Exploring the gender-climate-conflict nexus in conflict-affected borderlands in the Horn of Africa

Albert Souza Mulli

April 2024

XCEPT
CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT
EVIDENCE / POLICY / TRENDS

About the Author

Albert Souza Mulli is Head of Conflict and peacebuilding at Bodhi Global Analysis. He has over 12 years of experience in conflict and political economy analysis, and stabilisation and peacebuilding policy and programming.

Prior to joining Bodhi, Albert was the Peace Responsiveness Advisor at Interpeace, where he advised UN agencies (FAO, ILO, and IOM) and donor governments (ECHO, Denmark) on strategies and processes for integrating conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding into their humanitarian and development programmes. Before that, Albert worked for eight years as a Conflict Adviser in the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO) and Department for International Development (DFID) in Pakistan, Myanmar, Libya, and South Sudan.

Albert has an MA in International Affairs from the Graduate Institute in Geneva and a BA in Political Science and Latin American Studies from Vassar College in the USA.

About Bodhi Global Analysis

Bodhi Global Analysis is an international development consultancy specialising in political economy analysis, conflict analysis, and gender and inclusion.

About XCEPT

This publication is a product of the Cross-Border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends (XCEPT) research programme, funded by UK International Development. XCEPT brings together world-leading experts and local researchers to examine conflict-affected borderlands, how conflicts connect across borders, and the drivers of violent and peaceful behaviour, to inform policies and programmes that support peace. For more information, visit www.xcept-research.org or contact us at info@xcept-research.org.

This research is part of XCEPT's workstream on how conflicts connect across borders. It is one of several awards supported by the XCEPT Research Fund to investigate multi-actor interventions in cross-border conflict settings.

The views and opinions expressed in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the UK government.

This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the author(s) should be credited, with the date of the publication and reference to XCEPT. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material in this document, the author(s) will not be liable for any loss or damages incurred through the use of this document.

Cover image: Piyaset / Shutterstock 1384058903

BODHI
GLOBAL ANALYSIS

XCEPT
CROSS-BORDER CONFLICT
EVIDENCE / POLICY / TRENDS

UK International
Development
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

Table of Contents

Acronyms

ASAL	Arid and Semi-arid Lands
BORESHA	'Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa' project
CGIAR	Consortium of International Agricultural Research Centers
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
EU	European Union
EUTF	EU Trust Fund for Africa
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisations
ISS	Islamic State in Somalia
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
NRM	Natural Resource Management
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
SAPCONE	St. Peter's Community Network
SEEK	'Selam Ekisil' project
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
SNNPR	Ethiopia's Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
XCEPT	Cross-Border Conflict Evidence, Policy & Trends Research Programme

Executive summary

The Horn of Africa is affected by climate change and natural resource-based conflict. The impacts of climate change in the region – particularly extreme weather events like droughts and flooding – are indirectly contributing to local-level intercommunal natural resource conflicts across the region by exacerbating pre-existing conflict drivers and dynamics. Whilst there has been growing recognition that gender is among the key factors mediating the link between climate change and conflict, there is still a limited understanding of how and under what conditions this occurs – and what the implications are for peacebuilding in these contexts. This research aims to address this gap in the research, contributing to a stronger understanding of the gender-climate-security nexus.

With support from the Cross-Border Conflict Evidence, Policy and Trends (XCEPT) research programme, the research presented in this paper examines the gendered dimensions of the climate-conflict nexus and the effect of climate change and conflict on gender roles in two cross-border conflict systems: the Mandera Triangle (where Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia converge) and the southwest Ethiopia-northwest Kenya border area. To identify implications for policy and programming in climate-affected cross-border conflict systems, the research also conducted two case studies of cross-border projects, one in each conflict system, funded by the EU Trust Fund for Africa's (EUTF) 'Collaboration in Cross-Border Areas of the Horn of Africa Region' to address key risks in the climate-conflict nexus.

Key Findings

Climate change can contribute to cross-border natural resource conflict through four indirect causal pathways, each with a distinct set of intervening variables. By increasing resource scarcity, climate change can: 1) fuel out-group conflict and raise the risk of violence as a means to secure access to vital resources; 2) force pastoralists to change transhumance patterns,

increasing the likelihood that they trespass on land or seek to use resources claimed by local groups, thereby raising the risk of violent conflict; 3) induce migration which can drive opportunistic land-grabbing, in turn raising conflict over land; 4) disrupt livelihoods, forcing pastoralists to diversify livelihoods in ways which increase inter-group competition.

Women are not just passive victims of conflict, but actively engage in conflict – albeit differently to men. Whilst most of the literature on women and conflict focuses on conflict's impact on women, we found that in both conflict systems women actively engage in conflict. This includes instigating and encouraging men to fight, publicly shaming men who do not want to undertake revenge attacks, and providing material support to men during cycles of violence.

Despite their role in conflict and their unique and crucial knowledge of natural resources (from their role managing these resources), women play a limited role in decision-making processes around resource-based conflict resolution and natural resource management. Prevailing patriarchal gender norms are the primary reason for this.

The impacts of climate change are contributing to changing gender roles in communities in both conflict systems, driving women to take on responsibilities traditionally associated with men. Climate change has driven men to stay away from their communities for longer periods of time, and climate-induced conflict has increased the number of widows, driving a rise in female-headed households. This presents both a challenge and an opportunity which multi-actor interventions could leverage for better outcomes across the gender-climate-security nexus.

Recommendations

1. **Adopt a multi-dimensional and integrated gender-climate-security nexus approach to climate-vulnerable and climate-affected cross-border conflict systems.** Climate and conflict solutions need to be framed and pursued together – and must integrate gender. Gender is a key intervening factor in the climate-conflict nexus, so understanding its role and integrating a gender-sensitive approach is integral for effective and sustainable results.

2. **Adopting a gender-transformative approach will enable programming to contribute to shifting the gender norms that limit women's meaningful engagement** in decision-making around natural resource management and conflict. An explicit approach requires moving beyond tokenistic efforts focused solely on women's representation towards challenging the underlying drivers of gender inequality and women's exclusion.

3. **Engage with influential men to secure their buy-in and catalyse opportunities for addressing patriarchal norms** – which are also detrimental to men – to allow women to play a greater role in natural resource management and decision-making processes associated with them, including around conflict and peacebuilding.

4. **The gender-climate-security nexus needs to be integrated into international policy frameworks**. A growing call for integrating conflict into climate adaptation frameworks and programmes needs to be broadened to include gender, ensuring climate-conflict policies, frameworks, and targets are gender-sensitive and, where feasible, gender transformative.

5. **There needs to be continued investment in research on the gender-climate-security nexus, particularly by women researchers.** Understanding how gender roles and norms contribute to natural resource conflict is crucial to addressing conflict and building peace. Ongoing local-level analysis of the gender-climate-security nexus is essential to further policy and programme actors' understanding of climate change and conflict's contribution to shifting gender norms, and how these changes can be capitalised upon for more effective, gender-transformative climate change adaptation and environmental peacebuilding outcomes.

1. Introduction

The link between climate change and conflict, particularly natural resource-based conflict, is indirect, complex, and multi-dimensional. In cross-border conflict systems, climate change can exacerbate resource conflict between communities by increasing resource scarcity, disrupting livelihoods, and forcing communities to change migration patterns or move across borders, increasing the risk of violence. There is a growing understanding that this process is gendered, given that gender norms and identities intersect with other environmental, social, political, and economic factors to determine how individuals, groups, and communities engage in violent conflict.

However, there is still a limited understanding of how climate-induced natural resource-based conflict affects gender norms, and what the implications are for environmental peacebuilding. Can climate change and climate-induced conflict in cross-border areas create opportunities for women to play a greater role in natural resource management and peacebuilding? How can more integrated development and peacebuilding interventions in areas affected by natural resource-based conflict expand and leverage these opportunities for greater gender equality, climate adaptation and peace outcomes?

This paper presents findings from research on the gendered dimensions of the climate-conflict nexus and the effect of climate-induced conflict on gender roles and/or norms in the Mandera Triangle (where Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia converge) and the southwest Ethiopia-northwest Kenya border area. Through two project case studies, one in each conflict system, the research identified opportunities for more climate adaptation and peacebuilding interventions to be more gender-transformative.

The paper is structured into five sections. The first section presents the current state of gender in the climate-conflict evidence. The second section presents the analytical framework and research design adopted, and how it will address key gaps in the evidence. The third section presents the findings of the research. The fourth section presents the two project case studies. Lastly, the fifth section distils conclusions from the research and presents recommendations for multi-actor interventions in climate change and conflict affected areas.

2. The Missing Piece: Gender and the Climate-Conflict Nexus

Policy interest in the relationship between climate change and conflict began to gain prominence from 2007, spurring a growth in scholarly and practitioner-led research. Over the past 16 years, research on the climate-conflict nexus developed broadly into two distinct yet overlapping streams. The first – originally labelled 'climate security' – was initially narrowly focused on the risks that climate change posed to state security. However, it has broadened over time to encompass research on climate change's effects on different types of conflict, violence, and human security at different levels.[1]

The second research stream is 'environmental peacebuilding', which overlapped with, but emerged separately from the climate security stream. Inversely to climate security, it has focused on understanding the causal relationship between environment and peace.[2] Originally conceptualised as 'environmental peacemaking' focussed solely on shared natural resources as a means to resolve conflict, the field has evolved

1   Busby, J. W. (2021). Beyond internal conflict: The emergent practice of climate security. *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(1), 186–194. Available at: **Link**.

