communities, to share their perspectives and experiences on the factors fueling conflict and violence on the one hand and community resilience on the other. This research aimed to provide an evidence-based and participatory analysis of the current peacebuilding situation in Marsabit County. Ultimately, it yielded comprehensive and insightful findings intended to serve as a valuable resource for Interpeace and other actors working towards promoting peace, security, and development in the region. This report would not have come to fruition without the contributions of several people who each played a significant role.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the dedicated research team: Tarri Guyo, David Narokwe, Eshow Kokoi, Gumato Denge, Peris Lopode, Muhidin Ibrahim, Joseph Guyo, Hibo Hussein, and Abdirizak Omar. Despite challenging circumstances, such as insecurity incidents and difficult terrain, they persevered in engaging with local communities. We also express gratitude to all the participants, communities, and partners who supported the completion of this work. Special recognition goes to Governor H.E. Hon. Mohamud Ali and the entire leadership of Marsabit County for their commitment. By seconding three staff members to the programme, they significantly impacted both the programme and the study process. We also acknowledge the collaboration of the County Commissioner of Marsabit, the Marsabit Inter-faith Council (MIC), the Marsabit Conflict Monitoring Committee (CMCs), and the Inter-Village Dialogue Space Committees (IVDSCs). Additionally, we appreciate the openness and willingness of religious leaders, elders, youths, women, and other community members to participate. They showed us their resilience, diversity, and potential as agents of positive change, inspiring us with their stories, hopes, and visions for a peaceful and prosperous future. This research is dedicated to them.

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Finally, the success of this programme was anchored in financial support from the European Union (EU) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). We sincerely thank these partners, both on behalf of the programme team and the people of Marsabit.

While it is not possible to mention everyone in this acknowledgment, we extend our gratitude to all who contributed to making this programme a reality. Thank you for your collaboration and commitment to peace.

**Hassan Omar**  
*Team Leader,*  
*Marsabit Peacebuilding Programme*

# Foreword

I begin by expressing my gratitude to the people of Marsabit County for maintaining calm, which facilitated the research process. This report represents the outcome of a consultative research effort aimed at allowing the community to articulate their challenges related to peace, as well as the factors contributing to their resilience in the face of endemic conflict. It is firmly rooted in the understanding that the responsibility and power to build and protect peace within the county rest squarely in the hands of Marsabit's people and its leadership.

Previous peace initiatives have predominantly followed a top-down approach, often focusing on containment rather than transformation of the underlying relationships that fuel violence. The repeated breakdown of agreements and ceasefires underscored the need for a fresh, participatory approach—one that would foster greater community investment in peace and align conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts with specific local needs.

Given Marsabit's unique experiences of fragility, it becomes imperative to construct more inclusive and sustainable peace structures. Sustainable development hinges on peace, and for peace to endure, Marsabit County must fully leverage the resources made available through devolution. By doing so, it can enhance the social and economic well-being of its citizens. This call extends beyond Marsabit County; Kenya's vulnerability to conflict could be significantly reduced if the National Government prioritizes investments in peacebuilding and conflict prevention in collaboration with the devolved counties.

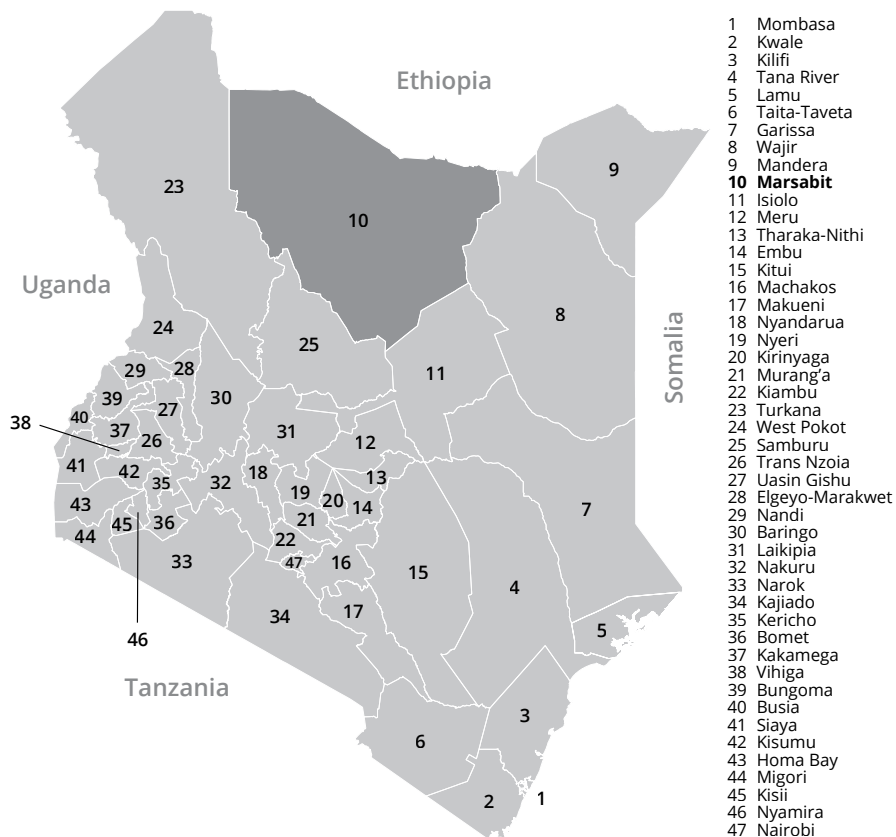
The findings presented in this report will inform programming, policy formulation, planning, and targeted investments by county governments, the national government, civil society organisations (CSOs), and other development partners. It would be highly fulfilling if the lessons learned from Marsabit County could be incorporated into peace interventions implemented not only in other Kenyan counties but also beyond.

**Hassan Ismail Mohamed**  
*Country Representative,  
Interpeace- Kenya*

# ■ Abbreviations

<b>ASTU</b>	Anti-Stock Theft Unit
<b>BPU</b>	Border Patrol Unit
<b>CDF</b>	Constituency Development Funds
<b>DCC</b>	Deputy County Commissioner
<b>DPC</b>	District Peace Committee
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>GOK</b>	Government of Kenya
<b>GSU</b>	General Service Unit
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>IEBC</b>	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
<b>KDF</b>	Kenya Defence Forces
<b>KII</b>	Key Informant Interview
<b>KNUT</b>	Kenya National Union of Teachers
<b>MCA</b>	Member of County Assembly
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NCIC</b>	National Cohesion Integration Commission
<b>NFD</b>	Northern Frontier District
<b>NPR</b>	National Police Reservists
<b>NPS</b>	National Police Service
<b>PAR</b>	Participatory Action Research
<b>PWDs</b>	Persons Living with Disabilities
<b>QRU</b>	Quick Response Unit
<b>RDU</b>	Rapid Deployment Unit
<b>REGABU</b>	Rendille, Gabbra and Burji
<b>SALW</b>	Small Arms and Light Weapons

**Figure 1: Location of Marsabit County in Kenya. Author: Kimemia Maina**



# Executive Summary

Violence has persisted in Marsabit for more than three decades. This study asked what communities considered to be both the current drivers of conflict, and opportunities for peace as part of the wider Marsabit Peacebuilding Programme, which employs Participatory Action Research (PAR) to collectively identify and transform conflict dynamics. The programme integrates grassroots aspirations for peace, leveraging local capacities while establishing a strategic link with decision makers at the County and national level to root changes in better governmental policies and practices.

The research observed a state of volatility. Competition over territories and diminishing natural resources has fueled ethnic and political conflicts within Marsabit County. This has long involved the damaging practice of cattle raiding, but violence has found its way to urban centres, as well. The situation is aggravated by the ethno-politicisation of both local conflict dynamics and wider governance structures, whereby public resources and services are overwhelmingly allocated along ethnic lines. Elections become zero-sum events, with serious material consequences for the losing side due to the allocation of public resources along ethnic lines.

Circumstances are made more volatile by the porous border with neighbouring Ethiopia. Marsabit has seen a spate of banditry, smuggling of people, livestock, and contraband, and a steady influx of small arms. Border forces struggle to contain these flows, or else are suspected of at times being complicit, with extortion and bribery commonly reported. As these drivers stoke violence in the region, people feel that the police responses are wanting. Marsabit County is vast, infrastructure is poor, and police capacity thin, leaving people vulnerable to cattle raiding, banditry, and petty theft.

A stakeholders validation forum was held that prioritised five issues which they saw as the most critical impediments to peace in their county:

- **Ethnicisation of politics and governance.**
- **Access to land and natural resources.**
- **Social fragmentation.**
- **Cross-border dynamics; and**
- **Security threats.**

Faced with these threats, they also identified four main sources of resilience that have helped communities in Marsabit cope. These includes **Common cultural, social, and economic ties; Community driven peace agreements; Local peace and resource management structures; and Consistent political will in support of peace agreements and infrastructures.** The end of the research marks the beginning of working to facilitate the quest for homegrown and workable solutions to the impediments identified and to build on these important sources of resilience.



*Focus group discussion during participatory action research held in Illaut, laisamis subcounty on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023. Copyright: Interpeace, 2023*

# 1. Introduction to Marsabit

## 1.1 County context

The conflict in Marsabit County has a particular context and history, with specific environmental, physical, and socio-economic characteristics. It was named Marsabit County by the 2010 Constitution, which introduced a devolved system of governance from the national government to 47 devolved County governments across Kenya.

### Geographic location and topography

Marsabit County is in northern Kenya. It shares an international border of over 500 km with Ethiopia to the North. Within Kenya it borders Wajir County to the east, Isiolo County to the south, Samburu County to the southwest and Turkana County to the west. Marsabit County has a surface area of 66 923 km<sup>2</sup> and is composed of four sub-counties: Laisamis; Moyale; North Horr; and Saku.

The four sub-counties are further divided into 20 electoral wards. The County's political capital is a town also called Marsabit, although the biggest town in the County is Moyale by population. The County lies on a plain, between altitudes of 300 and 900 metres above sea level. To the west of Marsabit County is Lake Turkana. The major topographical features are:

- Mount Kulal in the northwest (2235 m)
- Hurri Hills in the northeast (1685 m)
- Mountains around the Sololo-Moyale escarpment in the northeast (up to 1400 m)
- Mount Marsabit in the centre (1865 m)
- Ol Donyo mountain range in the southwest (2000 m)

Most of the central areas of Marsabit County are covered by the Chalbi Desert. The climate in the County comprises arid and semi-arid conditions, with an average temperature ranging between 15 and 26°C, and an annual rainfall between 200 and 1000 mm (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, 2017).

## Economy

Marsabit covers 12% of Kenya's land mass and accounts for 0.62% of Kenya's gross domestic product (CRA, 2022). About 70% of Kenya's national livestock production comes from ASAL Counties including Marsabit, Turkana, and Isiolo (Government of Kenya, 2019). Indeed, livestock production is the County's main economic activity, with 90% of communities being dependent on animal husbandry (Whittaker, 2012 & Kumssa et. al. 2011). The Gabbra and Rendille communities herd camels, cattle, goats, and sheep, while the Borana and Samburu herd cattle.

Marsabit County is a popular location for regional cross-border trade. Goods and services are supplied in and move through Moyale, a market town on the border between Kenya and Ethiopia about 595 km from Nairobi and 675 km from Addis Ababa. The town is split between the two countries. The larger portion is in Ethiopia (in the Oromia region) and the smaller in Kenya (the capital of the Moyale sub-county within Marsabit County). It is a busy market for both informal and formal trade of food and livestock. The main items featured in cross-border trade are maize, beans, soya, wheat grains, mung beans (also known as "green grams"), rice, flour, cattle, goats, and camels.

The sub-county Saku has a forest that provides arable land for cultivation and farming (Famine Early Warning Systems Network, 2011). People farm maize, beans, wheat, pulses, fruits, and *miraa* (Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, 2017). Other economic activities include beekeeping, sand harvesting, and mining. Livestock and associated products are mainly traded from Ethiopia to Kenya, while most foods such are traded the other way, from Kenya to Ethiopia (Brenton and Edjigu, 2021) through cross-border markets at Moyale, Sessi, Arbale, Somare, and Lammi.