2   Ide, T. (2018). The impact of environmental cooperation on peacemaking: Definitions, mechanisms, and empirical evidence. *International Studies Review*, 21(1). Available at: **Link**.

and broadened.[3] As a result, environmental peacebuilding currently encompasses a wide set of concepts and theories with no coherent overarching theoretical framework and evidence base.[4] Nevertheless, most research on environmental peacebuilding aims to demonstrate how improved and more cooperative natural resource management can both minimise the environmental, resource-based drivers of conflict whilst also improving communities' adaptation and resilience to climate change.[5]

Over the past decade, the evidence base on the climate-conflict nexus has strengthened. Currently, there is a broad consensus that while climate change is not a direct driver of violent conflict, it can exacerbate existing conflict drivers in complex ways, under certain conditions and through different pathways.[6] With some variation on the type of conflict and the explanatory power of climate impacts, there is generally robust empirical evidence for the different causal pathways between climate change and local, inter-communal natural resource-based conflict.[7] The evidence base for environmental peacebuilding is, however, much smaller and largely drawn from grey literature produced by NGO and UN programmes.[8] Whilst there is solid evidence that shared natural resources can contribute to peace, there is limited empirical

> **❝ Whilst there is solid evidence that shared natural resources can contribute to peace, there is limited empirical evidence for how and under what conditions this happens.**

evidence for how and under what conditions this happens. And much of the evidence that does exist is largely derived from disparate and sometimes anecdotal case studies.[9]

Gender has remained a central gap in both research streams. The body of research on gender's role in driving conflict and in shaping communities' vulnerability and resilience to climate change has grown over the past decade, but separately. Gender has been largely omitted and remains at the margin of the research on the climate-conflict nexus.[10] There are a few important exceptions. Fröhlich and Gioli in 2015 developed a comprehensive research framework for integrating gender into climate and conflict research, which Caroli et al built and expanded on in 2022.[11] Tanyag and True in 2019, Smith et al in 2021, Yoshida and Céspedes-Báez in 2021, deepened the evidence based through empirical studies

3　Dresse, A., Fischhendler, I., Nielsen, J. Ø., and Zikos, D. (2019). Environmental peacebuilding: Towards a theoretical framework. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 54(1). Available at: **Link**.

4　Ibid.

5　Brown, O. and Nicolucci-Altman, G. (2022). The Future of Environmental Peacebuilding: Nurturing an Ecosystem for Peace - A White Paper. Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). Available at: **Link**; Dresse, A., Fischhendler, I., Nielsen, J. Ø., and Zikos, D. (2016). Moving beyond natural resources as a source of conflict: Exploring the human-environment nexus of environmental peacebuilding. THESys Discussion Paper, No. 2016-2. Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Available at: **Link**; Waisová, S. (2015). Environmental cooperation as an instrument of conflict transformation in conflict-prone areas: Where does it start, how deep it can be and what effects it can have? Politické Vedy, 2(105). Available at: **Link**.

6　Koubi, V. (2019). Climate change and conflict. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 22(1), 343–360. Available at: **Link**.

7　Doring, S. (2020). Come rain, or come wells: how access to groundwater affects communal violence. *Political Geography*, 76(January). Available at: **Link**; Gleditsch, N. P. (2012). Special Issue on Climate Change and Conflict. *Journal of Peace Research*, 49(163). Available at: **Link**; Ide, T. et al. (2020). Multi-method evidence for when and how climate-related disasters contribute to armed conflict risk. Global Environmental Change, 62(1). Available at: **Link**; Theisen, O. M. et al. (2013). Is Climate Change a Driver of Armed Conflict? *Climatic Change*, 117 (3). Available at: **Link**; van Weezel, S. (2019). On climate and conflict: Precipitation decline and communal conflict in Ethiopia and Kenya. *Journal of Peace Research*, 56(4). Available at: **Link**; Vesco, P., et al. (2020). Natural Resources and Conflict: A Meta-Analysis of the Empirical Literature. *Ecological Economics*, 172. Available at: **Link**; Von Uexkull, N., d'Errico, M. and Jackson, J. (2020). Drought, resilience, and support for violence: Household survey evidence from DR Congo. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 64(10). Available at: **Link**.

8　Dresse, A., Fischhendler, I., Nielsen, J. Ø., and Zikos, D. (2019). Environmental peacebuilding: Towards a theoretical framework. *Cooperation and Conflict*, 54(1). Available at: **Link**.

9　See: Adams, C., Ide, T., Barnett, J. et al. (2018). 'Sampling Bias in Climate–Conflict Research,' *Nature Climate Change*, 8. Available at: **Link**; Herbert, S. (2019). Lessons from environmental peacebuilding programming. K4D Helpdesk Report. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies. Available at: **Link**.

10　Ide, T., Ensor, M. O., Le Masson, V., & Kozak, S. (2021). Gender in the Climate-Conflict Nexus: "Forgotten" Variables, Alternative Securities, and Hidden Power Dimensions. *Politics and Governance*, 9(4). Available at: **Link**.

11　See: Fröhlich, C., Gioli, G. (2015). Gender, conflict, and global environmental change. *Peace Review*, 27(2). Available at: **Link**; Caroli, G., Tavenner, K., Huyer, S., Sarzana, C., Belli, A., Elias, M., Pacillo, G., and Läderach, P. (2022). The Gender-Climate-Security Nexus: Conceptual Framework, CGIAR Portfolio Review, and Recommendations towards an Agenda for One CGIAR. Position Paper No. 2022/1. CGIAR. Available at: **Link**.

of the gender dimensions of environmental peacebuilding in different contexts.[12] However, the vast majority of the research on gender in the climate-conflict nexus remains narrowly focussed on their impacts on women and girls, emphasising women's vulnerability mainly as victims of conflict and climate. There is still a major gap in our understanding of women's roles in climate-induced conflict, how climate change and conflict affect (and potentially shift) gender norms, and the implications for men and women's engagement in environmental peacebuilding.[13]

3. Research Design and Analytical Framework

This paper aims to address the gap in the literature on gender's role as an intervening variable in the causal pathways linking climate change to conflict. Much of the empirical research on the climate-conflict nexus has focussed on Sub-Saharan Africa, particularly the Horn of Africa.[14] This is a consequence of the considerable incidence of both climate change and natural resource-based conflict in the region.[15] To ensure consistency, we selected the Horn of Africa as the target location for our research. This was to ensure that the research could, as much as possible, isolate its examination of gender as an intervening variable, in a context where the link between conflict and climate change has been well established. Due to the transnational nature

of climate change and its impacts, within the Horn of Africa we further narrowed the scope of the research by choosing to focus on two climate-affected cross-border conflict systems: the Mandera Triangle (where Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia converge) and the southwest Ethiopia-northwest Kenya border area (see Figure 1).

Lastly, to ensure the research is relevant to, and can inform, more gender-responsive cross-border peacebuilding and climate policy and programming responses, we included case studies of multi-actor cross-border programmes — these, in turn, determined the conflict systems to be targeted by the research. To enable a comparative analysis, we selected two projects which had environmental peacebuilding and gender components, in two separate, but similar,

Figure 1. Research locations
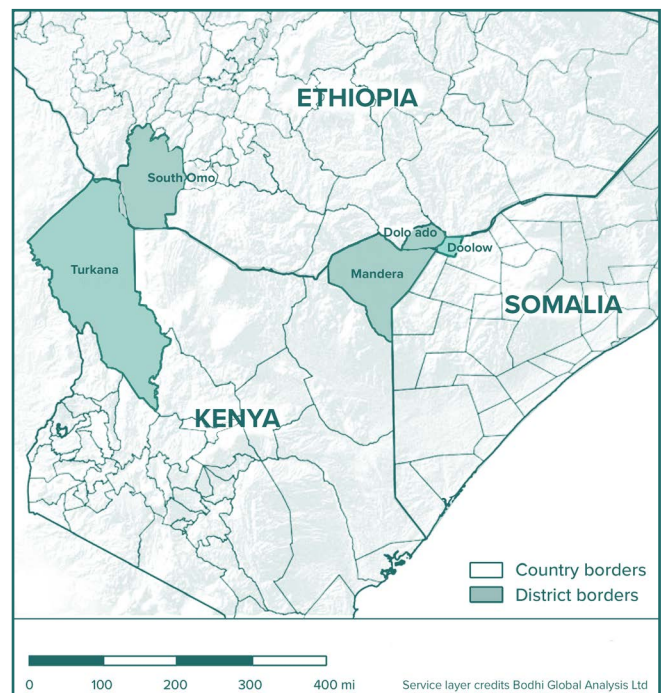
12   See: Smith, J. M., Olosky, L., and Fernández, J. G. (2021). The climate-gender-conflict nexus: Amplifying women's contributions at the grassroots. Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security. Available at: **Link**.

      Tanyag, M., & True, J. (2019). Gender responsive alternatives to climate change: A global research report. Monash GPS Centre. Available at: **Link**; Yoshida, K., and Céspedes-Báez, L. (2021). The nature of women, peace and security: A Colombian perspective. *International Affairs*, 97(1). Available at: **Link**.

13   Kronsell, A. (2018). 'WPS and Climate Change', in Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, Oxford Handbooks. Available at: **Link**.

14   Sweijs, T., de Haan, M., and van Manen, H. (2022). Unpacking the Climate Security Nexus Seven Pathologies Linking Climate Change to Violent Conflict. The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. Available at: **Link**.

15   Solomon, N., et al (2018). Environmental impacts and causes of conflict in the Horn of Africa: A review. *Earth-Science Reviews*, 177. Available at: **Link**; UNHCR. (2023). UNHCR East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes Region Regional Overview - Internally Displaced Persons (January – March 2023). Available at: **Link**; WWA (2023). Human-induced climate change increased drought severity in Horn of Africa. World Weather Attribution. Available at: **Link**.

cross-border conflict systems. They were selected because they each adopted a different approach to addressing cross-border conflict in two conflict systems that experience similar climate impacts and have similar patriarchal norms in place that shape how men and women engage in peacebuilding. This in turn would enable the analysis to examine the effectiveness of the two different approaches, and their integration of gender, in similar contexts and conditions, minimising the possible intervening effects of contextual differences.

To ensure coherence in our research, we selected two projects funded by the same programme, the EU Trust Fund for Africa's (EUTF) 'Collaboration in Cross-Border Areas of the Horn of Africa Region' programme, which currently runs to March 2024. Its objectives are:

1. To prevent local conflict and mitigate its impact;

2. To promote economic and private sector de-velopment, and greater resilience, particularly among vulnerable groups (e.g. youth, women, displaced people); and

3. To ensure effective trans-boundary cooperation and coordination of cross-border initiatives.

The first case study is the 'Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa' project (BORESHA), delivered in 2018-2021 in the Mandera Triangle by a consortium led by the Danish Refugee Council. BORESHA aimed to contribute to objective two of the EUTF programme, with interventions focussed on building economic resilience among climate and conflict-affected communities. The second case study is 'Selam Ekisil' (SEEK), a project delivered in 2019-2023 in the southwest Ethiopia-northwest Kenya border area by a consortium led by Pact, with the aim of addressing conflict through better and more cooperative NRM. SEEK aims to contribute to objective one of the EUTF programme, focusing on supporting intercommunal and cross-border peace dialogue. The comparative analysis of these two projects enabled us to illustrate how current

and past programmes in the two regions operated in and considered the relationship between climate, conflict, and gender, and, therefore, draw out relevant implications for future policy and programming in similar cross-border contexts.