## Demography

The 2019 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2019) estimated 459,785 people lived in Marsabit County, of which 53% were men and 47% were women. There were 77,495 households, with an average household size of 5.8 individuals per household and a population density of 6 people/km<sup>2</sup>. About half (47%) of Marsabit's population is made up of children below 14 years of age. This is due to high fertility rates among women, as illustrated by the most frequent household size being 4-6 members (41%) (Sivi, 2013).

Only 6% of Marsabit County residents have a secondary level of education or above, 26% have primary-level education only and 68% have no formal education.



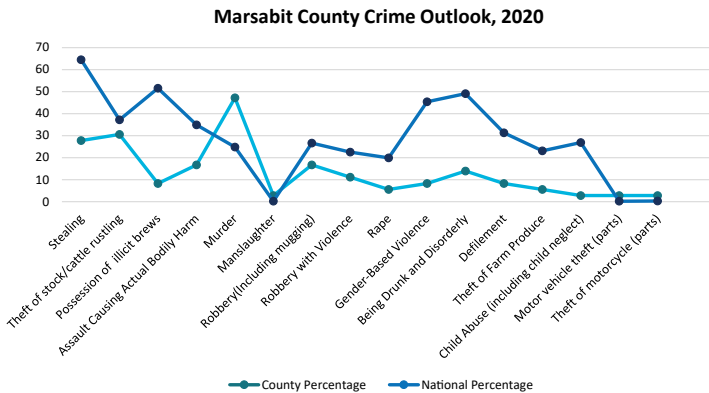
Saku sub-county has the highest share of residents with a secondary level of education or above, at 12%. This is four times the rate found in North Horr sub-county, which has the lowest share of residents with a secondary level of education or above (KNBS, 2019).

Some 14 ethnic groups make up most the County's population: the Gabra, Rendille, Borana, Samburu, Turkana, Burji, Dassanech, Wayu, Garre, Sakuye, El Molo, Konso, Muungano<sup>1</sup> and Somali (Isiolo Gender Watch and Minority Rights Group International 2021).

Marsabit County's absolute poverty level is 63.7%, which is approximately double the national rate of 34.4%.<sup>2</sup> The County has low education levels, with large numbers of out-of-school youths. Only 44% of those in Marsabit County can read and write, compared with a national literacy rate of 82.62% as of 2021.

## 1.2 Conflict context

The nature of conflict in Marsabit has changed over the years. Food insecurity is high, while personal safety is low (UN-HABITAT, 2019). Figure 2 shows the frequency of different types of crime that took place in Marsabit County and Kenya in 2020: notably, murder and manslaughter are above the national average.



**Figure 2: Proportion of particular crimes in Marsabit County and Kenya (National Crime Research Centre, 2020)**

- 1 This word refers to all other Kenyan communities living in the County including Meru, Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, etc.
- 2 Describes the condition where one cannot afford the minimum income to acquire basic needs.

The Marsabit region suffers from frequent droughts. These episodes fuel intense competition over already-scarce natural resources, making access to and control over these resources a key survival strategy for pastoralists and their herds. Sometimes, even the slightest contact between groups can trigger violent conflict.

Conflicts in Marsabit County date back to the postcolonial state being established in Kenya (Malicha, 2021). The Kenya-Ethiopia border established by the British colonialists disrupted traditional grazing patterns and resource sharing, and affected how communities relate to each other. Conflicts have since arisen between communities living within the County, as well as between those living across County and international borders.

Additionally, Marsabit was at the centre of political opposition to secession in the Northern Frontier District. It was home to the Northern Province United Association, which united Marsabit-based Borana, Burji and Gabra in a campaign against secession to safeguard their minority interests, particularly their control over local trade, at the expense of the more populous Somalis. The subsequent marginalisation of Somali families within Marsabit town during the 1963 Shifta conflict, which included a general boycott of Somali shops and a refusal to sell them milk, enabled Burji, Borana and Gabra individuals to enter the livestock and retail trade (Whittaker, 2012).

Even though citizens from Marsabit did not actively participate in the Shifta war, Borana groups from Ethiopia moved through northern Kenya during the conflict, raiding the Rendille in Marsabit County as they did (Whittaker, 2012). The Gabra and Rendille competed for territory in this area, meaning the Gabra joined with the Ethiopian Borana during these raids. This began cycles of raids between the Gabra and Rendille that persist.

Meanwhile, in the Ilemi Triangle, Turkana and Daasanech communities have long fought. Although the triangle does not fall within Marsabit County, what happens there aggravates wider conflict dynamics. Since the mid-1980s, recurrent drought in the triangle and dwindling water levels in Lake Turkana have led to the forced adoption of diverse livelihoods. This in turn has transformed cattle-raiding conflicts into new competitions over, fishing and other natural resources. In addition, the commercialisation of cattle rustling has forced vulnerable groups to acquire arms for defence (Aurah, 2018).

The rivalry between the Borana and the Gabra dates to the early post-independence period, with several reported episodes of conflict regarding resources, territorial claims, cattle rustling, and control of Marsabit politics. Violence broke out again in 1988 following the division of the previous Marsabit district into two con-

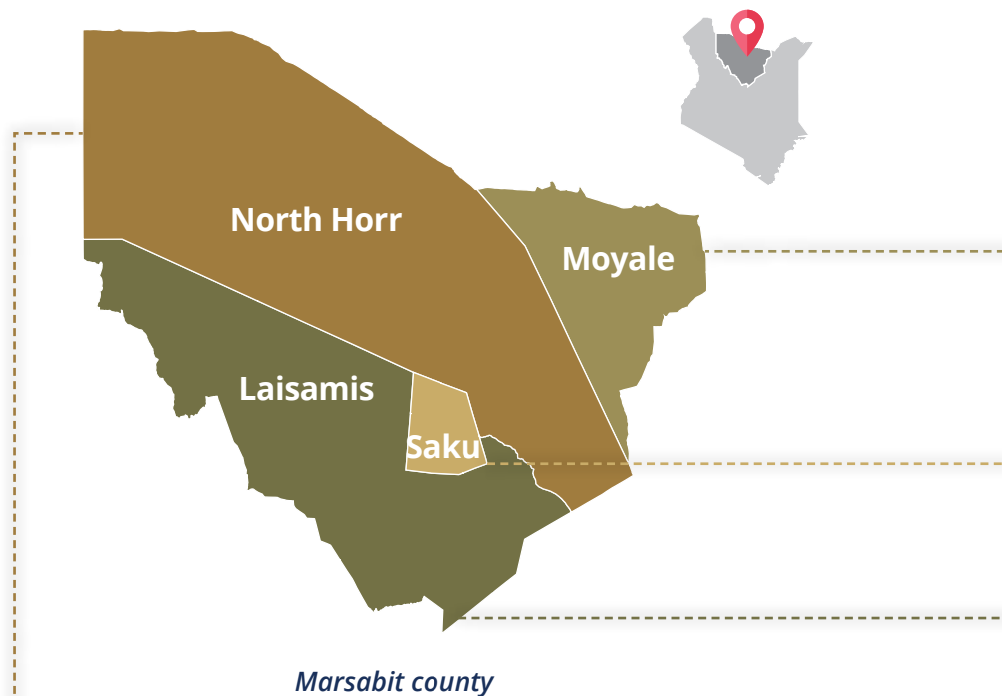
stituencies, Saku and North Horr, which, instead of ending hostilities, led to more contestation, with each community accusing the other of pursuing expansionism. Tensions simmered for a generation until a Gabra man was killed in Turbi in 2002. In retaliation, the Gabra raided the Borana and stole at least 700 goats. A dialogue based on the Modogashe Declaration provisions was established to restore justice. The provisions required the Borana to pay 100 goats for the killing of the man and the Gabra to pay 2100 goats, three times the number of goats stolen, but the two communities did not reach consensus. In May 2005, a peace agreement was finally reached, but it lasted only a week before Ethiopian Boranas were killed near the Kenyan border. In retaliation, Boranas attacked Gabra villages in Kenya and stole animals. A revenge attack by the Gabra saw them steal a Borana herd in Saku, with a Borana chief and a police reservist killed in pursuit of the animals. The situation escalated in July 2005 with the Turbi and Bubisa Massacres, where 95 people (23 of whom were children) were killed over two days, and 6200 displaced (Mwangi, 2006).

In April 2006, a military plane flying delegates to a peace meeting in Marsabit town crashed, killing 14 passengers and scuppering the chances of a lasting agreement. Following years of subsequent low-level cycles of violence, war broke out between the two communities in Moyale in January 2014. These conflicts have caused considerable loss of life, displacement, and damage to property in Marsabit. As of 2019, 115,182 live in IDP camps where they can suffer from starvation, epidemics, rape, assault, prostitution, and child labour (Pragya, 2021). Inadequate protection, relief, and peacebuilding measures/interventions have disproportionate effects on children and women, impairing development and causing lasting psychosocial trauma. Conflict management is made more difficult due to the remoteness of parts of the County that lack state security support at a time when the influence of traditional governance systems is felt to be diminishing (Ibid).



*Borana and Gabra herders hold hands as sign of agreement to pasture and water at Haro Girisa on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Copyright: Interpeace, 2023*

# Conflict Hotspots



## North Horr

### Dukana

*El-Hadi  
Forole  
Sarru  
Buluk  
Sabare*

### Ileret

*Elmasich  
Aibete  
Elbokoch  
Dura  
Guomude  
Lomadang  
Il Gele  
Ilolo*

### North Horr

*Qorka  
Darade  
Elbeso  
Malabot  
Sibilo  
Galas  
El Muda  
El Gufu  
Barambate  
Sarimo  
Chariashe*

### Turbi

*Demo  
Idhidho  
Burgabo  
Mudhe  
Horonder  
Shurr*

### Maikona

*Gamura  
Basbalesa  
Booji  
Medato  
Kurawa  
Olom  
Kutur  
Ilman Gura  
Balesbura*

## Moyale

### Uran

*Funan  
Qumbi  
Funan itha  
Walda  
Rawana  
Elle Bor  
Elle Dimtu*

### Obbu

*Amballo  
Badanrero*

### Golbo

*Dabel  
Qoloba*

### Butiye

*Laqi  
Antut*

## Saku

### Karare

*Songa  
Leyai  
Kituruni  
Karare  
Parkishon  
Lpus  
Midrock  
Hulahula*

### Badasa

*Dogogicha  
Wako Jaldesa  
Gabra  
Scheme  
Sales Waqo  
Isacko Umuro  
Konso  
Banchale*

### Jaldesa

*Sagante  
Dokatu  
Manyatta Jillo  
Adhi Huka  
Kubi Qalo  
Gof Choba  
Haro Girisa  
Qilta Korma*

### Central

*Bank  
Quarters  
Milima Tatu  
Majengo  
Manyatta  
Ginda  
Karantina  
Marsabit  
Forest  
Shegel*

## Laisamis

### Kargi/ South Horr

*Kurkum  
Yel  
Malab  
Hasse  
Kargi  
Kambinye  
Urup  
Uruwen  
Anderi  
Ntaletiani*

### Loiyangalani

*Gas  
Dakaiye  
Purapul  
Kabeen  
Moite  
Gatab  
Civicon  
Larachi  
Sarima  
Arapal  
Olturot  
Nkororoi*

### Korr/ Ngurnit

*Ilaut  
Ngurnit  
Lengima  
Mpagas  
Sarai*

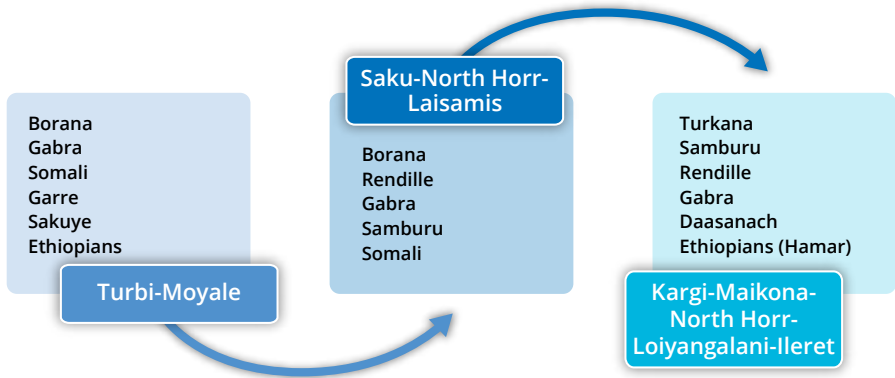
### Loglogo

*Salamate  
Gudhas  
Sori Adi  
Kamboe*

### Laisamis

*Koya  
Koom  
Sere Elbarua  
Thurusi*

The conflict hotspots form a belt pattern. Each belt witnessed violence between certain ethnic communities, as shown in Figure 7.



**Figure 7: Conflict belts in Marsabit County**



*A focus group discussion held in Manyatta Jillo during PAR on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023, Copyright: Interpeace, 2022.*

The geographic locations were also said to face conflicts between certain ethnic communities as highlighted in Table 1.

**Table 1: Conflict actors in various locations within the conflict context**

	Location	Conflict actors
1	North Horr	Gabra-Turkana
		Daasanach-Gabra
2	North Horr-Ethiopia	Borana-Gabra
3	Moyale-Ethiopia	Garre-Borana
4	Moyale-Wajir County	Borana-Degodia
		Borana-Gare
5	Moyale-Mandera County	Borana-Degodia
		Gabra-Borana
6	Saku	Rendille-Borana
		Borana-Rendille
7	Laisamis	Gabra-Rendille
		Rendille-Turkana



Focus group discussion for women only in Merile on 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2023. Copyright: Interpeace, 2023





**2012**

Borana, Rendille, Gabra and Burji;  
Political competition necessitating  
formation of Rendille, Gabra  
and Burji REGABU outfit

**2016 - 2020**

Humans and Wildlife; 600 cases  
processed by the County Wildlife  
Conservation and Compensation  
Committee (CWCCC).

Borana and Gabra; Moyale conflict;  
Heavy fighting led the Kenya Defence  
Forces to employ air power. 23  
people killed, 100 homes destroyed  
and 8,521 households displaced.

**2013/14**

Gabra and Borana; Politically  
instigated ethnic territorial  
expansion. Over 40 people  
killed, schools and livelihoods  
destroyed.

**2018 - 2022**

**2000**

Rendille, Gabra and Borana;  
livestock theft, mass  
displacements, injuries and  
loss of lives.

**2005**

Gabra and Borana; Turbi  
massacre with massive loss of  
lives; cattle theft; revenge  
attacks

Borana and Rendille;  
Livestock theft,  
mass displacements,  
injuries and loss of lives.

**2001 - 2003**

Turkana and Daasanach;  
competition for fishing rights;  
lose to human life and  
destruction of property

**2008 - 2009**

## 2. Research Objectives and Methodology

In 2021, at the invitation of the Peace Directorate of Marsabit County, Interpeace and NCIC conducted a rapid conflict assessment of the root causes of violent conflicts between Borana, Gabra and Rendille communities. It also examined why previous peacebuilding efforts had failed to bring sustainable peace and provided recommendations for more effective activities. That research suggested there was a danger of conflict escalation, with hate speech and rumour-mongering prevalent ahead of the upcoming election. Communal militias were forming and there were almost daily incidents of violence and killings. Researchers warned that if nothing were to happen soon, ethnic cleansing could follow, and the NCIC rated the risk for open violence in Marsabit during the 2022 general election as high (NCIC, 2022).

Interpeace and the NCIC used the recommendations in that report to urge action by the Government of Kenya and donors to conduct Participatory Action Research (PAR) on both impediments to peace and resilience factors. PAR is a deliberative and inclusive approach that helps conflict-affected communities, government actors, CSOs and professionals reach consensus on what the priority issues need to be addressed, and which resilience factors need to be enhanced to ensure sustainable peace.

### 2.1 Research objectives

---

This research sought to:

- Investigate the challenges to peace in Marsabit County
- Document the sources of resilience for local communities within Marsabit County
- Provide a platform for the communities to build consensus on the impediment to peace to resolve their own conflicts.
- Amplify the voices of the people on issues of peace and security by increasing participation and local ownership.

## 2.2 Methodology

The study was conducted using a PAR approach, which seeks a collective diagnosis of problems. The aim is not to establish “one truth,” but to carry out widespread consultation and incorporate as many viewpoints and perspectives as possible from those affected by conflict. Focus group discussions and key-informant interviews were used to investigate two fundamental questions: *What are the challenges to peace in Marsabit County?* And *what is preventing the situation from getting worse?* The study used multistage sampling to cluster communities and collect samples from all the four sub-counties. Research participants within the identified areas were then selected using purposive sampling. The study included 28 FGDs, reaching 577 research participants (349 men and 228 women), and 21 key informant interviews with political leaders, women, administrators (national and County), youth representatives, religious leaders, elders, and local leaders. Informants were selected based on their understanding of the conflict situation in the County.

**Table 2: FGDs carried out in Marsabit County**

Location	FGDs	Participants	Male		Female	
			18-35	Above 35	18-35	Above 35
North Horr (Ileret, North Horr town, Dukana and Shurr)	4	72	18	32	8	14
Laisamis (Loglogo, Koya, Ilaut, Sarima and Gatab)	5	100	30	29	18	23
Moyale (Township, Heilu, Dabel, Badanarero and Elle Bor)	5	123	28	67	5	23
Saku (Shegel, Manyatta Jillo, Dakabaricha, Songa, Badasa, Jaldesa, including people living with disability)	7	140	15	78	24	23
Women only FGDs in Marsabit county (Moyale, Merille, Turbi & Saku)	4	79	0	0	30	49
Youth only FGDs in Marsabit county (Saku, and Moyale)	2	43	40	3	0	0
Minority tribes/clans in Marsabit county (Sarima)	1	20	4	5	8	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>135</b>



*A group photo of inter Gabra, Borana and Rendile meeting after signing an agreement on cessation of hostilities on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2023 in Marsabit. Copyright: Interpeace, 2023*

21 key informants were also engaged. These included political leaders, women, administrators (national and county), youth representatives, religious leaders, elders, and local leaders, among others. They were all selected based on their understanding of the conflict situation in the county.

## 2.3 Limitations

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This study was hampered by the vastness of the County, where poor roads, particularly in the Chalbi desert, meant long driving hours. Patchy network coverage also prevented the team from contacting a small number of the previously selected key informants. Nevertheless, the research team reached a satisfactory representation of all the identified ethnic, age, and gender groups.

## 3. Drivers of Fragility

This chapter highlights the five main drivers of conflict in Marsabit County as identified during the research and prioritised by stakeholder during the validation process:

- Ethnicisation of politics and governance
- Access to land and natural resources
- Social fragmentation
- Cross-border dynamics
- Security threats

### 3.1 Ethnicisation of Politics and Governance

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Conflict in Marsabit County has always played out along ethnic lines. Participants in this study revealed that the people of Marsabit perceive everything through the lens of ethnicity. An “us-versus-them” mentality is so deeply entrenched that it has reshaped the way history is told – altering, among other things, who is reported to belong or not belong in certain areas.

Social fragmentation is exacerbated by the politicisation and radicalisation of people’s ethnic identities. The ethnicisation of politics is both a cause and consequence of years of fragility, linking to inequitable public services, electoral violence, and ethnic conflict driven by hate speech, corruption, and criminality. The Borana believe that Saku sub-county should be theirs alone; the Gabra believe that North Horr should be exclusively Gabra. Ethno-politicisation has created the feeling that communities face an existential threat. People express fear that they will be forcibly removed from their lands, and at the same time spread narratives that justify the forced removal of other ethnic groups from certain areas (Interpeace, 2022).



**Figure 9: Factors contributing to ethnicisation of politics and governance in Marsabit County**

### 3.1.1 Inequitable distribution of public services

Public services are perceived to be distributed on an ethnic basis, meaning that voting decisions are heavily influenced by one's identity rather than political manifestos, with every community wanting someone from their tribe to be governor.<sup>3</sup> Respondents felt that politicians provide more services in areas where their own communities are located, meaning other constituents receive unequal opportunities when it comes to jobs, education, infrastructure, and other projects falling under County and National government jurisdiction.<sup>4</sup> Some communities seem to enjoy better access to resources at the County level when they also have a Member sitting in the National Assembly.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Female FGD participant at Loglogo, 31 December 2022.

<sup>4</sup> FGD participant at Songa, 29 December 2022.

<sup>5</sup> FGD participant at Illeret, 10 December 2022.

This is not new or confined to Marsabit – every Kenyan President since independence has directed public resource towards their own ethnic bases (Hassan 2020). But national practices are now mirrored at the County level, with political leadership favouring ethnic groups from whom they need support while overlooking groups associated with their political opposition (Omondi et. al. 2019). Feelings of inequality and exclusion are growing in Marsabit County, where devolution has brought division and discrimination down to the clan level, each of which wants their fair share of services.<sup>6</sup>

### 3.1.2 Ethnicisation of the perceived benefits of natural resource investments

Some respondents perceived natural resource investments only benefited certain communities. A wind power project in Gatab (Loiyangalani ward), for example, became a source of contention when it ought to have been leveraged as a source of shared productivity and development. Disagreements over its placement and the jobs it creates have led to heightened tensions between different ethnic groups.<sup>7</sup> It also highlights the hub and spoke divide in Kenyan power relations and politics, whereby the wind power project in Marsabit contributes significantly to the Kenyan national power grid, yet Marsabit County itself has no reliable electricity. Residents suspect this is a direct result of political leaders in Marsabit protecting investors at the expense of providing essential services required by the local population. The predictable result is political disenfranchisement that may yet breed further mistrust and conflict.

Ethnicity plays out within the artisanal gold mining sector, too. The minority Sakuye community in Moyale constituency, where the Borana and Gabra are the majority, are consistently marginalised with regards to access to mines and markets, as well as being denied the opportunity to be middlemen. In response, the minority Sakuye have supported the entry of private investors from outside the County who are promising to give more support to the local community in return for access to mines. This has become a source of conflict with the Borana and Gabra who benefit from the status quo and do not want to cede the space for new investors.

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6 Female FGD participant at Loglogo, 31 December 2022.

7 FGD participant in Sarima village, 4 January 2023.

### 3.1.3 Hate speech and ethnic political manipulation

Hate speech and propaganda are frequently used by politicians to drum up fear of opposing parties and rouse support during elections<sup>8</sup>. Politicians are perceived to use social media, radio, and other forms of communication to incite brigades of community members to attack each other.<sup>9</sup> Some young people alleged that elders and political leaders put them under considerable pressure to organise such attacks, with women and young people also used to spread hate and ethnic rivalry. Additionally, political leaders speak out to castigate other communities whenever their own group has been attacked. In such cases, they condemn, hold press conferences, and talk loudly about the other group even before the identity of the perpetrator has been confirmed. When members of their own groups attack others, they do not condemn criminal acts and instead they divert government attention from the criminal incidents by introducing discussions around land ownership and other injustices meted against them. They depict other communities as bad when perpetrators from their own communities are equally culpable. Politicians galvanise and polarise their community's emotions whenever an incident of violence happens against them, depicting themselves as heroes.

The relationship between the Borana and Gabra, for example, has deteriorated over time and is characterised by increased conflicts and derogatory references to each other, using terms such as *nyap* ("enemy") and *ilme ekhera* ("ghost offspring"). "Two birds will never sit on the same anthill," we were told, "Marsabit will either be a Borana town or a Gabra town, not both."<sup>10</sup>

### 3.1.4 Ethnic mobilisation & ethnicised voting patterns

The respondents mentioned that the main goal of politicians is to clinch political office so that they can control resources. To garner the majority vote, politicians mobilize their communities to vote for them and set these communities against politicians from neighbouring communities so that they do not vote for their opponents. Similar mobilization is done to effect conflict. One research participant said;

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8 A chief in a KII at Turbi on 7 Dec 2022.