The Analytical Framework

The study's analytical framework draws on Caroli et al's Gender-Climate-Security nexus, a comprehensive framing of how the impacts of climate change interact with gender and social inequalities, and the different ways in which this affects, and is affected by, conflict and violence.[16] Drawing on the existing literature, the nexus identifies four inter-linked pathways for climate-related conflict and security risks which have a gendered dimension: resource scarcity, loss of livelihoods, mobility and migration, and intra-household and communal conflict. Recognising that all four pathways overlap, we drew specifically on the fourth pathway – on (inter)communal conflict – to develop our analytical framework as it is the pathway most relevant to the study's scope. Particularly, the fourth pathway focuses on the gendered dimensions of the relationship between climate change and conflict in climate-vulnerable and conflict-affected arid and semi-arid lands (ASALs).[17]

The analytical framework is structured to enable a cascading analysis of conflict, the conflict-climate nexus, and the intersecting role of gender (see Figure 2 below). This structure was fundamental to enable an iterative analysis, in which each set of causal relationships examined provides the basis for analysis of the next set. Each analytical component is described below, in order.

- **Conflict and security** - An analysis of the key conflict drivers, actors, and dynamics in each conflict system is fundamental for then assess-ing the role that climate hazards play and how gender operates as an intervening variable in the causal pathways linking climate change and conflict.

---

16   Caroli, G. et al (2022). The Gender-Climate Security Nexus: Conceptual Framework, CGIAR Portfolio Review, and Recommendations towards an Agenda for One CGIAR. Position Paper No. 2022/1. CGIAR FOCUS Climate Security. Available at: Link.

17   Ibid.

- **Climate hazards and the link with conflict** - Identifying the climate hazards affecting each conflict system is then essential to narrow down the pathways through which each specific climate hazard empirically affects conflict.

- **Gender's intersecting role** - The two first components provide a conceptual and empirical basis for finally examining how gender contributes to conflict, and, conversely, how the impacts of climate change and conflict affect gender roles and/or norms. Gender norms refers to the informal rules in a society, which define how people of a particular gender are expected to behave – their gender roles – and shape each gender's perceptions, attitudes, and expectations towards each other.[18] Recognising that changes in gender norms can take a long time, and due to multiple and complex factors, the analysis focussed on identifying shifts – and entry points for interventions – which could contribute to changing gender norms in the long-term.

Methodology

The research adopted qualitative research methods, including a desk-based review of existing secondary research, and the collection of primary data through Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in the two target areas. The desk review drew on both academic journals and grey literature, including research reports by the UN, the World Bank, USAID, the European Commission, and NGOs. Primary data collection followed strict research ethics principles, including informed consent, independence, confidentiality, gender-sensitivity, and Do No Harm. All data were collected in the local language, with interview transcripts translated into English for analysis. The use of different data collection methods enabled the use of primary data collection to triangulate and fill gaps in the findings from the secondary data, ensuring the findings are accurate and reliable.

The research was conducted over a two-month period between 1 May and 24 June 2023. Data collection in the field was conducted between 3 and 24 June 2023 by three teams of two national researchers, one in Ethiopia (composed of two

Figure 2. Analytical framework

---
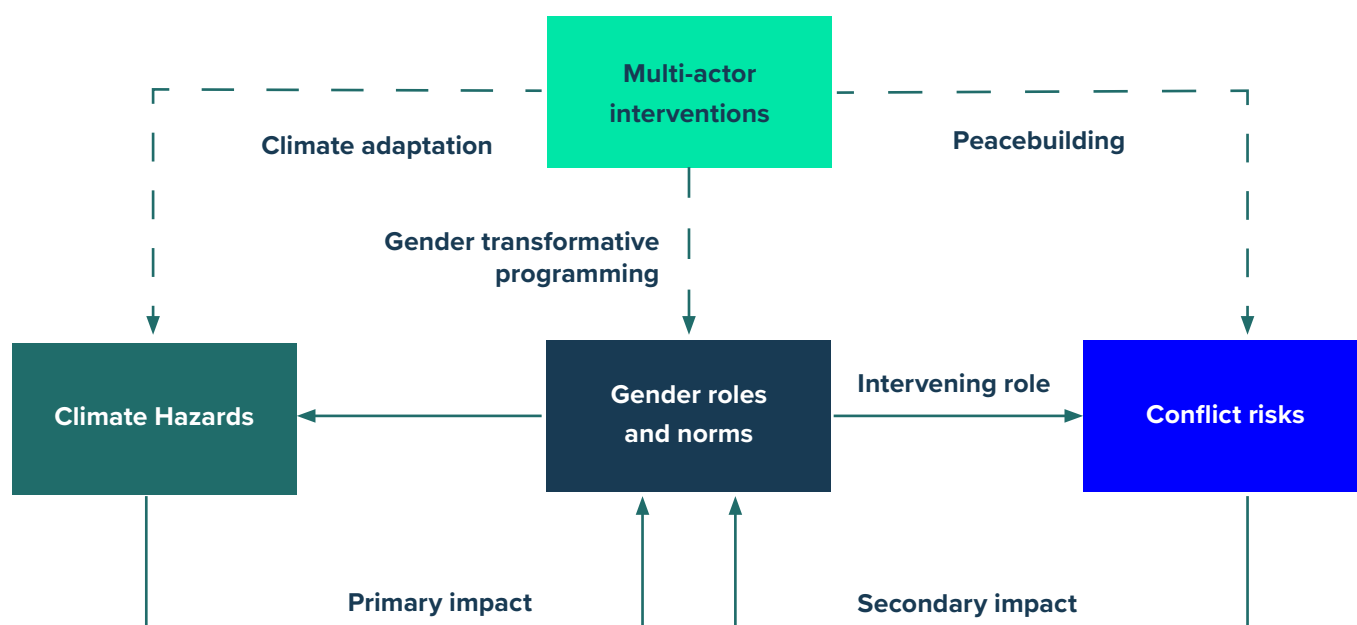
18   Harper, C., Marcus, R., George, R., D'Angelo, S. and Samman, E. (2020) 'Gender, power and progress: How norms change'. ALIGN/ODI. Available at: **Link**.

men), one in Kenya (composed of one man and one woman), and one in Somalia (composed of one man and one woman). A total of 47 KIIs were conducted: 28 in BORESHA target areas in the Mandera Triangle (8 in Ethiopia, 11 in Kenya, and 9 Somalia) and 19 in SEEK target areas across the Northwest Kenya-Southwest Ethiopia border area (10 in Ethiopia and 9 in Kenya). Respondents included BORESHA and SEEK project staff, local authorities, and local community leaders. Among the 47 respondents, 37 were men and 10 were women. Despite concerted efforts to interview women, prevailing patriarchal norms in the research locations limited the research team's access to women respondents.

The KIIs were supplemented by 20 FGDs with community members: 12 in BORESHA target areas in the Mandera Triangle (four each in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia) and 8 in SEEK target areas in the northwest Kenya-southwest Ethiopia border area (four each in Kenya and Ethiopia). Of the 20 focus groups, 10 were mixed, composed of both men and women, 5 of only men, and 5 of only women.

KII and FGD data were analysed throughout the data collection phase – the data were assessed against the analytical framework and the findings of the desk review to triangulate and validate the results and identify new themes and gaps from the primary data. The analysis drew mostly on primary research from the three target countries for the analysis of the climate-conflict nexus. However, to inform the analysis of implications for programming interventions, we also consulted relevant secondary research from other similar contexts, highlighting where our findings were aligned with previous research.

Data Limitations

It is important to note that the research faced a few limitations, which should be considered when reading its findings and conclusions.

- Data gaps – Interview data differed across the three research locations as they were collected by different teams using different tools. Despite all teams undergoing the same training, there was inevitably variation in the length and level of detail of answers provided across locations, possibly due to researchers' individual research styles, research subjects' misunderstanding of lines of questioning, and incomplete discussions with questions missed or unanswered. In the data analysis phase, this was clearly noted and data triangulation was rigorously applied, within each location, to ensure findings were accurate and consistent.

- Response bias - Informants may have formed their responses based on personal motivation rather than the most accurate information. This is often the case as respondents might feel that giving positive feedback would help the programmes to continue or resume. Extra care was made to probe appropriately and to encourage respondents to answer openly. Findings are also triangulated with other sources.

4. Findings

The Mandera Triangle

The Mandera Triangle is a borderland area where the borders of Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia converge. It encompasses Mandera County in Kenya; Dollo Ado woreda in the Liben Zone of Ethiopia's Somali region; and Dollow district, in the Gedo Region of Somalia. It is a region categorised by arid and semi-arid lands, with a predominantly rural population, the majority of which engage in pastoralism and agro-pastoralism as the primary source of livelihood. Cross-border trade is an important feature of local livelihoods, with key consumer goods and cattle moving from Somalia into Kenya, the trade of camels from northern

Kenya into Somalia and Ethiopia, and the trade in khat from Kenya and Ethiopia into Somalia.[19]

Communities on all three sides of the tri-border area are organised around clan-based identities, and all clans in the area have a cross-border presence. For example, the Garre, Marehan, and the Murule, the three largest clans in the area, are all present in Mandera County and in the Gedo region of Somalia. The Degodia, the most numerous clan in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, are also present in Mandera.[20]

Conflict Overview

The Mandera Triangle is a multi-dimensional conflict system, with conflict driven by socio-economic and political factors both within and across borders. There are two main types of conflicts in the area: 1) Intercommunal conflict between different clans over natural resources, territorial boundaries, and political power, both at the local and national level, 2) the armed conflict between al-Shabaab and Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) – violent extremist non-state armed groups (NSAG) – and the Somali and Kenya governments.

Violence associated with intercommunal conflict is mostly sporadic and cyclical in nature, with intermittent spikes in violence which can result in large-scale fatalities and displacement. There was an escalation in the levels of intercommunal violence between 2010 and 2015.[21] The period between 2013 and 2014 was especially violent, driven by armed conflict principally between the Garre and Degodia clans.[22]

> ❝ **The Mandera Triangle is a multi-dimensional conflict system, with conflict driven by socio-economic and political factors both within and across borders.**

The violence is estimated to have displaced 125,000 persons in Mandera county alone.[23] There has been limited intercommunal violence in the Mandera Triangle in recent years, with most conflict-related violence in the region since 2019 resulting from the conflict with al-Shabaab. As seen in Figure 3, most violent incidents and fatalities in the period have been concentrated in Mandera County, Kenya, and the Gedo Region, Somalia.