9 An elder in an FGD at Jaldesa on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022.

10 An MCA in an Interview during the Assessment in Marsabit in Dec 2021.



“Those eyeing political seats, be it gubernatorial position or any other influential position, always use ethnic or tribal lines to source for support. That is why they pit tribes against each other by brainwashing them with the idea that certain political positions are reserved for them thereby creating incitement and hatred. This turns the communities against each other”<sup>11</sup>[1]

Another respondent concurred and emphasized this;

“We have been made to think that ethnicity is the most important consideration when choosing a politician. So, if someone from the El Molo community aspires to vie for any position, they cannot win unless it is a deliberate effort on the part of leadership (religious or inter-communal).”<sup>12</sup>[2]

Stakes being so high means that communities such as the Gabra, Borana and Garre that straddle the Ethiopia/Kenya border often mobilise for conflicts and elections on both sides. Communities also attempt to influence elections by bringing in non-eligible voters from across the border, often at the behest of chiefs and elders who are perceived to help foreigners secure National ID cards to facilitate the process (Ali Abdi, 2017).

In the first election under devolution in 2013, the so-called ‘REGABUGA TUKO SAWA’ (Rendille, Gabra, Burji, Garre, Turkana, Konso, Sakuye, Watta communities) alliance emerged leaving the Borana on one side. In that election, the majority Borana even had 2 Borana gubernatorial candidates. The result was that the coalition clinched most of the county and national level political positions. In 2017, REGABU split with Rendille joining the Borana to clinch the gubernatorial candidature and the senatorial position. Part of the Burji leaders also joined the Borana camp. This weakened REGABU’s domination over the election results.

In 2022 however, no such coalitions were mooted. Each community presented their own candidate with Borana having 2, Gabra 2 and Rendille 1 gubernatorial candidate. Under these circumstances, competition was not strongly manifested across communities. Instead, candidates fiercely contested with their competitors from within their ethnic group. As such, political rhetoric, songs, and poems focused more on maligning the internal opponents that would divide the vote as opposed to the candidates from the other communities. This internal competition within the communities seemed to reduce inter-community polarization. A Borana candidate won the office.

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11 [1] An elder in an FGD at Jaldesa on 27<sup>th</sup> Dec 2022.

12 [2] The Cabinet Secretary Treasury in a KII in Nairobi on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

It was noted during this research that the Marsabit County communities claim to mobilise heavily along ethnic lines for the purpose of placing leaders into office. Marsabit County, which used to be a one-people county, continues to face polarisation as deep insecurity issues remain largely unresolved by devolution (patta, 2017). During elections people are divided into ethnic groups by politicians. This kind of voting pattern creates mistrust and deepens community division.

The apparent differences between communities have percolated into some elites at large and resonate deeply in the politics of the county. The competitive nature of politics has created the need to secure predictable voting blocs, resulting in the formation of alliances between ethnic communities.

### 3.1.5 Perception of political sponsorship of criminal activities and conflict

Politicians are perceived to support and fund conflict, including cattle raids. The Constituency Development Fund vehicles have allegedly been used to provide food rations for Morans on raids,<sup>13</sup> for example. Politicians are also allegedly involved in buying firearms for their communities and inciting further conflict.<sup>14</sup> Whilst personal responsibility of those who launch attacks cannot be ignored, it is also becoming increasingly clear that there are conflict entrepreneurs and activists, including politicians and clan elders, who are involved in having clan militias on standby to fight in the name of their own communities at the height of conflicts in the county fomenting inter-ethnic conflicts<sup>15</sup>. Indeed, research participants felt that many conflicts are crafted by political forces themselves, determined to keep communities divided and the County destabilised. The result is political disunity, whereby communities that have coexisted peacefully for years and historically voting together are being turned against one other, often violently.

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13 A Security Officer in a KII at Laisamis on 1 Jan 2023.

14 A Bodaboda operator in an FGD at Saku on 26 Dec 2022.

15 Young female FGD participant in Saku, 22 December 2022

## Gender dynamics in politics & governance in Marsabit County

Women are marginalised from political and decision-making processes at both the government and community level. Communities adhere to traditional gender norms that ascribe women more to reproductive and family roles as opposed to those entailing community leadership. In these communities, sets consisting of men of approximately the same age rotate into positions of political and social authority. In addition, serious community decisions including political representation so-called “negotiated democracy”), are made at the religious shrines where women are barred. The result is a heavy underrepresentation of women at all levels of political office (see Table 3). At the time of writing, the only woman in national politics from Marsabit County is the women’s representative, a position created by the 2010 Constitution of Kenya to increase the representation of women in parliament. Moreover, women in Marsabit are not perceived to keep their ethnicity throughout their lives: a women may be born a Borana, but if she marries into the Gabra community, she will then be deemed to be Gabra. So, communities do not bestow their communal strategies to women for fear of losing them to opponents. Consequently, the community only vests leadership roles to older women who are already married.

**Table 1: Composition of political and government leadership (UN Women, 2019)**

	Political Leadership			Government Leadership			
	Member of Parliament	Senator	Governor	MCA	CEC	Chief officer	Director
<b>Women</b>	0	1	0	10	3	5	0
<b>Men</b>	4	1	1	20	8	11	22

## 3.2 Access to Land and Natural Resources

Conflicts among communities have traditionally been fuelled by competition over natural resources, such as water and pastureland. The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2016) have ascertained that such conflicts have intensified as climatic changes prolong droughts. Livestock mobility has long been the main strategy to cope with climate-related changes. However, as pastoralists venture into other communities' territory, conflicts occur. Further, with a growing population in Marsabit, as well as rapid changes in land value, land use and land tenure, grazing land is diminishing and driving more competition between different communities for dwindling resources. The conflict has also changed from simply seeking access to water or pasture to seeking control of territory and its resources, including in some places speculative extractives such as gold in the Dabel gold mines. The potential of such economic opportunity, sadly, drives yet more competition and conflict between groups and thus redefining the identity of these communities becomes gradual and painstaking process.

### 3.2.1 Impact of climate change on access to land and natural resources

Climate change-induced drought has aggravated conflicts in Marsabit County, where rising temperatures and increasingly unpredictable rainy seasons have placed increased pressure on water sources and pastureland, reducing herds and increasing competition for grazing land. Community members underlined that long droughts aggravate the already-scarce access to potable water, making every day a struggle for survival.<sup>16</sup>

When communities are forced to migrate to find greener pastures for their livestock (noting that this migration takes place within Marsabit, across County boundaries of Turkana, Samburu, Isiolo, Wajir and even across the international borders of Somalia and Ethiopia), their vulnerable stocks are raided.<sup>17</sup>

Because of prolonged drought, many people are also adapting their livelihoods and moving to Dabel in search of gold. This has caused competition and conflict between residents of Dabel and migrants, and led to environmental degradation as mining holes and toxic minerals are dug and used indiscriminately.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Female FGD participant in Merille, 30 December 2022.

<sup>17</sup> Female participant in a women only FGD in Merille, 30 December 2022.

<sup>18</sup> FGD participant in Dabel, 4 December 2022.

However, several people interviewed felt that the problem in Marsabit was not scarcity itself, but the zero-sum approach to resource sharing that excludes others based on identity. This is the true crux of the issue: a lack of solidarity and community cohesion.

### **3.2.2 Contested Territories and boundary disputes**

Several territories and boundaries in Marsabit County are contested by multiple communities. This contestation revolves around access to good pastureland and water, land with favourable agricultural potential, natural resources or claims over ancestral lands.

Mount Marsabit remains a rare zone of plenty surrounded by desert. It has arable land, tourist attractions, dense national-park forest, a few permanent water resources, and a vibrant urban centre. These few resources have become the epicentre of competition between the Borana, Gabra and Rendille. Beyond Mount Marsabit, the boundaries within the previously overlooked arid regions have also become a source of conflict as devolution and development funds seep into the County. And beyond that, many more contests are ongoing not just within the County (see table 4), but over its borders in to Koom (an area shared between Isiolo, Marsabit and Samburu) and even into South Sudan regarding the Ilemi Triangle. Overlapping administrative units, poorly defined borders, and ethnicised settlements each carry the risk of conflict. Most administrative borders have no distinctive markings, and the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, which oversees border delineation, has not yet demonstrated capacity to resolve border disputes at County level. Some places are even named differently by different communities, emphasising the contestation over its ownership (see table 5).

## Land contestations within Marsabit County



**Table 5: Same areas named differently by various communities**

Area	Name of the place	Ethnic Community
Area within Kargi	Yel	Rendille
	Bales Bura	Gabra
Area within Badanrero	Bothoth	Borana
	Bidoi	Degodia

### 3.2.3 Politicisation of land administration

Marsabit County has recently witnessed redefined boundaries, new forest protection laws, and new national parks (including community-based private wildlife conservancies), that have had a significant influence on the administration of land. Previously managed and used communally, these land change changes, combined with the introduction of modern methods, can be at odds with the existing traditional approaches.

In Marsabit County, land has never been subdivided and is seen as community-owned property. Its availability and accessibility for minority groups without ancestral claims is difficult. The issue has become politicised, with politicians promising voters that, once elected, they would provide land to supporters. Politicians have therefore contributed to conflict in the area and further exacerbating the myths and realities of expansionism and displacement. This is illustrated by a land conflict in Balchalok where the County government and the area MCA supported the Daasanach community to construct a borehole using their ward development fund. However, this took place on allegedly Gabra-owned land, and the borehole has since been vandalised and rendered dysfunctional.<sup>19</sup>

### 3.2.4 Gender dynamics in access to land and natural resources

Of the 56,941 households in the County, the 2019 census observed that about half (21600) are female-headed. However, this role is made difficult given that women in Marsabit have low social status, literacy levels, restricted roles in public life, and limited ownership of both livestock and land.

While men take care of their livestock, women bear disproportionate responsibilities in caring for the entire family. This includes collecting water and firewood, which given climactic changes now entail travelling further from home. This not only gives women less time to devote to their families' needs, travelling further exposes them to additional security risks. As a result, women suffer disproportionately from the ravages of drought and resource scarcity, even if based on their regular interactions with nature, either as farmers or home stewards, women have substantive knowledge and skills in drought-related adaptation and risk reduction. It is therefore imperative for them to be incorporated

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<sup>19</sup> Ward administrator in a KII in Dukana, 7 December 2022.

in County climate action committees and other climate change processes at the local level.

Elderly men preside over traditional cultural activities and make decisions over land use and pasture sharing. Drought and other climatic conditions have, however, influenced the roles elders play in the community. Since they can no longer travel longer distances to graze their animals, they have allowed the youths (the Morans) to take over this role as they stay at home and engage in more domestic roles. Many young men have also joined ethnic militias groups that guard community land against perceived intruders. When pitted against each other, such groups can carry out cycles of retaliatory attacks.

## 3.3 Social Fragmentation

This section highlights the factors that have fuelled disputes, violent conflict, and social fragmentation in Marsabit. The factors include livestock raiding, cycles of revenge, glorifying masculine 'warrior' cultures, the erosion of traditional norms and systems limiting the use of violence, legacies of unresolved past conflicts, and unimplemented peace agreements.

### 3.3.1 Livestock raiding

In recent years, livestock raiding has become more frequent, violent, and destructive. We are seeing drought decimate resources, which in turn drives more use and possession of illegal firearms as communities securitise the little, they have.

Communities appear content to raid and take others' livestock through young cadres of 'warriors' blessed by elders. Raiding cycles undermine the prospects for peace, and instead sew hatred and the desire for revenge. These are no longer just small feuds to restock cattle after a dry spell. They have become more frequent, intense, and drive both national and international black markets for livestock. The police can do little to either prevent or resolve the issue.<sup>20</sup>

To ensure a raider coming into a town knows exactly where to find the animals, safely secure them, and flee, several incidents of theft have been undertaken by organised groups that have collaborated across ethnic lines.<sup>21</sup> For instance, Sambu-

20 A women's representative FGD participant in Merille, 30 December 2022; National administrator in a KII in Moyale, on 1 December 2022.

21 FGD participant in Saku, 22 February 2023.



ru youths collaborating with Rendille youths to attack either Gabra or Borana communities. In retaliation, the innocent Rendille communities who live on the conflict faultline bear the brunt of violence and revenge. The study also registered such collaborations between conflict hotspot areas and other relatively peaceful areas including, but not limited to: Hurri Hills; Thurusu; Koom; Shurr; Loglogo; Dukana; Forole; Bubisa; Turbi; Sololo; Gadamoji; Maikona-Kargi; Moite; Gas; and areas surrounding Sibilo National Park, such as Darade, Karsa, Boluk, Assuma and Alia Bay.