Although driven by distinct factors (detailed below), intercommunal conflict and the conflict with al-Shabaab are linked in different ways.[24] Whilst al-Shabaab do not have a clear clan-based character, there is evidence that they exploit clan divisions in their recruitment strategies.[25] Community members have also reported that the destruction of property and loss of assets resulting from al-Shabaab-related violence exacerbates resource scarcity, fuelling resource competition between clans.[26]

Further, the conflict with al-Shabaab has contributed to tensions between Kenyan Somalis and refugees from Somalia, whom the Kenyans mistrust due to their suspected association

19   EUTF. (2016). Cross-border analysis and mapping - Cluster 2: Kenya-Somalia-Ethiopia. European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa. Available at: **Link**.

20   Menkhaus, K. (2015). Conflict Assessment: Northern Kenya and Somaliland. Social Science Research Network (SSRN). Available at: **Link**; NCIC. (2022). Towards a Violence-Free 2022 Election Conflict Hotspot Mapping for Kenya. National Cohesion and Integration Commission - Kenya. Available at: **Link**.

21   Interpeace. (2017). Mandera County Note: Voices of the People - Challenges to Peace in Mandera County. Interpeace. Available at: **Link**.

22   ICG (2015). Kenya's Somali North East: Devolution and Security. Briefing N°114, International Crisis Group. Available at: **Link**.

23   OCHA (2014). Kenya: Inter-Communal Conflict by County (January-November 2014). UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Available at: **Link**.

24   ACLED (2022). Regional Overview: Africa 22-28 October 2022. ACLED. Available at: **Link**.

25   Sahgal, G., Kimaiyo, T., Mohamed, A. H., Rotich, S., Karienye, D., and Warfa, A. O. (2019). Clan Conflict and Violent Extremism in the North-Eastern Counties of Kenya. Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies. Available at: **Link**.

25   Saferworld. (2020). "A war that hurts us twice" - Inside Kenya's war on terror: community perspectives on security in Mandera county. Saferworld. Available at: **Link.**

26   FGD. Adult women. Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

Figure 3. Conflict incidents in the Mandera Triangle 2019-2022. (Source: ACLED (2022). Regional Overview: Africa 22-28 October 2022. ACLED. Available at: **Link**.)
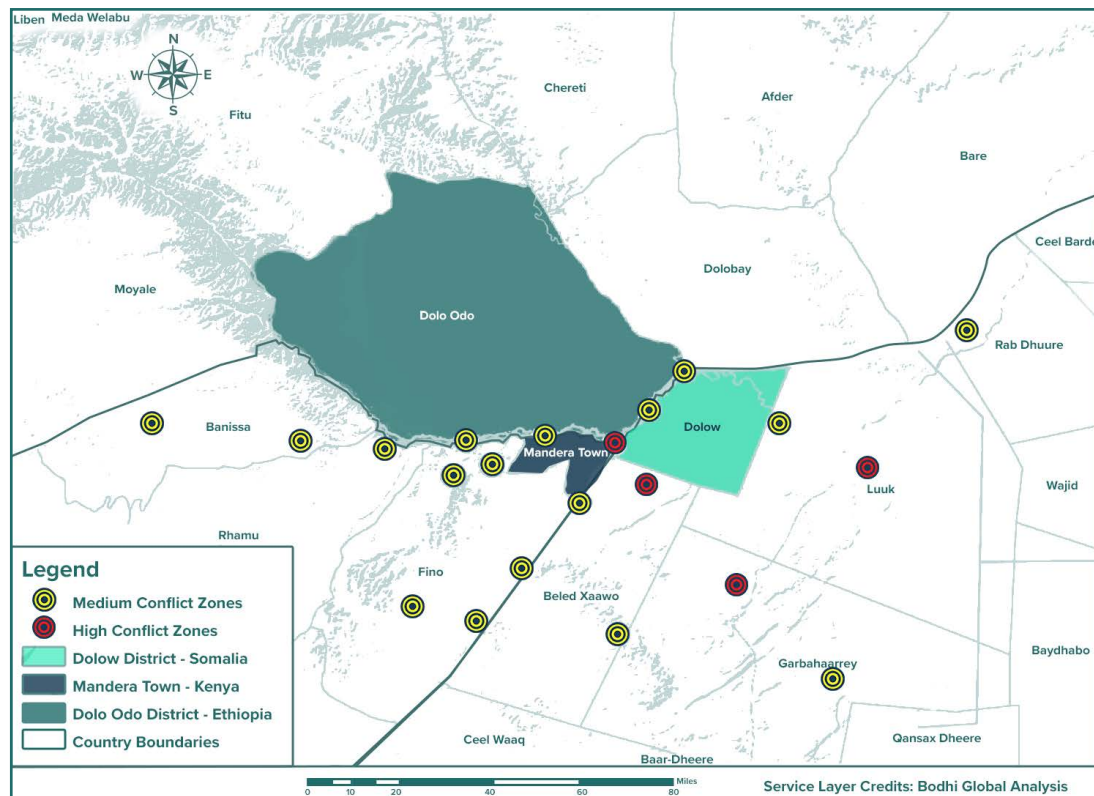
with al-Shabaab.[27] From August 2022, conflict activity increased notably in Somalia after the Somali government launched an offensive against al-Shabaab in south-central Somalia, driving the number of reported fatalities to 6,500, compared to fewer than 3,500 in 2021, prior to the offensive.[28] The Somali government's offensive has been supported by clan militias of the Hawadle, Abgal, and Habar Gedir clans, which have previously been in conflict with each other.[29]

Whilst recognising these two conflicts are linked, the research focussed on intercommunal conflict, which is more relevant to the scope of the study. This was for two reasons: first, intercommunal conflict is largely driven by resource scarcity which is affected by environmental and climatic changes. Second, the two case study projects we focused on only targeted intercommunal conflict through their peacebuilding work.

Conflict Drivers

Intercommunal conflict in the Mandera Triangle is fuelled by two inter-linked drivers: competition over scarce natural resources, and political and economic competition over land and territorial borders.

Conflict driver 1: Competition over natural resources

Whilst the salience of clan and sub-clan identities is fluid and contingent, clan-based identities have been central to groups' claims over specific territories and the resources therein.[30] As a result, intercommunal conflict in the Mandera Triangle has been driven primarily by different clans seeking to access and control scarce natural resources such as arable land for grazing and agriculture, and water resources.[31] As most

---

27   Saferworld. (2020). "A war that hurts us twice" - Inside Kenya's war on terror: community perspectives on security in Mandera county. Saferworld. Available at: **Link**.

28   ACLED (2022). Heightened Political Violence in Somalia. Contextual Assessment. ACLED. Available at: **Link**.

29   ICG (2023). Sustaining Gains in Somalia's Offensive against Al-Shabaab. Briefing No. 187. International Crisis Group. Available at: **Link**.

30   Menkhaus, K. (2015). Conflict Assessment: Northern Kenya and Somaliland. Social Science Research Network (SSRN). Available at: **Link**.

31   UNDP. (2023). Unlocking the potential of Africa's borderland regions: Insights from Agropastoralists. United Nations Development Programme. Available at: **Link**.

clans in the area have a cross-border presence – either through settlement or seasonal migration – resource-based intercommunal conflict occurs both within Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia as well as across their borders.

In the Dawa, Genale, and Lower Juba basins in Ethiopia, competition over scarce arable land is a source of conflict between farming communities as well as between farmers and pastoralists. In Dollo Ado, drought and demographic pressure has forced many Degodia to abandon pastoralism in favour of farming, resulting in competition over farmland with the farmers from the Garre Marro clan.[32] A similar dynamic is present in Kenya, where the Garre and the Degodia compete over access to pasture and water points for livestock, particularly water pans in Banisa and Mandera West. The Garre believe that the Degodia 'monopolise' communal grazing lands and the Degodia believe that the Garre restrict their access to communal water pans.[33] Each clan often mobilises and seeks support across the Kenya-Ethiopia border.[34]

Conflict driver 2: Ethnic-based political and economic competition over land and borders

Conflict between clans over access to natural resources drives conflict over political and administrative borders. For example, the Garre and the Murulle contest the territory around Alango Gof, which has a permanent water point. Historically, there have also been conflicts between clans seeking to control border towns like Rhamu and El Wak through which much of the cross-border trade between Kenya and Somalia occurs.[35]

Conflict over territorial boundaries is also driven by political factors. In Kenya, for example, the delineation of new political constituencies under the process of devolution has created new political boundaries that do not always align with old administrative and clan-based territorial boundaries. This intensified competition between clans for elected seats and positions in local government, which are now seen as a means to access state resources.[36] For example, in addition to being an important trade town, contestation over the administrative boundaries of the border town of El Wak, which is on the border between the Gedo Region of Somalia and Mandera County in Kenya, has driven conflict between the Garre and the Marrehan clans.[37] Each clan's claims are anchored in the desire to increase the number of parliamentary and cabinet seats they control in the county government.[38] In Kenya, this has also driven clans to mobilise clan members in Somalia and Ethiopia to register to vote in Mandera County to bolster the number of votes for their preferred candidate, as happened during the 2013 elections.[39]

The Southwest Ethiopia–Northwest Kenya Border

The Kenya-Ethiopia border spans 861 kilometres through the counties of Marsabit, Moyale, Turkana, Wajir, and Mandera in Kenya, and Borana and Dawa in Ethiopia.[40] The southwest Ethiopia–northwest Kenya border region encompasses the South Omo zone of Ethiopia's South Ethiopia Regional State, formerly part of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), and Turkana county in Kenya.

32   Eulenberger, I. et al (2016). Agenda-setting report for the borderlands working group. Available at: **Link**.

33   Nolasco, L. K. (2017) Conflicts and their management in Kenya. Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. Available at: **Link**.

34   Saferworld. (2020). "A war that hurts us twice" - Inside Kenya's war on terror: community perspectives on security in Mandera county. Saferworld. Available at: **Link**.

35   Ibid.

36   Interpeace. (2017). Mandera County Note: Voices of the People - Challenges to Peace in Mandera County. Interpeace. Available at: **Link**.