### 3.3.2 Glorification and internalisation of warrior masculinity

The culture of Moranism has glorified acts of violence, especially among the Samburu and Rendille. Whilst overtly masculine, women play a central role in reproducing this Moran warrior culture through night-time singing competitions where they boast about their own boyfriends and ridicule others as cowards.<sup>22</sup> One report claims that rustlers within the Borana community carry the genitalia of their victims home to receive more praise, while courageous Turkana men take home blood-stained clothes in order to receive rewards from women, such as handicrafts or jewelry, for their bravery (Kjosavik, 2018). This is not only an impediment to peace as far as it further polarises groups, stockpiles emotions, as the violent acts are remembered as painful lore to provoke vengeful acts in return.

In communities where boys are circumcised, such as the Samburu, Rendille, Borana and Gabra, it is common to look down on communities where circumcision is not practiced, indeed, songs and speech in some circumcising communities describe the uncircumcised as meaningless young boys (Layok). This affects the level of respect accorded to the community, regardless of the age of the person in question,<sup>23</sup>

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22 Local administrator in a KII in Koya, 1 January 2023.

23 FGD participant in Sarima, 4 January 2023

### 3.3.3 Erosion of norms and systems limiting the use of violence

This study has found that several of the cultural practices used by communities to limit conflict have been diluted or manipulated. Some people contend that youth are more disrespectful and disobedient towards their elders, and individualism amongst the Moran has begun to supersede the sense of collective responsibility that used to hold communities together.<sup>24</sup>

Additionally, most communities no longer hold cultural practices around cattle raiding to be sacred, with the killing of women and children was forbidden. Today, killing women, children and the elderly have become commonplace, and sometimes even celebrated. Paying bribes to release criminals that are caught, or else using senior political leaders to manipulate the system, is also not uncommon.

Acts of violence no longer spare religious and cultural sites, either. This disrespect has in part eroded the historic culture of forgiveness that elders as custodians of peace once exuded. Indeed, instead of elders raising their voices against crime and conflict, they have incited it, leading to a normalisation of violence. Like political leaders, elders publically denounce their own communities being attacked, but remain quiet when they are the aggressor. “Many of these community elders have perfected the art of victimhood,” we were told, and use it as a pretext for ‘just’ vengeance.<sup>25</sup>

### 3.3.4 Legacies of unresolved historical conflicts

The social fabric of communities in Marsabit has been weakened by years of unresolved conflict and mistrust. Marsabit County residents are divided into neighbourhoods almost exclusively occupied by one ethnic group. Their grazing patterns are also designed in a manner that advances this narrative, as single ethnic groups have exclusive access to and control over specific grazing areas. For instance, Sololo and Moyale are viewed as Borana grazing lands, North Horr sub-county is viewed as a Gabra grazing zone, Laisamis sub-county is seen as grazing land for the Rendile and Samburu, while the Loiyangani zone is predominantly accessed and controlled by the Turkana community. This balkanisation is also observed inside Saku, where the Baddasa and Songa areas are seen as exclusive zones for the Borana and the Rendille, respectively<sup>26</sup>. This architecture makes meaningful understanding of each

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<sup>24</sup> Local administrator FGD participant in Songa, 29 December 2022.

<sup>25</sup> FGD participant in Koya, 1 January 2023.

<sup>26</sup> *Boda boda* rider FGD participant in Moyale, 2 December 2022.

other communities difficult, let alone reconciliation.<sup>27</sup> There is a sense of collective trauma, whereby unresolved grievances sit deep and contribute to violent behaviours. People receive no psychosocial support to manage these feelings.<sup>28</sup> But without, animosity towards historical perpetrators grows and forms the basis for revenge attacks.<sup>29</sup> These frequently go beyond raiding and include killing.<sup>30</sup>

As a result, potentially transformative peace dialogues can struggle to have impact. Worse still, managed insensitively they can even foment more community mistrust.<sup>31</sup> Peace activists are sometimes seen as threats to their own community and labelled as “spies,” and administrators who expose raiders from their own communities are subject to violence – murders have even been recorded.

### 3.3.5 Unimplemented previous agreements

Marsabit has witnessed several peace processes and agreements. The Modogashe Declaration in 2001 aimed to restore peace and tame banditry and cattle rustling and continues to be used as the basis of compensation for stolen livestock and people killed among pastoral communities. However, conflicting parties do not faithfully honour it in full, meaning its implementation is typically piecemeal.<sup>32</sup> Communities in Marsabit subsequently signed the Dukana–Dillo–Maikona agreement, the Ole Kaparo and Yussuf Haji Peace Initiative, and The Marsabit Peace Roadmap in 2021. The implementation of all these agreements has been patchy, however, leading to persistent cycles of conflict, mistrust, and trauma.<sup>33</sup> Cycles such as these do not only thwart longer-term peace agreements but make it difficult to achieve any short-term healing or forgiveness.

## 3.4 Cross-Border Dynamics

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Marsabit County shares a long and porous border with the Oromia and Somali regions of Ethiopia. The Borana, Gabra, Daasanach, and Garre ethnic communities straddle the two countries and migrate as the availability of water and pasture resources dictate. Legal cross-border trade is accompanied by the illicit trade of

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27 Sheikh in a KII in Moyale, 30 November 2022.

28 An Administrator in a KII in Moyale on 29 Nov 2022

29 A Bodaboda operator in an FGD in Saku 26 Dec 2022.

30 FGD participant in Shegel, 25 December 2022.

31 Elder FGD participant in Saku, 26 December 2022.

32 Local administrator in a KII in Illeret, 10 December 2022.

33 FGD participant in Jaldesa, 27 December 2022.

stolen and contraband goods, including small arms and light weapons, and the unregulated movement of people. The continuous armament of illicit firearms means that bandits are often better armed than the security forces. This may be one of the reasons why the police respond slowly. To address these threats, cross-border security agents have enhanced their scrutiny of potential criminals, but in so doing, they harass common citizens too. Additionally, cross-border dealings encourage bribery and extortion, which make the security agencies involved less incentivised in addressing intercommunal conflicts at the core of local violence.

### 3.4.1 Illicit Trade

The porous Kenya-Ethiopia border is the site of drug trafficking, irregular migration, smuggling, and livestock theft. Import duties go unpaid, and smuggled goods undercut local markets. Criminal activity is rife, and the use and trade of *Cannabis sativa* (also known as *bhang* and referred to locally as the *shashamane* herb) has grown into a serious social issue that security actors have struggled to curb. Youth are the main consumers and distributors of drugs, and criminality, bribery and extortion linked to the valuable trade are common.<sup>34</sup>

Sometimes, illegal firearms cross the border into Kenya, whilst goods such as motorbikes go the other way into Ethiopia and sold. This external market drives petty theft in Moyale.<sup>35</sup>

Illegal migration ranks third among identified borderland crimes in Kenya (NCRC, 2018), and there is significant movement of unregistered human labour. This includes individuals who are believed to commit crimes only to disappear across borders.

### 3.4.2 Harassment by cross-border security forces and armed militias

Participants reported harassment by security forces and militias across the Kenya-Ethiopia border. For example, security agents impound trade items, impede the movement of people, and wrongfully imprison traders. There are also many security roadblocks across Marsabit County, where bag searches are sometimes done unprofessionally. With female officers being rare, many female traders feel harassed when they or their belongings are searched by male officers.

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<sup>34</sup> Religious leader in a KII in Moyale, 30 November 2022.

<sup>35</sup> FGD participant in Moyale, 2 December 2022.

Militia from southern Ethiopia also sometimes cross into Kenya, harassing populations in Sololo and Moyale sub-county. Community members reported that the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) perpetuate violence in Marsabit, typically in support of the Borana.<sup>36</sup> It has become difficult for security agents to deal with this threat since the OLF move back and forth across the border, escaping jurisdiction on both sides<sup>37</sup>.

### 3.4.3 Proliferation of small arms

Illicit arms flowing freely across international and County boundaries are a key factor in conflict escalation in Marsabit County. People source arms from Somalia, Ethiopia, and neighbouring Isiolo, Wajir, and Samburu Counties for use in cattle raiding. Raiders are sometimes even better armed than security personnel. The Borana, Gabra, Turkana, Samburu, Rendille, and Daasanach alike are encouraged by elders to use their illicit arms on raids in service of their ethnic communities.<sup>38</sup> There are also political connections at play, with some suspecting that politicians are financing the proliferation of weapons. “People cannot afford guns themselves” we were told, “so, when the leaders stop financing the conflict, the war will stop.”<sup>39</sup>

## 3.5 Security Threats

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Insecurity is one of the drivers of conflict in Marsabit. The main security threats covered in this section, as identified by the research, are highway robbery, the gradually increasing numbers of hired assassins deduced from the arrests of alleged assassins, government apathy and inadequate security provision.

### 3.5.1 Highway banditry

Some conflict hotspots in Malgis, Moile, Lengima, Illaut, Elem, and Duka Moja have suffered from highway banditry at the hands of criminals looking to acquire property, livestock, money, and food. Violent attacks have also been reported on the Moyale–Isiolo highway and the Laisamis–Loiyangalani road, with herders losing their livestock and travellers being robbed of property and money. This has been exacerbated by drought and poverty. In most cases, the assailants do not kill if the

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36 Local Administrator FGD participant in Songa, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2022

37 Local administrator FGD participant in Songa, 29<sup>th</sup> December 2022.

38 FGD participant in Dakabaricha, 26 December 2022.

39 FGD participant in Walda village, 23 June 2021

victims co-operate.<sup>40</sup> This has contributed to reduced trade in animals, vegetables, and milk as people fear moving through insecure areas to access markets. Incidences can provoke spontaneous revenge in the form of highway demonstrations, further impeding movements of animals and people.<sup>41</sup> Such blockades have unintended wider effects, including forcing children to travel further and pay more to attend school, if indeed they continue to attend.<sup>42</sup>

Highway banditry does not necessarily target specific ethnic communities. However, this crime turns ethnic when the victims are from a different ethnic community to the perpetrators. This sometimes engenders revenge attacks. It is unclear whether banditry is a criminal choice or reflects a community desire to defend and mark one's territory. It is likely both. But in either case, it drives broad social division between groups since it is communities, rather than individuals, who are held responsible for thefts and homicides.

### 3.5.2 Hired assassins

This study heard evidence of a new trend whereby communities hire assassins to target communities that are seen as opponents.<sup>43</sup> This has cast doubt on who is responsible for the many killings that have happened in the town. Suspicion has increasingly fallen on the OLF, who are known to offer high-security protection for irregular migrants and high-volume drug shipments moving from Moyale via the Wajir–Marsabit border towards Marsabit, Meru and, eventually, Nairobi.

Another form of transactional crime involves the local Morans who sometimes hire seasoned cattle rustlers from other Counties to carry out raids against communities in Marsabit. In early 2023, a dispute between collaborating gangs led to the killing of three Samburu and one Rendille Moran at Ndonyowasin. Following this incident, cases of raids in Marsabit significantly reduced.

### 3.5.3 Government apathy and inadequate security provision

Despite their constitutional obligation to guarantee the safety and security of all citizens, security personnel are considered slow to respond by communities. This has

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40 FGD participant in Illaut, 3 January 2023.

41 FGD participant in Manyatta Jillo, 25 December 2022.

42 CEC for cohesion in Marsabit County in a KII in Saku, 22 February 2023.

43 FGD participant in Badasa, 29 December 2022.

severely undermined trust and co-operation between security officials and communities. However, slow responses are in part attributable to challenging topography, poor roads, and patchy communication. The lack of mobile-phone network coverage, coupled with power challenges, reduce people's capacity to report incidents, raise alerts or obtain response updates when crimes take place.

In addition, however, even when security actors do respond to violence, communities attest that no arrests are made, or else when they are made no successful prosecutions follow. Communities believe that the County government is not a neutral actor and question the commitment of the County government to find sustainable solutions. This drives mistrust of government actions and mistrust of peace processes (Interpeace, 2022). No high-level national government official has visited the area, and communities have been left to their own devices to build peace.

Raiders take advantage of this combination of difficult geography and operational inadequacy to perpetrate conflict. Raiders are more familiar with local topography than the police and use the forest as hide-outs. Further, police are poorly capacitated, with some conflict hotspots such as Kalacha, Shegel, Kambinye, Kurkum, Arapal, Koya, Larachi, and Dakaye lacking any police posts.<sup>44</sup> Where police officers are present, they are beset by lack of equipment, fuel, and other amenities necessary for adequate security responses. Other times, they are "simply complacent,"<sup>45</sup> with the security apparatus accused of favouritism towards some communities above others.<sup>46</sup> Moreover, some participants insinuated that security agents may even connive with criminals or intentionally overlook criminal activity, including the proliferation of cattle raiding and use of SALW.<sup>47</sup>

In comparison, the National Police Reservists (NPRs) are highly regarded among the pastoralist communities, for whom they appear to respond quicker than the police.<sup>48</sup> However, while NPRs may provide an essential service as frontline actors for peace and security, their neutrality remains unclear. Tellingly, their alleged link to criminality saw their recent disarmament by the County government. Whilst understandable, this had unintended consequences, with the withdrawal of NPRs not only increasing insecurity but also causing a spate of self-arming by local communities to make up for the security that NPRs had previously provided. Increasing the impartiality of their service delivery would appear to be a fruitful area for improvement.

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44 Ward administrator in a KII in Obbu, 12 December 2022.

45 Governor of Marsabit County in a KII in Nairobi, 7 December 2023.

46 FGD participant in Illeret, 10 December 2022.

47 FGD participant in Illeret, 10 December 2022.

48 Female FGD participant in Badasa, 29 December 2022.

## 4. Sources of Community Resilience

Although ethnic conflict has long existed in Marsabit, communities also draw on sources of resilience that can prevent violent situations escalating.

### 4.1 Common Cultural, Social, and Economic Ties

There is much that culturally and socially unites the different ethnicities within Marsabit. This can provide a source of resilience against diverse challenges such as adaptation to climate change (Perry, 2021), grazing patterns, management of land resources, respect for elders, the sanctity of holy grounds, and social tolerance. Chief among these norms is linguistic commonalities at the ward level between the populous Borana and Gabra, as well as between community elites who can communicate through English or Swahili.<sup>49</sup> Shared language makes it easier to negotiate and resolve differences.

Beyond language, shared cultural norms and practices such as religious ceremonies, coming of age events, and naming ceremonies can build collective resilience to the drivers of conflict and open platforms for constructive engagement between groups. Inter-marriage encourages tolerance between communities. For instance, the Gabra and Rendille have coexisted for many years without significant differences because they have intermarried for enough time that they see each other as family.<sup>50</sup> A ward administrator emphasised this point, saying the “Gabra and Rendille are one.”<sup>51</sup>

Although communities in Marsabit are highly patriarchal, the gradual involvement and engagement of women in peace processes in the County has ensured that the concerns and needs of women and children are increasingly reflected in dialogue. Still, some norms are collective and yet undoubtedly regressive, such as female genital mutilation (Koskey 2023).

Communities are also connected economically through both local and regional

<sup>49</sup> Women's representative for Marsabit County in a KII in Nairobi, 10 June 2023.

<sup>50</sup> FGD participant in Loglogo, 31 December 2022.

<sup>51</sup> Ward administrator FGD participant in Kargi, 22 December 2022.



trade across the international border with Ethiopia. Both enhance local capacities to cope with conflict. For example, when there is inflation in Kenya negatively influencing the price of goods in Kenyan Shillings, people can adapt and trade their goods for the stronger Ethiopian Birr and stave off the worst effects of food and economic insecurity.

However, it is important to note that whilst trade increases income opportunities and cooperative networks, there is a gender aspect to these opportunities that must be understood. Economic interdependence may support peaceful relationships between ethnic groups, but at the same time it can have negative repercussions for women and youth if it only creates economic opportunities that reinforce gender inequalities by, for example, keeping trade largely in the hands of older men. To maximise resilience, inclusive economic development that ensures the independence and security of all sections of society is vital.

## 4.2 Community Driven Peace Agreements

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Among the multiple peace processes in Marsabit, community-driven agreements on issues that matter for local level conflicts (i.e. recovery mechanisms for stolen livestock) seem to hold for longer than elite-led bargains. For example, the communities along the Turbi–Ethiopia border, as well as in Jaldesa and Shurr, respect previously negotiated community-negotiated agreements and return stolen livestock. This suggests that community driven agreements have instilled a commonly understood set of peace norms that help prevent conflict escalation more effectively than accords imposed from above.<sup>52</sup>

## 4.3 Local Peace and Resource Management Infrastructures

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Marsabit has several resource-sharing infrastructures in place. As resources dwindle these become more important in ensuring people come together and share the little available peacefully.<sup>53</sup> Peace Committees have made considerable efforts in resolving communal conflicts and are mandated to convene reconciliation and conflict prevention meetings, negotiate compensation when people are killed or animals stolen, and to trace and recover lost animals. They provide space for inter-

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<sup>52</sup> FGD participant in Turbi, 7 December 2023.

<sup>53</sup> FGD participant in Koya, 1 January 2023.

action between communities and the government on security matters, and make traditional dispute resolution more locally accessible, affordable, and respected.<sup>54</sup> Several attempts have been made to develop the committees further to make them more inclusive and effective.

Communities also have elaborate structure of elders who facilitate interethnic coordination, peace negotiations, and conflict resolution. Historically, elders are deeply respected by Morans in pastoral communities, who can be restrained from raiding when elders call for peaceful dialogues between tribes.<sup>55</sup> Resilience has been further strengthened by the unanimous calls for peace by various religious actors through the interfaith platform.<sup>56</sup> This has created bridges between communities with different religious practices.<sup>57</sup>

Numerous conflict prevention, mitigation, and peacebuilding structures have also been either initiated or supported by NGOs and CSOs. This has had some success in resolving intra- and intercommunity disputes, improving humanitarian access, and raising awareness about human rights, and in particular the centrality of women and youth to inclusive peace and security.<sup>58</sup>

## 4.4 Consistent Political Will in Support of Peace Agreements and Infrastructures

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Solutions to any conflict can be found only if there is political goodwill to bridge divides and encourage co-operation. The Government of Kenya has shown a willingness to resolve the conflict in Marsabit, and deployed numerous security agencies in search of security, including: the Kenya Defence Force and Border Patrol Unit along the Ethiopian border; the Anti-Stock Theft Unit; the Quick Response Unit to curb intercommunity clashes; the General Service Unit to pre-empt riots and demonstrations; and the National Police Service. However, despite this political will, overtly securitised responses such as these cannot resolve deeply held social and political grievances alone. They require more sensitive conflict transformations, and it is therefore encouraging to see County administrators support local peacebuilding efforts in accordance with the devolution plan. These efforts could be deeper, and the persistent ethnicisation of politics cannot be ignored. However,

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54 National administrator in a KII in Moyale, 1 December 2022.

55 Elder FGD participant in Koya, 1 January 2023.

56 *Bodaboda* operator FGD participant in Saku, 26 December 2022.

57 Religious leader FGD participant in Hellu Manyatta, 3 December 2022.

58 *Bodaboda* operator FGD participant in Saku, 26 December 2022.



*Intra Gabra community consensus building held in Kalacha on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2023.*

*Copyright: Interpeace, 2023*

even though politics remains largely zero sum, leaders in Marsabit County continue to demonstrate political goodwill to engage in peace processes between elections, which makes it easier for communities to coexist.<sup>59</sup> County government facilitated talks between clan chiefs saw more information sharing between groups, whilst their support for new peace talks (even as older agreements stutter) demonstrates a lasting political will for peace that serves as a key source of resilience. As a result, people spoke of seeing more unity between political leaders in condemning acts of violence.

Resilience and peacebuilding are more likely when National and County government instruments are integrated and work in step. The Rejasha Amani Marsabit Operation, for example, saw the Deputy County Commissioner mobilise chiefs to disarm those in possession of illegal weapons, with North Horr alone surrendering 176 illegal firearms. These were furnished by national agencies such as the NCIC carrying out community dialogues across the County, the joint effect of which was a palpable “sense of calmness” in Marsabit.<sup>60</sup>

59 National administrator in a KII at Laisamis, 1 January 2023.

60 National administrator in a KII in North Horr, 8 December 2022.

# 5. Conclusion and Way Forward

## Conclusion

The goal of the Marsabit Peacebuilding Programme is to foster lasting peace in Marsabit County. The specific objective of this consultative phase was to investigate the challenges to peace in Marsabit County and to document the sources of resilience for the local communities within the county. Consultations involved community members from various roles in the county. These included local leaders, young people, administrators, political leaders, professionals, women, men, all ethnic groups, and persons living with disabilities, among others. These consultations sought a collective diagnosis of problems – not to establish “one truth”, but to hold a broad consultation and incorporate as many viewpoints and perspectives as possible from the people who are affected by the conflicts in question. Even the study participants reached in Nairobi were members of the county or government agencies charged with functions in Marsabit County. So, these discussions did not originate from outside the county but from within. The study concluded that, despite the myriad of challenges to peace existing in the county, each challenge’s contribution to conflict incidence varies. The next section presents this notion in detail.

## Validation and prioritisation process

After the participatory action research consultative phase, the research process culminated into a stakeholder’s validation forum. The stakeholders’ forum, held on 5-6 September 2023 in Marsabit town, was attended by 250 participants in total, representing the four constituencies of Marsabit County, namely Laisamis, Moyake, North Horr and Saku, as well as some from Nairobi. Attendees included, among others, local communities, national and county government officials, elected leaders, and representatives of civil-society organisations and of religious entities.

Stakeholders were divided into four diverse groups that incorporated a variety of geographical origins, clan affiliations, professions, equitable gender representation, youth, and minority involvement. The forum used group discussions because participatory action research is about capturing all voices, understanding experiences from all viewpoints, and ensuring that these voices contribute to solutions that are appropriate for all. These groups provided space for in-depth discussions about the relevance of the thematic areas identified during the prior phase of the participatory action research process. Further, the groups prioritised the specific



*Residents of Badasa and Songa together with various peace stakeholders raise their hands in agreement to peace resolutions during an inter-village meeting between the two communities on 4th June 2023. © Interpeace 2023*

challenges cited under each thematic issue in order of their urgency and criticality. A sum of each group's ratings was calculated to get the ranking of each challenge. This section presents an overview of the prioritisation process. The stakeholders ranked the specific challenges from the most pressing to the least urgent under each thematic issue.

The factors contributing to the ethnicisation of politics and governance in the county were ranked by stakeholders as shown in table 6. Groups ranked challenges by the weight of their contribution to conflict with the most pressing challenges rated as 1. Then, a summation of the ranking from all groups was used to classify the challenges with the least totals as the most pressing.

**Table 6: Validation and prioritisation process: ethnicisation of politics and government**

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Sum	Rank
<b>ETHNICISATION OF POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE</b>						
Inequitable distribution of public services	1	2	5	4	12	3
Ethnicisation of the perceived benefits of natural-resource investments	3	3	1	2	9	1
Hate speech and political manipulation	5	5	4	1	15	5

	Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Sum	Rank
Ethnic mobilisation and ethnicised voting patterns	2	4	3	5	14	4
Perception of political sponsorship of criminal activities and conflict	4	1	2	3	10	2

Participatory action research is about reaching consensus between groups of people who hold very different truths at the start of the process. The collective consensus between the four groups ranked the challenges within ethnicisation of politics and governance as follows:

1. ethnicization of the Perceived Benefits of Natural Resource Investments
2. Perception of Political Sponsorship of Criminal Activities and Conflict
3. Inequitable distribution of Public Services
4. Ethnic Mobilization & Ethnicized Voting Patterns
5. Hate Speech and Political Manipulation

The next impediment to peace in the county examined was access to land and natural resources.