37   Eulenberger, I. et al (2016). Agenda-setting report for the borderlands working group. Available at: **Link**.

38   Nolasco, L. K. (2017) Conflicts and their management in Kenya. Rosa Luxemburg Foundation. Available at: **Link**.

39   Saferworld. (2020). "A war that hurts us twice" - Inside Kenya's war on terror: community perspectives on security in Mandera county. Saferworld. Available at: **Link**.

40   UNDP. (2018). Cross-border cooperation between Ethiopia and Kenya for conflict prevention and Peacebuilding in Marsabit-Moyale Cluster. United Nations Development Programme. Available at: **Link**.

> ❝ **The Kenya-Ethiopia border is characterised by poverty and underdevelopment, largely due to marginalisation and lack of central government services and investment.**

It is a cross-border and borderland area characterised by poverty and underdevelopment, largely due to marginalisation and lack of central government services and investment. Estimates place 79.4 per cent of the population in Turkana county below the poverty line.[41] Similarly, South Omo is one of the poorest regions in Ethiopia.[42] Long-term underinvestment in fundamental necessities such as health, education, security, and roads has exposed the communities in these borderland regions to vulnerability and external shocks, including climate, economic, and conflict shocks.[43]

The two main ethnic groups living in this region are the Turkana, mainly on the Kenyan side of the border and the Dassenach, who have a cross border presence. The region is also home to a variety of minority ethnic groups, including the Nyangatom, which have a presence in both Kenya and Ethiopia. Due to the region's harsh arid and semi-arid environment and variable and unpredictable climate, both populations have traditionally relied on livestock as a primary source of livelihood, with estimates that 80 percent of the population in the region are pastoralists.[44] Fishing in Lake Turkana and the River Omo, and subsistence agriculture are the second most prominent sources of income. Both communities have adopted a number of strategies

to cope with the region's arid/semi-arid conditions, including regular migration within their respective countries and across the border in search for pasture and water.[45]

Conflict Overview

The conflict system in the southwest Ethiopia–northwest Kenya border region is characterised by conflict between different local ethnic groups, both within and across the border. The conflict system in this borderland area comprises three main types of conflict: 1) conflict between pastoralists over grazing land and water resources, 2) conflict between fishing communities over control of and access to fisheries (around Lake Turkana), and 3) conflict over land rights and communal territory, all occurring predominantly across ethnic lines (although there are also incidences of intra-communal conflict).

Violence associated with this conflict system is sporadic and occurs in cycles of escalation, which results in fatalities and loss of assets, such as livestock and fish. One estimate places the number of people 'affected' by violence associated with these conflicts in the region at 70,000 people, although it does not specify the effects.[46] Figure 4 below shows the areas of high and medium incidence of violent conflict in the region (encircled by the purple line).

Conflict Drivers

Like the Mandera Triangle, the South Omo-Turkana conflict system is largely fuelled by two inter-linked drivers: competition over scarce

41   Obala, E. (2021). Omo Delta Project: Expanding the Rangeland to achieve Growth and Transformation - Gender mainstreaming in Livelihood Resilience Building. VSF Germany. Available at: **Link**.

42   Adugna, E. and Sileshi, M. (2013). Determinants of poverty in (agro-) pastoral societies of Southern Ethiopia. Livestock Research for Rural Development, Volume 25, 20. Available at: **Link**.

43   UNDP. (2018). Cross-border cooperation between Ethiopia and Kenya for conflict prevention and Peacebuilding in Marsabit-Moyale Cluster. United Nations Development Programme. Available at: **Link**.

44   Obala, E. (2021). Omo Delta Project: Expanding the Rangeland to achieve Growth and Transformation - Gender mainstreaming in Livelihood Resilience Building. VSF Germany. Available at: **Link**.

45   World Bank. (2020). From Isolation to Integration: The Borderlands of the Horn of Africa. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank. Available at: **Link**.

46   Macharia, A. (2020). Diminishing role of traditional mechanisms in the management of pastoralist conflict. Briefing Paper No. 2: An Analysis of Turkana Dassenach Conflict. Available at: **Link**.

Figure 4. The South Omo-Turkana border. (Source: SEEK (2021). Source: Approaches to Managing Conflict in Southwest Ethiopia – Northwest Kenya Border. PACT. Available at: **Link**.)
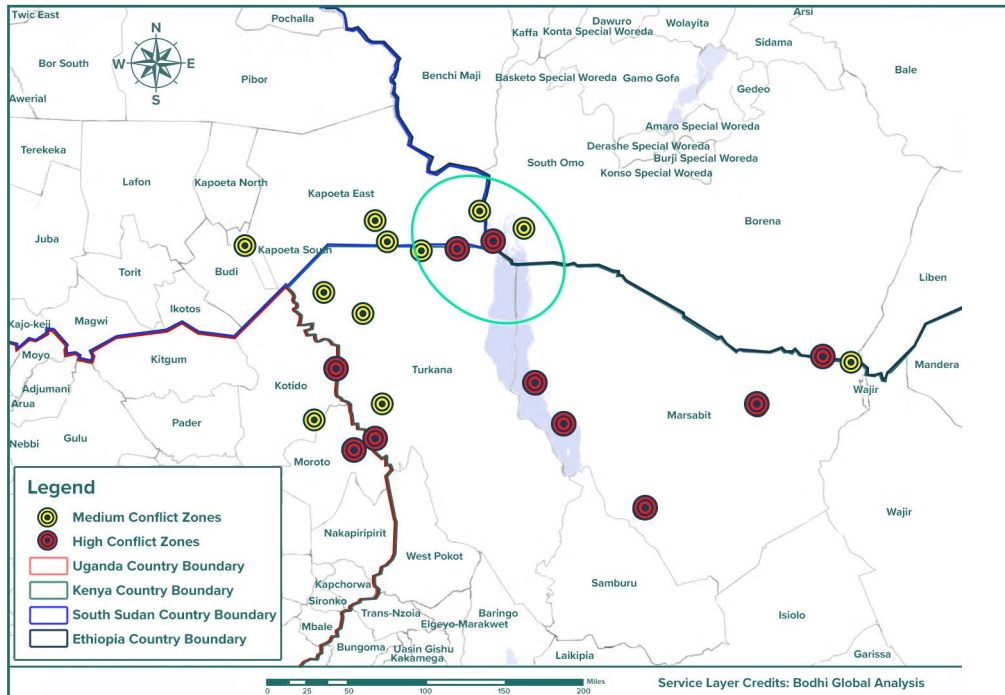
natural resources, and political and economic competition over land and territorial borders. However, in this border area, the presence of Lake Turkana represents a crucial additional resource central to local livelihoods, which in turn has also invariably featured centrally as a driver of intercommunal conflict and violence.

Conflict driver 1: Competition over scarce pastoral resources

Due to the scarcity of pasture and water sources, the Turkana and Dassanech/Nyangatom – who are mostly pastoralists – have engaged in violent conflict over access to and control of these key resources. This occurs on both sides as well as across the border as both groups engage in seasonal cross-border migration in search of these resources.[47] Violent clashes between the Turkana and the Dassanech and the Turkana and the Nyangatom peaked in 2008-2010, but remain consistent to this day.[48]

Violence is often triggered by livestock raiding.[49] Like migration, livestock raiding between communities has traditionally been a central part of cultural practices like dowries, and a coping mechanism – for replenishing herds during periods of drought.[50] Cattle raids are often the triggers of cycles of inter-communal violence, which often escalate as communities counter-raid and mobilise for revenge attacks.[51] Between 2018 and 2021, there were 34 violent clashes and 5,726 animals raided between the Turkana and the Dassanech, and 53 clashes and 795 animals raided between the Turkana and the Nyangatom.[52]

---

47   Democracy International (2021). Ethiopia South Omo Zone Conflict Assessment: Final Report. USAID. Available at: **Link**.

48   Ibid.

49   KII. Community member (female). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (women). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

50   KII. Traditional chief. Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. 7 June 2023.

51   Kamene, M. J. (2017) Assessing Dynamics of Cross-Border Ethnic Conflicts in Horn of Africa: A Case of Turkana-Dassanech Conflict in Kenya-Ethiopia Border. Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies, University of Nairobi. Available at: **Link**; Devine, P. (2009) Turkana – Dassanech conflict: Causes and Consequences. Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR), Catholic University of Eastern Africa. Available at: **Link.**

52   Democracy International (2021). Ethiopia South Omo Zone Conflict Assessment: Final Report. USAID. Available at: **Link**.

Conflict driver 2: Competition over fisheries

The livelihoods of an estimated 200,000 people depend on fishing in Lake Turkana and the Omo River delta, and the numbers of people involved in fishing has reportedly increased in recent years as pastoralism has become more difficult due to environmental degradation, resource scarcity, and conflict.[53] This has become more acute in recent years as there has been an increase in the number of Ethiopian fishermen migrating to Kenya to fish on Lake Turkana. This has increased competition between the Turkana and the Dassanech and Merille of Ethiopia for control of fisheries, which has, in turn, increased violent conflict between fishermen from these groups.[54] Several community members interviewed in Turkana confirmed a fairly recent increase in intercommunal conflict around fishing and access to productive fishing areas on Lake Turkana.[55]

Conflict driver 3: Contested territorial and land rights

Communities in the region also experience conflicts over land rights, based on conflicting historical territorial claims by different groups, and enabled by the lack of formal land demarcation. In the Lower Omo Valley, which runs along the border, both the Dassanech and Nyangatom share borders with the Turkana, there are a number of cases of communities contesting land ownership, which has occasionally led to violent disputes.[56] Cross-border land disputes are historically rooted in local disputes over the Kenya-Ethiopia border. A majority of Turkana communities believe that their ancestral land extends further north into Ethiopia than the current border, including the arable wetlands around the northern end of Lake Turkana. As a result, they see the Dassanech communities that farm and fish in these areas as encroaching on their land, and mount attacks which result in the destruction of farmland.[57]

These disputes have not been properly addressed by authorities on either side of the border, leaving contested claims and associated grievances on both sides unaddressed.[58] Even with limited violence, this fuels inter-communal mistrust which, like with resource-based conflict, inhibits social cohesion and limits conflict resolution. This allows small disputes to escalate into intercommunal violence, fuelled by historical grievances.