**Table 7: Validation and prioritisation process: access to land and natural resources**

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL	RANK
<b>ACCESS TO LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES</b>						
Impact of climate change on access to land and natural resources	4	4	2	4	14	4
Contested territories and boundary disputes	1	1	1	3	6	1
Politicisation of land administration	3	3	3	1	10	2

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL	RANK
The myths and realities of expansionism & displacement	2	2	4	2	10	2

Under this thematic issue, the key factors contributing to this impediment, in order of priority, are contested territories and boundary disputes, politicisation of land and administration, the myth of expansionism and displacement, as well as the disputes the devastating impact of climate change on access to land and natural resources.

The third thematic issue reviewed was social fragmentation.

**Table 8: Validation and prioritisation process: social fragmentation**

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL	RANK
<b>SOCIAL FRAGMENTATION</b>						
Livestock raiding	1	1	5	1	8	1
A culture of indiscriminate revenge	2	3	2	2	9	2
Glorification and internalisation of warrior masculinity	4	5	6	3	18	4
Erosion of norms limiting the use of violence	7	2	8	8	25	6
Legacies and grievances of the past	3	4	1	4	12	3
Withdrawal of/failure to implement previous agreements	5	6	3	5	19	5

The next thematic issue identified by communities was cross-border dynamics.

**Table 9: Validation and prioritisation process: cross-border dynamics**

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL	RANK
<b>CROSS-BORDER DYNAMICS</b>						
Illicit trade	1	2	2	2	7	2
Harassment by cross-border security forces and by armed militias	3	3	3	3	12	3
Proliferation and circulation of small arms	2	1	1	1	5	1

Another thematic issue contributing to conflict was security threats.

**Table 10: Validation and Prioritisation Process: security threats**

	GROUP A	GROUP B	GROUP C	GROUP D	TOTAL	RANK
<b>SECURITY THREATS</b>						
Highway banditry	3	3	2	3	11	3
Hired assassins	2	1	3	2	8	2
Government apathy and inadequate security provision	1	2	1	1	5	1

After two days of discussion and deliberation, the stakeholders had revised the original list of thematic issues and zeroed in on the following five priority issues as the most critical impediments to peace in Marsabit County:

- ethnicisation of the perceived benefits of natural-resource investments
- contested territories and boundary disputes



- livestock raiding
- proliferation and circulation of small arms
- government apathy and inadequate security provision.

The validation forum also endorsed the resilience factors that have enabled the communities in Marsabit County to cope in the face of endemic conflict. These included factors surrounding social ties and connectedness, the establishment and maintenance of various infrastructures for peace, the existence of both community and political will to enter and sustain peace processes, and economic interdependence between and among communities in the county.

## Way Forward

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This report shall be disseminated to all relevant stakeholders at local, national, and international level, including community organisations, civil-society organisations, county and national government agencies, and international organisations. This report is intended to serve as a resource and reference for Interpeace and other actors who are working towards promoting peace, security, and development in the region. Therefore, its findings will enrich programming, policy formulation, planning and targeted and common investment by county governments, the national government, CSOs and other development partners. Additionally, this report shall feed into the next phase of the Marsabit Peacebuilding Programme, in which Interpeace will facilitate the quest for homegrown, workable solutions to the impediments identified using the participatory action research approach.

The initial stabilisation phase of the Marsabit peacebuilding programme aimed at cessation of hostilities among the warring communities with a clear prioritisation of the various impediment to peace and the sources of resilience. Informed by the research findings, the next phase of the programme will consolidate the successes so far reached with the aim of strengthening the local resilience for sustainable peace and facilitate complete return to normalcy, healing of the scars of violence and resettling of displaced population in Marsabit among other critical process in transforming the conflict and societal relations.

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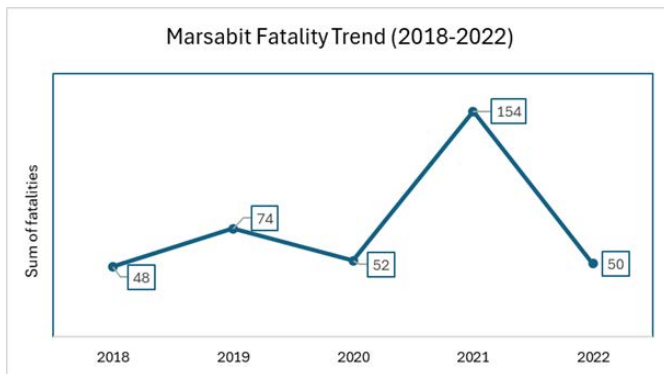
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# Annex I: Context update as a result of the Marsabit Peace Programme

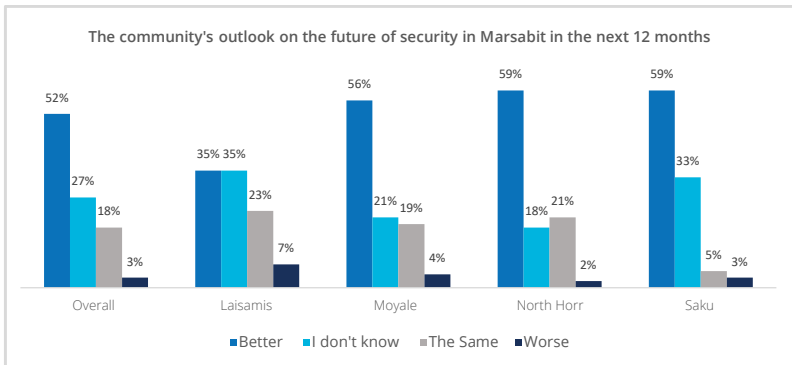
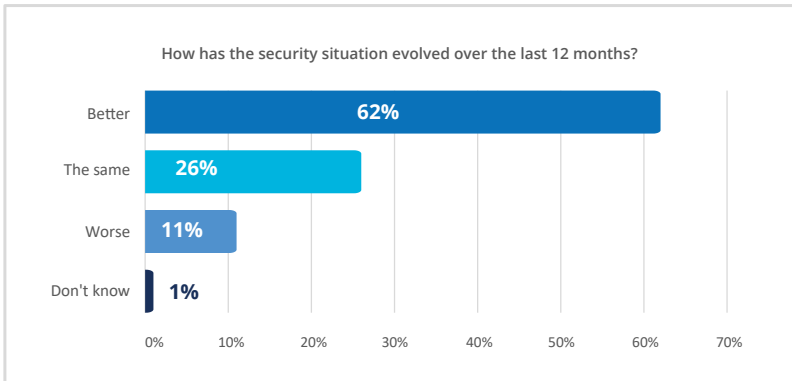
The impediments to peace and resilience factors mentioned in this report represent the perspectives of conflict-affected communities and authorities who were interviewed between 27 February and 15 March 2022. At the time, many of the conflict dynamics that were described in this report were persisting and trust in the prospects for lasting peace were still low.<sup>61</sup> This stems from recurring conflict incidents in Marsabit county between 2018 and 2022, resulting in a total of 378 fatalities within this period (ACLED Data, 2023). The graph below shows a trend of fatalities resulting from violence in the county, which reached a peak in 2021, but significantly declined in 2022. This dataset only records reported casualties – and real number might be significantly higher.

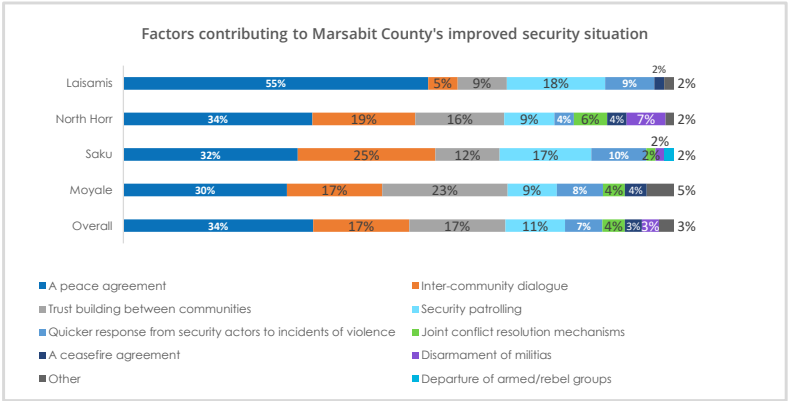
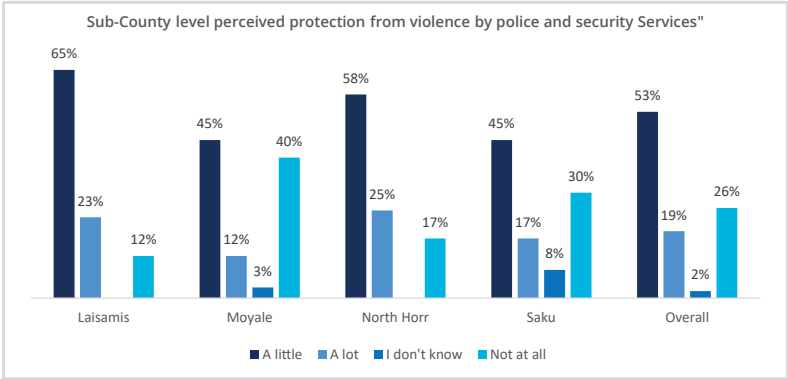


61 A 2021 Rapid Conflict Assessment by Interpeace and NCIC warned the Kenya government and donors that very urgent action was needed to prevent an escalation of the conflict, which, at the time, was already very deadly. Between 2018 and early 2022, there were almost daily acts of violence, including assassinations, violent raids etc, in Marsabit County, leading to a total of 378 fatalities within the 5-year period (ACLED data, 2024). Hate speech was rampant, and the three main conflicting communities, the Borana, Gabra and Rendille, were all stockpiling weapons in fear of ethnic cleansing. The analysis also showed that peace activities were regarded with significant suspicion, as peace activities generally involved a small set of elite actors, happened usually in places far from where the actual conflict took place, and violence would usually break out in the immediate aftermath, triggered by spoilers who wanted to derail the peace efforts. For a better appreciation of the significant difference that the Interpeace, NCIC and NEPCOH contribution made, we recommend readers to read the rapid conflict assessment conducted in 2021. <https://www.interpeace.org/resource/marsabit-county-rapid-conflict-assessment/>

# Annex II: Baseline Evaluation findings

These perceptions formed the basis on Interpeace’s, NCIC and NEPCOH’s intervention in Marsabit, and the very nature of the intervention has led to significant conflict transformation and the stabilisation of intercommunal relations. Already by the end of 2022, there were significant improvements in people’s perception about the security situation. For example, in the November 2022 baseline, about nine months into the project, 62% of people surveyed felt that there was a significant improvement in the security situation. This was in part due to ongoing security operations, but as the second and third graph demonstrates, many people still felt that security actors only played a small role in improving security (and 26% felt not at all), while peace agreements (35%), intercommunal dialogues (17%) and trust building measures between communities (17%) accounted for the biggest factors improving security.





By November 2022, a majority of 52% believed that the security outlook for the next year would improve, and only 3% believed that things would get worse. The beliefs of the majority were warranted, because in the year that followed, many more significant achievements were made in Marsabit's road to peace.

# Annex III: Extract from Incident Tracker

Below is an outline of some of the conflict factors that existed by the time the data for this report was collected, and how joint work by Interpeace, NEPCOH, county government and communities themselves led to significant changes in security and conflict dynamics. This data contained in the table below was collected during an outcome harvesting workshop<sup>1</sup> in December 2023.

Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<b>2018-2022 Competition for resources leading to road closures, meaning that some communities need to travel very far on bad roads to access Marsabit town and roads that connect to Nairobi and Moyale.</b>	On 3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2022, the Gabra & Borana communities came together to open the Shurr-Jaldesa Road that was previously inaccessible to the Gabra community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Inaccessible resources in the previously closed region are now available to both communities.</li> <li>✓ The road has helped the Gabra community to limit expenses incurred in accessing Shurr through Jaldesa which is the shortest route.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilised the Gabra and Borana communities to engage in a meeting.</li> <li>• Facilitated meeting participants.</li> <li>• Coordinated the county and national governments, and the community to have the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> NEPCOH, Interpeace, PACIDA, local elders, National Government &amp; the community.</p>

<sup>1</sup> Outcome harvesting is a method to reflect on the changes that happened as a result of an intervention. It is mostly used when the nature of activities or the context is dynamic, as seen in conflict-prone areas.



Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<p><b>2018-2022 Competition for grazing resources leading to violent attacks on civilians.</b></p>	<p>On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2022, Gabra and Borana herders met at Gof chopa and agreed to graze together peacefully and even shared camel milk. The two groups met at a buffer zone where previously no community could graze there even though the resources were plenty.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Even though the two groups were heavily armed they agreed to put down their weapons and share resources.</li> <li>✓ This was the first step to integrating the two communities as they were slowly building trust with each other.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated and provided logistical support to the herders.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> PACIDA, NGAO, NEPCOH, Interpeace</p>
	<p>On 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2022 Gabra and Dassanach communities met at Sibilo National Park and agreed to graze their animals together peacefully and share the available resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Peaceful sharing of resources by two communities that had been in conflict over a long time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated and coordinated the meeting.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> County Commissioner's office and community elders.</p>

Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<p><b>Livestock theft and unwillingness of the community to report the perpetrators; no fatalities occurred during this incident (Interpeace monitoring reports).</b></p>	<p>On 25<sup>th</sup> September 2022 the Borana community from Kubi Qallo returned 10 camels that were stolen from the Gabra community in Horonder. Previously, stolen animals were returned forcefully by security forces, however during this period the community voluntarily surrendered them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A symbol of goodwill following a peace meeting that brought together the Gabra &amp; Borana communities where elders from both communities promised to integrate and start grazing together.</li> <li>✓ Improved co-ordination and communication between the chiefs, elders and the communities from both sides which was hardly witnessed before.</li> <li>✓ For the first time the community surrendered the thief to the security forces.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpeace organized the IDP meeting and other peace meetings that started the conversation of returning stolen animals.</li> <li>• Facilitated elders from the Borana community to engage the youths to return the stolen camels.</li> <li>• Mediated between the chiefs in Borana &amp; Gabra community on how to coordinate the return of stolen animals.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> NGAO, County Government, security team, community elders, community members, NEPCOH, Interpeace</p>

Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<p><b>5 years of tension (2018-2022) between the Gabra and Borana with no interaction within this period. High levels of suspicion between the two communities, and one would be suspected of being a spy if they cross over to the other community. Conflict-related casualties between Gabra and Borana in Saku Sub-County during the period were 47, (ACLED Data, 2024).</b></p>	<p>By October 2022, Intervillage Dialogue Spaces were created in numerous conflict hotspot places where two conflicting communities lived next to one another. This led to a significant reduction in insecurity, improved mobility and intervillage collaboration, and improved social harmony. For example, on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022 in HuQa village Saku subcounty Mama Kolis Waqo Halakhe, a Gabra woman married to a Borana was reunited with her mother Kame Boru, a Gabra for the first time in 5 years since the ethnic clashes between Gabra and Borana started in 2018.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ For five years there was a high tension and violence between the two communities.</li> <li>✓ During the 5 years Mama Kolis lost 4 brothers and was unable to attend their burial.</li> <li>✓ Her family just like other families were previously living together &amp; intermarrying but in the 5 years there was no interactions.</li> <li>✓ The Intervillage peace meeting helped the communities to cross imaginary boundaries, rebuild relations and collaborate on security and economic manners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized the peace meeting that brought together the Gabra &amp; Borana communities.</li> <li>• Provided food, refreshments &amp; logistics for the participants.</li> <li>• Due to insecurity the government put in place dusk to dawn curfews this incentivized the communities to engage in the peace meeting.</li> <li>• Willingness of the Gabra/Borana community to meet.</li> <li>• Previous peace meeting of stakeholders by the foundation.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> Interpeace, NCIC</p>

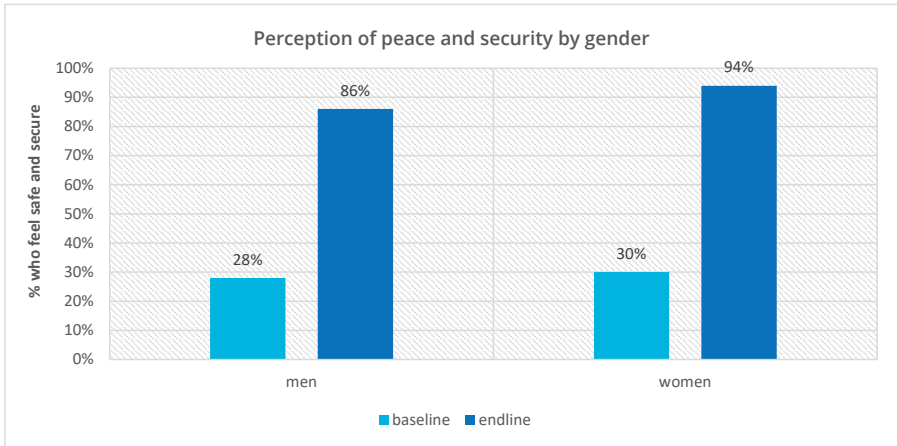
Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<p><b>January to March 2023:</b></p> <p><b>Livestock raiding and attacks among the Borana, Dassanach, Gabra, Rendille, Samburu and Turkana caused 20 casualties and 5 injuries across Marsabit county (ACLEDData, 2024).</b></p>	<p>In March 2023 community leaders of three warring communities (Borana, Gabra and Rendille) signed intra-community peace agreements that brought the active end to violent conflicts that had escalated to an all-time high in 2021/2022 in Marsabit. Borana agreement signed 16 to 17 March, Gabra agreement signed 21 to 22 March, and Rendille agreement 27 to 28 March 2023.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Peaceful co-existence of the warring communities, through the prevention of more killings, reduced livestock theft, and supported return of stolen livestock.</li> <li>✓ Saku town was brought to life as the business communities conducted their activities without fear.</li> <li>✓ Trust was restored and calm returned in Saku, Kalacha, and Laisamis communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conducted intra community meetings.</li> <li>• Deployed election monitors in every ward</li> <li>• Conducted radio shows to sensitise community members in Marsabit.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> elders, Interfaith Council, political goodwill, Interpeace, NCIC</p>

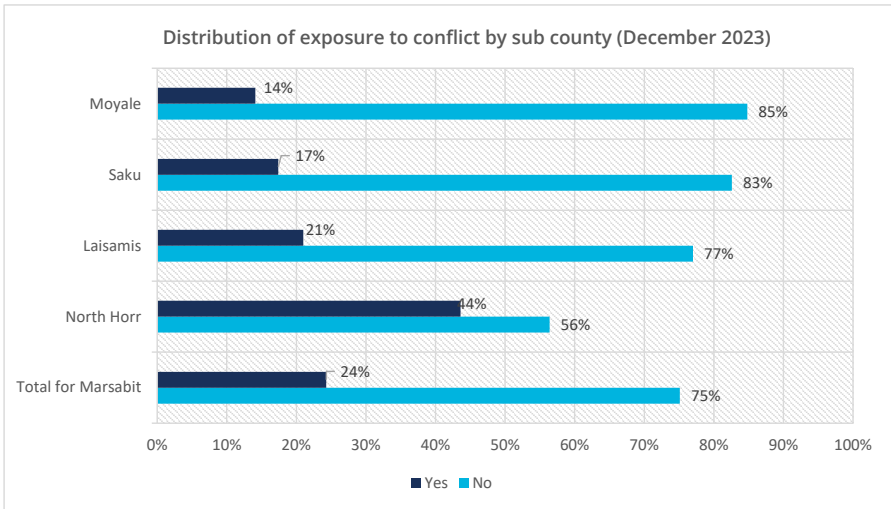
Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<p><b>April to May 2023: Competition for grazing land in Harogirisa, violent attacks against civilians in Badassa and Songa among the Borana, Gabra and Rendille communities; 10 casualties and 1 injury in Harogirisa (ACLED Data, 2024).</b></p>	<p>On May 7, 2023, a 10-member resource committee (5 Borana, 5 Gabra) was established to address all resource-based conflicts in Harogirisa, a grazing area between Horoder and Saku towns, contested by the Borana and Gabra communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conflicting communities (Borana and Gabra) can now share resources and live peacefully in an area that had become inaccessible during the drought period, due to insecurity.</li> <li>✓ Elders and herders together with security teams agreed to arrest those who spearheaded propaganda that escalated conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated inter-community dialogues on resource sharing between herders from both communities.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> security team, elders, youth/herders, Interpeace</p>
	<p>On 15 May and 3 June 2023, peace actors' forums were held at Paradise Inn in Saku, bringing together the County Commissioner, elders, and community members from Borana and Gabra communities to discuss the witnessed killings between the Borana of Badassa and Rendille of Songa that had been ongoing for a month.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ The peace forum resulted in the beefing up of patrols by the Quick Response Unit to ensure no more killings happened in the area, after 8 people lost their lives in the conflict.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mobilised the peace actors' forums.</li> <li>• Supported a one-day meeting to discuss the killings.</li> </ul> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> Interfaith council, local NGOs, NRT, the County Assembly Members, chiefs, Women for Peace, Quick Response Unit station between Badassa and Songa, Interpeace.</p>

Type of Conflict	Outcome of Project Intervention	Significance of the outcome towards realisation of reduced violence in Marsabit	Project's Contribution and Actors Involved
<p><b>May 2023:</b></p> <p><b>Revenge killings between the Samburu and Rendille communities; 5 casualties in Laisamis Sub-County (ACLEL Data, 2024).</b></p>	<p>Between 20 to 21 May 2023, a cessation of hostilities was agreed upon between Lmasula elders of Ndonyo Wasin and Lturuya elders of Laisamis sub-county to reconcile them after a fight occurred when a Lmasula moran defiled a Lturuya girl in early May 2023.</p>	<p>✓ Improved inter- and intra-community relationships hence preventing loss of lives after one Lturuya moran and four Lmusula morans were killed.</p>	<p>Interpeace facilitated an inter community dialogue meeting between the elders.</p>
<p><b>June to July 2023:</b></p> <p><b>Borana, Gabra, Rendille, Samburu, Turkana; livestock raiding, violent attacks against civilians. No casualties, (ACLEL Data, 2024).</b></p>	<p>An inter-village dialogue (IVD) peace committee was established between 21 and 24 July 2023 by the conflict monitoring committee (CMC) members elected by the community. The IVD coordinates peace activities at village level across all conflict hotspots in Marsabit County.</p>	<p>✓ The peace structures are committed to recover livestock in case of a raid. They also monitor conflicts and provide incidents reports on their areas. There is now improved communication, collaboration, and cooperation between villages and communities who have been in conflicts for longtime.</p>	<p>Facilitated the inter village dialogue meetings.</p> <p><u>Peace actors:</u> Interpeace, CMCs, political goodwill, elders, Interfaith Council</p>

# ANNEX IV: End-term Evaluation Findings

An evaluation of the project's accomplishments during the stabilisation phase was conducted in December 2023. Quantitative data was collected using 24 key informant interviews and 14 focused group discussions conducted across the four target sub-counties in Marsabit County. Quantitative data was collected through 362 individual interviews and recorded using the mobile data collection platform (Kobo) for analysis. The end-term data was compared to the baseline to determine the outcome of the intervention in Marsabit county.





After two years of intervention in Marsabit county, 90% of survey respondents expressed feelings of safety in their day-to-day activities. Positive perceptions of the county's safety have increased from 49% at baseline (which took place 9 months into project implementation) to over 70% at the conclusion of the project. The percentage of individuals exposed to conflict has significantly decreased from 50% at baseline to 24% at the conclusion of the project. There was a 58% increase in the number of men and 64% increase in the number of women who felt safe and secure. All respondents from the Corner tribe and the Garre indicated they feel safe and secure to conduct their daily activities. The Sakuye ethnic group reported the tribe with the least proportion of those who felt safe and secure at 75%. There is more work to be done. 24% of people reporting to be exposed to conflict is still very high as is a 30% perception of unsafety. After decades of violent conflict – an 18-month peacebuilding project will not be sufficient to bring lasting peace to Marsabit. However, the difference in the conflict dynamics and perceptions are the start versus the end of the project are stark – demonstrating the power of community-led and government supported peacebuilding processes.






## Interpeace Headquarters

Office 5A, Avenue de France 23,  
1202 Geneva, Switzerland



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