The Impact of Climate Change on Conflict

Climate Hazards

The Horn of Africa is currently going through what has been reported as the worst drought in 40 years.[59] This has been driven by three years of consecutive La Niña conditions in 2020, 2021, and 2022, exacerbated by the impact of climate change, contributing to below average rainfall for the 'short rains' (October-December) in 2020, 2021, and 2022 and the 'long rains' (March-May) in 2021 and 2022.[60] Hydrometeorological evidence shows that climate change is driving unpredictable and erratic rainfall and higher temperatures which in turn leads to excessive evaporation, contributing to longer and more frequent drought conditions.[61]

53   World Bank (2020). From Isolation to Integration: The Borderlands of the Horn of Africa. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank. Available at: **Link**.

54   Democracy International (2021). Ethiopia South Omo Zone Conflict Assessment: Final Report. USAID. Available at: **Link**.

55   KII. Local government official. Lorwateng, Turkana, Kenya. 7 June 2023; KII. Local government official. Turkana, Kenya. 9 June 2023.

56   SEEK (2021). Approaches to Managing Conflict in Southwest Ethiopia – Northwest Kenya Border. PACT. Available at: **Link**.

57   Aurah, N. S. (2018). Turkana-Dassanech relations: economic diversification and inter-communal conflicts, 1984-2015. University of Nairobi. Available at: **Link**.

58   Democracy International (2021). Ethiopia South Omo Zone Conflict Assessment: Final Report. USAID. Available at: **Link**.

59   FAO (2022). The Threat of Starvation Looms in East Africa After Four Failed Rainy Seasons. UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). Available at: **Link**.

60   Kimutai, J. et al (2023). Human-induced climate change increased drought severity in Horn of Africa. Available at: **Link**.

61   Ibid.

In the Mandera Triangle, an estimated 80 per cent of the population are negatively affected by climate change, particularly drought and flooding.[62] A number of community members interviewed in both research locations reported experiencing an increase in droughts in recent years. In Dollow, Somalia, several respondents highlighted an increase in temperatures alongside the higher incidence of droughts over the past five years.[63] In Mandera County, too, elders reported that the region has experienced unprecedented droughts for the past five years, underlining the devastating impact on livelihoods, killing livestock, increasing the price of water, and affecting agricultural production.[64]

At the same time, there is evidence that excessive evaporation has also been contributing to instances of increased precipitation which can lead to flooding.[65] Deforestation and poor land resource management by local populations – for example, by cutting down trees for firewood and the production of charcoal and over-grazing of pasture – have contributed to these patterns by degrading the soil and reducing moisture retention.[66] The result has been that whilst there are more droughts, they are increasingly punctuated by heavy rainfall that triggers floods. Mandera County, for example, was at the epicentre of the 2004-2006 drought in the Horn of Africa, but then also experienced flooding in 2006.[67] Similarly, despite historic droughts in 2022, communities in Mandera experienced acute flooding due to heavy rain in April and May 2023.[68]

Community respondents in both locations confirmed this link. For example, a focus group respondent in Dollow, Somalia, explained that "drought caused wells, dams, and all sources of water in the rural areas to dry, affecting the lives

> ❝ **In the Mandera Triangle, an estimated 80% of the population are negatively affected by climate change, particularly drought and flooding.**

of livestock and people in the area, but then there was also heavy rain with floods that buried the wells and other water sources further causing diseases due to the contaminated water used."[69] In Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, community members also highlighted this link, with one respondent reporting that "the drought brought about water scarcity, food insecurity, and health issues like measles and malnutrition. And with the arrival of rain, we were relieved from the drought conditions. Unfortunately, heavy rainfall also resulted in destructive floods, damaging houses and destroying crops such as onions, tomatoes, and other vegetables."[70]

The southwest Ethiopia–northwest Kenya border region is also vulnerable to several climate hazards, including both slow-onset impacts like increasing temperatures and drought, and more short-term extreme climate events like flooding due to increased rainfall, soil erosion, and poor water management infrastructure. Recent studies have found that the average annual maximum temperature in Ethiopia, including South Omo, rose by 0.3 to 0.6°C per decade between 1985 and 2018.[71]

In Turkana, analysis of temperature changes since 1985 indicates an increase in temperature, particularly during the long rainy season. The number of days of precipitation per rainy season have decreased and become more variable, leading to longer and more frequent dry spells.

62   World Vision (2021). Responding to the triple challenge: Climate, conflict and COVID-19 in the Horn of Africa. World Vision UK. Available at: **Link**.

63   FGD. Community members (men). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (women). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

64   FGD. Elders (men). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

65   Ngcamu, B. S., and Chari, F. (2020). Drought Influences on Food Insecurity in Africa: A Systematic Literature Review. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 17(16). Available at: **Link**

66   Kimutai, J. et al. (2023). Human-induced climate change increased drought severity in Horn of Africa. Available at: **Link**.

67   IFRC (2008). Kenya: Floods. International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

68   Davies, R. (2023). Kenya – Floods Displace Thousands of Households in Mandera and Kisumu. Floodlist. Available at: **Link**.

69   FGD. Community members (men). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

70   FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

71   Ware, M.B., Matewos, T., Guye, M. et al. (2023). Spatiotemporal variability and trend of rainfall and temperature in Sidama Regional State, Ethiopia. Theoretical and Applied Climatology, Vol. 153. Available at: **Link**.

> ❝ **The drought brought about water scarcity, food insecurity, and health issues like measles and malnutrition.**

There are reports that periods of seasonal droughts have become longer and more frequent, with an average of only two years of rainfall occurring every six years since the 1980s.[72] In South Omo and Turkana, communities reported a perceived link between prolonged droughts and dry spells in recent years, and climate change. In Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, all focus group respondents reported an increase in droughts and "disruptions in rainfall patterns" over the past two years.[73] One focus group respondent, for example, reported how "we have observed a significant shifting of rainfall patterns because of climate change. This includes alterations in the timing, amount, and intensity of rainfall."[74]

At the same time, the rainy seasons have become more intense, with torrential rainfall leading to more frequent flooding events.[75] Extreme rainfall contributed to flooding around Lake Turkana in 2020, in which tens of thousands of people living on the shores were displaced.[76] In Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya, community respondents confirmed a growing number of incidences of flooding, reporting that during the rainy season, "people living along rivers or flooded areas are displaced as well as their properties destroyed."[77]

The research shows both conflict systems are highly affected by, and vulnerable to, the impacts of climate change, particularly droughts and floods, which are increasingly linked, with longer and more frequent periods of drought being accompanied by an increased incidence of heavy rain during the rainy season. The next section examines how these climate impacts affect conflict dynamics in both conflict systems.

The Impact on Conflict

Drawing on both secondary and primary data, we identified four main pathways through which climate change has contributed to conflict dynamics in the two conflict systems. Two pathways are common to both conflict systems, with an additional pathway distinct to each one. In both conflict systems, we found that climate change contributes to conflict dynamics by increasing resource scarcity which 1) fuels out-group conflict and raises the risk of violence as a means to secure access to vital resources and 2) forces pastoralists to change transhumance patterns, increasing the likelihood that they move into land, or seek to use resources that are claimed by local communities, thereby raising the risk of violent conflict.

Additionally, in the Mandera Triangle, climate change has 3) induced migration which has driven opportunistic land-grabbing, in turn, raising conflict over land. And in the South Omo-Turkana area, climate-induced resource scarcity has 4) disrupted livelihoods, forcing pastoralists to diversify livelihoods towards fishing, thereby raising conflict over fisheries. We will examine each pathway separately to identify the key intervening variables in each one.

Pathway 1 - Climate change increases resource scarcity, increasing the risk of conflict over natural resources

In this pathway, climate change's primary impact is on the availability and predictability of key

72 Shanguhyia, M. (2014). Past and Current Initiatives in Managing Trans-border Insecurity in Kenya's Turkana Borderlands: Implications for Future Policy. International Development Research Centre (IDRC). Available at: **Link**.

73 FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (women). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

74 FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

75 MoALFC. (2021). Kenya County Climate Risk Profile: Turkana County. Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Co-operatives (MoALFC), Nairobi, Kenya. Available at: **Link**.

76 Richardson, K., Calow, R., Pichon, F., New, S. and Osborne, R. (2022). Climate risk report for the East Africa region. Met Office, ODI, FCDO. Available at: **Link**.

77 FGD. Community members (men). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. 8 June 2023.

(agro-)pastoralist resources such as grazing land and water sources. This, in turn, can heighten zero-sum calculations and, in the absence of established natural resource governance mechanisms, can induce groups to mobilise for violence against out-groups in order to safeguard access to and control of ever-scarcer resources for the in-group.[78]

In Dollo Ado, on the Ethiopian side of the Mandera Triangle, all community members interviewed reported that during the dry season, scarcity of water, viable grazing land and "fodder for livestock" triggers greater competition between pastoralists, which raises tensions and the risk of disputes. They also reported that scarcity of these resources also results in the loss of livestock – with one respondent claiming more than one hundred had died in the past two years – which in turn further fuels groups to compete for control of resources, or to raid livestock, which triggers violence.[79]

In Dollow, on the Somalia side of the Mandera Triangle, peace committee members also reported that increasing water and pasture scarcity exacerbates other drivers of conflict, including historical grievances and inequality between clans in access to development projects.[80] In Mandera County, in Kenya, communities reported that drought has led clans to dig more boreholes, including in disputed territories between the Garre and Degodia, which has in turn triggered violence over access and control of these boreholes. They reported that NGOs have contributed to this by digging boreholes on contested land.[81]

Community respondents in both South Omo and Turkana similarly reported that climate change has decreased the availability of grazing land and water points, driving an increase in disputes and tensions between groups in the area.[82] Focus group respondents in South Omo underlined that this intensifies between rainy seasons, when limited access to pasture and water increases the incidence of cattle raiding.[83] More than in any of the other locations, loss of livestock due to climate change was raised by all focus group respondents in South Omo as a key conflict driver as it pushes pastoralists to raid cattle, which often triggers cycles of escalating intercommunal violence. As one respondent explained:

> "Animal theft has been a significant trigger for conflicts, particularly in pastoralist communities like Hammer where livestock serves as a primary source of wealth and livelihood. When livestock is stolen, it can lead to immediate economic losses and threaten the livelihoods of the affected individuals or communities. The loss of animals not only disrupts the source of income but can also cause social unrest and a desire for retaliation. This can escalate into conflicts between different groups or individuals involved in animal theft or those seeking to protect their livestock from theft."[84]

Another key factor was manipulation by local politicians, which was raised by a majority of community members interviewed in Mandera County, in Kenya, and also in Dollow, Somalia. Community respondents highlighted that politicians are a key actor in conflicts in Mandera, mobilising their own ethnic groups for conflict against rival politicians.[85] Respondents also highlighted that politicians manipulate and seek to capture external resources, saying that competition between local politicians over access to government or NGO programmes and funds also leads to conflict.[86] An NGO respondent in Dollow, Somalia, confirmed this dynamic, reporting that politicians "incite young people to

78   UN-Habitat. (2020). Land and Conflict in Jubaland: Root Cause Analysis and Recommendations. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Available at: **Link**.

79   FGD. Community members (men). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (women). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

80   FGD. Peace Committee (mixed). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

81   KII. Local government official. Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; KII. Peace Committee member (man). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

82   FGD. Community members (men). Turkana, Kenya. 7 June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. 16 June 2023.

83   FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. 16 June 2023. FGD. Community members (women). South Omo, Ethiopia. 16 June 2023.

84   FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. 16 June 2023.

85   FGD. Community members (men). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

86   FGD. Community members (women). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

speak and fight for them" and for their "political interest".[87]

Our research shows that the causal link between climate-induced resource scarcity and conflict in both conflict systems is highly dependent on intervening variables. Whilst resource scarcity can itself shift in-group/out-group calculations in ways that increase the risk of conflict, our research suggests that cattle raiding – as a coping mechanism, for replenishing stocks of livestock lost due to climate change – is a central trigger for violence. Manipulation by local political elites, driven by personal political interests, is another key factor, particularly in the Mandera Triangle. These findings are in line with research from a number of similar Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) contexts – in which natural resources are a central part of communities' livelihoods and local conflict systems – across the Horn of Africa, including in Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia.[88]

Pathway 2 - Climate-induced resource scarcity drives pastoralists to shift transhumance routes, increasing the risk of conflict over pasture and water sources in the new areas

Like the first pathway, in this pathway, the primary impact of climate change is that it decreases the availability of vital pastoralist resources. However, in this pathway, the secondary impact is on mobility, as resource scarcity is forcing pastoralists to shift traditional transhumance routes, many of which are governed by long-established resource-sharing agreements. This shift, in turn, is driving them to compete for access to resources already claimed by local groups in those new areas, with whom they have no established agreements.[89]

In Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, community members reported that water scarcity forces pastoralists to move in search of water, which leads to violent disputes over water points, which are often found and accessed by other, different groups.[90] Similarly, community members interviewed in South Omo reported that drought has led communities in the area to move to nearby woredas in search of pasture and water, creating conflict with communities in those areas.[91] Focus group respondents highlighted that this happens particularly when pastoralists from the Dassenach and the Hammer move from their respective woredas into each other's territories.[92] In Turkana, respondents emphasised the cross-border movement of Dassenach from Ethiopia into Turkana in search of pasture as a key driver of conflict by sparking grievances among local groups in Turkana, who take up arms to safeguard their own access to these resources.[93] These same respondents highlighted that part of the reason why this creates conflict is because the Dassenach do not have agreements in place for sharing resources with the Turkana.[94]

The evidence for this causal pathway also underlines the role of key intervening variables – in other words, the link is highly contextual and only occurs if certain conditions are met. In this case, climate-induced changes to traditional and established transhumance routes and patterns are found to contribute to conflict by increasing resource competition between migrating pastoralists and local groups along the new routes and in the new grazing areas, often across borders. The lack of an established resource

87   KII. NGO worker. Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

88   Sweijs, T., de Haan, M., and van Manen, H. (2022). Unpacking the Climate Security Nexus Seven Pathologies Linking Climate Change to Violent Conflict. The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies. Available at: **Link**.

89   Transhumance is the seasonal migration of livestock for access to different grazing lands. It is a central part of the livelihoods of pastoralist communities in the two target locations, where this migration occurs across borders. See: van Baalen, S., and Mobjörk, M. (2016). A Coming Anarchy? Pathways from Climate Change to Violent Conflict in East Africa. Research Report. Stockholm International Peace Research Institute and The Swedish Institute of International Affairs. Available at: **Link**.

90   FGD. Community members (women). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

91   FGD 1. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

92   FGD 2. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

93   FGD. Community members (mixed). Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

94   Ibid.

sharing agreement – or whether the newly arrived groups seek to negotiate one with dominant local groups – is a key determinant in driving violent conflict. As with Pathway 1, these findings are in line with research conducted in similar pastoralist contexts.[95]

Pathway 3 - Climate-induced migration enables land-grabbing, increasing the risk of land conflict

The third pathway was identified in the Mandera Triangle only. Similar to the first and second pathways identified above, we see the impact of climate change in the third pathway in the way in which it decreases available land-based resources, causing migration, but intensifying local conflict over territorial claims. In other words, people migrate as a coping strategy for climate hazards, settling in new areas where they can better ensure their survival and protect their livelihoods. As they move – and as examples in the Mandera Triangle suggest – other groups move into the territory they leave behind, complicating previously established territorial claims, and, as a result, raising the risk of violence linked to territorial disputes.

In Mandera County, Kenya, a local government official reported that Degodia and Murrule communities have been using and settling on land previously settled by Garre communities, many of whom are thought to have moved to Nairobi, Kenya's capital, and other Kenyan towns outside of the Mandera Triangle. This migration has created tensions between the interests on land of some of those members of the Garre community who have remained in the area vis-à-vis newly arrived Degodia and Murrule communities.[96] Respondents confirmed the existence of this dynamic, reporting that communities from outside Mandera County were being given "contracts" by local politicians to construct on vacant land,

exacerbating ethnic rivalry over local territorial claims and land rights.[97]

These findings need to be considered within the frame of the pre-existing contestation over land access and ownership, between the dominant Garre clan and the Degodia and Murrule. The Garre's ancestral claims to land in the Mandera Triangle has created conflict with the Degodia and Murrule, who have increasingly settled in the area. The Garre, who have moved deeper into the county (away from the border) in search of fertile grazing land and water – largely due to the impacts of climate change – resent increased Degodia and Murrule settlement in areas along the border.[98]

Within this context, political manipulation and mobilisation are central intervening factors in fuelling conflict and violence. Due to the politicised nature of the conflict, violent outbreaks between the Garre and Degodia and Murrule often occur in relation to mobilisation for local elections, as politicians mobilise voters along ethnic lines.[99] Whilst climate change contributes to conflict along this pathway, by increasing resource scarcity and causing migration, which in turn complicates the politics of local, ethnic- territorial claims, it is patterns of political mobilisation, especially along ethnic lines, that are more directly linked to the occurrence of violent conflict.

Pathway 4 - Climate change disrupts pastoralism, forcing pastoralists to diversify livelihoods

The fourth and last pathway was identified in the southwest Ethiopia-northwest Kenya border area only. In this pathway, the primary impact of reduced rainfall due to climate change has been a contribution to reducing Lake Turkana's water levels, with secondary impacts on conflict dynamics between the Turkana and Dassenach.

95 Hammond, L. (2017). Livelihoods and Mobility in Border Regions of the Horn of Africa. Washington, DC: World Bank. Available at: **Link**; Omolo, N. (2010). Gender and climate change-induced conflict in pastoral communities: Case study of Turkana in northwestern Kenya. African Journals Online, Vol. 10, 2. Available at: **Link**; World Vision (2021). Responding to the triple challenge: Climate, conflict and COVID-19 in the Horn of Africa. World Vision UK. Available at: **Link**.

96 KII. Local government official. Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

97 FGD. Community members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

98 Interpeace. (2017). Mandera County Note: Voices of the People - Challenges to Peace in Mandera County. Interpeace. Available at: **Link**.

99 International Crisis Group. (2015). Kenya's Somali North East: Devolution and Security. Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°114. Available at: **Link**.

The Omo River delta (where the Omo River feeds into Lake Turkana) has traditionally served as a natural border between both communities' territories, but lower water levels as a result of climate-induced droughts – along with the development of hydroelectric dams and irrigation channels along the Omo River (from which Lake Turkana receives around 90 percent of its water) – have spurred a southward recession of the lake into Turkana territory in Kenya.[100]

As a result, many Dassenach groups from Ethiopia have had to enter Turkana territory to access arable land and water points near the lake, increasing territorial disputes, and raising tensions and the risk of violence with Turkana communities on the Kenyan side of the border.[101] Dassenach have also increasingly migrated to Turkana due to the fact that climate-induced resource scarcity and livestock losses have driven pastoralists on both sides of the border to diversify their livelihoods away from livestock herding, with many Dassenach taking up fishing in local rivers and moving southward into Kenya to access fisheries in Lake Turkana. Dassanech migrants interviewed in Todonyang, Turkana, reported that whilst they are "facing homelessness and hunger in Todonyang," it is better there than in South Omo "due to fishing in the lake," where they are "able to get food and also sell the fish and make some money." [102] At the same time, climate change has also put great strain on resources in and around the lake, particularly in the lake-shore districts of north eastern Turkana (Kataboi, Riokomor, and Todonyang) where local populations depend on fishing (and where most migrants from Ethiopia are fishing).[103]

Together, these trends are increasing competition over ever-more scarce fisheries, further raising the risk of violence as the impacts of climate change become more pronounced.[104] A local government official in Turkana explained that "six years ago the Dassenach did not participate in fishing, but now that they see it is lucrative business," reporting that because the River Omo flows into Lake Turkana, the Dassenach from Ethiopia make claims to having the right to fish in the lake, which is creating competition and raising tensions with the local Todonyang.[105]

A Dassenach migrant in Turkana explained that conflicts are "not found on land alone," but also on the lake where they "normally fight because of it and its resources such as fish."[106] Another focus group respondent, a Turkana, reported that in the Dassenach areas of South Omo, Ethiopia, "there is no food, and they move to our territories to look for food which results in conflicts between us the Turkana and the Dassenach."[107]

The Impact on Conflict Management Mechanisms

Climate change has also had an impact on traditional intercommunal and cross-border conflict and dispute resolution mechanisms. In borderland areas, where state structures are either absent or weak, communities rely on traditional conflict management mechanisms to negotiate transhuman routes (to prevent conflict), resolve disputes related to natural resource competition, and manage the escalation of intercommunal violence. Many communities have long-standing agreements on how they will jointly access, share, and govern the use of resources in areas used by more than one community. These agreements often cover areas that cross international borders. They have historically relied

100   Powers, J. C. (2011). Climate Change and the Turkana and Merille Conflict. ICE Case Studies No. 238, Inventory of Conflict and Environment (ICE). Available at: **Link**.

101   Ibid.

102   FGD. Community members (women). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

103   WPS. (2022). A Miracle in the Desert: The Lake Turkana Communities Facing the Harsh Realities of Climate Change. *Water, Peace, and Security*. Available at: **Link**.

104   World Bank. (2020). From Isolation to Integration: The Borderlands of the Horn of Africa. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/ The World Bank. Available at: **Link**; EUTF. (2016). Cross-Border Analysis and Mapping: Cluster 1 - Southwest Ethiopia-Northwest Kenya. European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing the Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa. Available at: **Link**.

105   KII. Local government official. Lorwateng, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

106   FGD. Community members (men). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

107   FGD. Community members (women). Loarengak, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

on the authority of tribal or clan elders to be enforced.[108]

However, as seen above, climate change forces pastoralists to change their regular seasonal migration and mobility patterns to search for water points and pasture beyond traditionally agreed routes and agreed-upon corridors. As seen in research on other ASALs, this often leads them to encroach on other pastoralist groups' pasture and on farmers' agricultural lands, raising the risk of violence. This is further compounded by the fact that these changes are bringing into contact groups that do not traditionally have conflict resolution agreements or mechanisms in place, further increasing the risk that resource competition can escalate into violence.[109]

In Turkana, for example, a peace committee member and an NGO worker interviewed reported that climate change has forced some Turkana to cross the border into South Omo in search of pasture (when traditionally it is the Dassenach from South Omo who move south into Turkana), but that "no resource sharing agreements were made, causing conflict."[110]

The next section will specifically examine the role of gender as an intervening variable in the climate-conflict nexus, through a discussion of the gendered dimensions of both (climate-induced) natural resource conflict and environmental peacebuilding in both conflict systems.

The Intersection of Gender, Conflict and Climate Change

The Gendered Dimensions of Conflict

In the Mandera Triangle, and along southwest Ethiopia-northwest Kenya, women and men engage in, and experience conflict very differently. In line with traditional patriarchal gender roles, men are more directly involved in violent conflict than women, both as perpetrators and as victims. In both research locations, men are found to be responsible for protecting livestock and their communities, whilst women's roles are primarily domestic, charged with raising children, caring for the home, fetching water, making food, farming and caring for home-gardens. The main difference is that around Lake Turkana, in the South Omo-Turkana conflict system, men engage in fishing, whereas women sell fish at the market.[111] Community respondents reported that because of gender roles, men and young boys are vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups, face communal pressure to participate in violence as a means to protect their communities, and are at greater risk of physical injury and death compared to women.[112] These cultural and societal expectations also force school-going male children to drop-out of school to defend community interests, often through violent means.[113]

Women and girls, on the other hand, are disproportionately vulnerable to, and affected by the indirect impacts of conflict. Community respondents in all research locations reported that women and girls suffer sexual violence during conflict, and that families affected by conflict

108　Macharia, A. (2020). Diminishing role of traditional mechanisms in the management of pastoralist conflict. Briefing Paper No. 2: An Analysis of Turkana Dassenach Conflict. Available at: **Link**.

109　De Juan, Alexander. (2015). Long-Term Environmental Change and Geographical Patterns of Violence in Darfur, 2003–2005, *Political Geography*, 45. Available at: **Link**.

110　KII. NGO worker. Turkana, Kenya. June 2023; KII. Peace Committee member (woman). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

111　FGD. Community members (women). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023; KII. Church representative. Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

112　FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Peace Committee (mixed). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023; FGD. Adult community member (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; FGD. Community elders (man). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

113　FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. 1 June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. 1 June 2023.

will force girls into early marriage as a coping mechanism – so as to gain assets or cash.[114] Notably, respondents in Somalia reported that boys are also victims of sexual violence during conflict, although this is largely under-reported due to social stigma, indicating that sexual violence is not just a women's issue, and that gender norms determine that it is more acceptable for women to be victims of sexual violence, as this can be openly discussed.[115] Further, women are also vulnerable to conflict as they have the added responsibility of caring for and protecting their children, which limits their mobility during periods of violence.[116] Their domestic responsibilities also expose women to violence as they need to collect water and firewood, even during times of high intercommunal tension and violence.[117] Women are also reported to be used as 'pawns' in a conflict, with militias attacking women specifically as a means to humiliate their enemies.[118] Community respondents in both South Omo and Turkana highlighted that conflict has left many women widowed, which has placed an additional burden on them to care for their families and become the primary providers for their households.[119]

These findings largely confirm previously-held consensus of women as victims of conflict and violence.[120] However, our research also found significant evidence of women's active role as conflict actors – not just victims – in both conflict systems. In both contexts, women are reported to incite and encourage men to engage in conflict,

> ❝ **Because of gender roles, men and young boys are vulnerable to recruitment into armed groups.**

particularly to undertake revenge killings once clan members have been attacked.[121]

A female respondent in the Mandera Triangle explained how women subscribe to and reproduce a "if you don't fight, you are not a man" narrative. During times of conflict, women use dirges and songs that are often 'derogatory' and 'inflammatory,' targeting other clans.[122] Among the Borana clan, women use qoosa taapa, jokes and plays that castigate men who refuse to participate in local conflicts.[123] In Turkana, respondents reported that women use songs and jokes to shame and humiliate men who do not fight. At times, this includes veiled threats by women who threaten to marry men from the winning clan, in case their own clan loses during episodes of violent conflict.[124] A District Peace Committee Member in Mandera County stated that women often decry, in public, elders who adopt narratives of peace, by appealing to a sense of clan heritage and pride, and as a result, inciting violence.[125] A government official in Mandera reported that women supply food and water to community-based armed groups ahead of raids and during cycles of intercommunal violent conflict.[126] In South Omo, community respondents reported a

114   KII. Community elder (man). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. 1 June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

115   FGD. Community members (women). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

116   Saferworld. (2020). "A war that hurts us twice" - Inside Kenya's war on terror: community perspectives on security in Mandera county. Saferworld. Available at: Link.

117   FGD. Peace Committee (mixed). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

118   FGD. Community members (women). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

119   FGD. Community members (mixed). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023; FGD. Community members (women). Loarengak, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023; FGD. Community members (male). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. 7 June 2023.

120   Kronsell, A. (2018). 'WPS and Climate Change', in Sara E. Davies, and Jacqui True (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Women, Peace, and Security*, Oxford Handbooks. Available at: **Link**.

121   FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. CMDRR Committee members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

122   KII. Community member (woman). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

123   UNECA. (2019). Reviewing the role of women pastoralists in conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Available at: **Link**.

124   KII. Local government official. Lorwateng, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023; KII. Church representative. Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

125   KII. Mandera District Peace Committee member (man). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

126   KII. National government security official. Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; KII. INGO staff member. Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

> ❝ **During times of conflict, women use dirges and songs that are often 'derogatory' and 'inflammatory,' targeting other clans.**

similar dynamic, with women providing fighters with resources ahead of raids, sheltering them during cycles of violence, and preparing special meals for men after a successful cattle raid.[127] In the Gedo region of Somalia, women reportedly contribute to land conflict by grabbing land in the name of their clans.[128] There are also reports of women who are complicit in the rape of other women during conflict.[129]

However, no respondents in Dollow or in Dollo Ado, on the Somali and Ethiopian sides of the Mandera Triangle, respectively, reported a role for women in conflict. One elder explained that women do not traditionally play a role in conflict because conflict is primarily over pasture and water for livestock, a livelihood activity for which men are responsible, not women.[130] Other community members attributed this to religion, explaining that "women in the Muslim community like Dollo Ado have not been found to directly contribute to the triggering of conflicts."[131] However, most other respondents in Mandera County did report that women, despite being Muslim, indeed, do play a role in conflict. The perception that women do not play a role in conflict, as was expressed by some respondents, could be attributed to a lack of willingness among male respondents to discuss the issue, or a lack of understanding among respondents of the complex, and perhaps indirect role, that women play in conflict. Further research is required to better understand women's role in conflict

along the conflict systems we studied during this research.

Gender and Environmental Peacebuilding

Due to patriarchal gender norms among communities in both conflict systems, women's roles in their communities are traditionally domestic in nature. As a result, women are under-represented in decision-making structures, whether at the household, community, or clan level, or in formal roles, denying them crucial decision-making powers.[132] This means that despite being the ones who, due to their gender roles, collect and use natural resources such as firewood, water, and agricultural outputs, women play a limited role in making decisions around how these resources are managed.[133] Indeed, a number of respondents who reported that women are not involved in community-level decision-making around natural resource management, also recognised their intimate knowledge of, for example, water management and soil conservation.[134]

As a result, women are also largely excluded from community mechanisms that manage conflict around natural resources and their usage, despite their roles in fuelling conflict, as presented above. As one focus group respondent in South Omo explained, "men have taken absolute decision-making and leadership roles. Men typically have greater representation in decision-making processes related to resource management and conflict resolution in the community."[135] A community member interviewed in Turkana explained that "men are the ones who are mostly involved in conflict resolutions and dialogue

---

127 FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; KII. Community representative (woman). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

128 UN-Habitat. (2020). Land and Conflict in Jubaland: Root Cause Analysis and Recommendations. United Nations Human Settlements Programme. Available at: **Link**.

129 Odary, K.V. (2020). Reviewing the role of women pastoralists in conflicts in the Horn of Africa. African Journal of Land Policy and Geospatial Sciences, 3(4). Available at: **Link**.

130 FGD. Community members (men). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

131 FGD. Community members (women). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

132 Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. (2012). Realising Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in Kenya: A myth or reality? Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Available at: **Link**.

133 FGD. Peace Committee (mixed). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

134 FGD. Community members (women). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (mixed). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

135 FGD. Community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

around peace, as both the Turkana and the Daasanach are patriarchal communities. In both communities, respondents reported that "men attend peace talks while women just sing and dance."[136]

Where women play a role, it is minimal. For example, customary practices employed by Somali clans in the Mandera Triangle do not often engage women in conflict resolution. Women are involved in conflict resolution only when conflict has occurred which involves women, and would normally only engage other women in peace talks.[137] One respondent reported that when there is inter-clan conflict in Banissa, a town in Mandera County, "women are assigned to talk to all the women groups and men talk to men to cool down tensions, including explaining the negative effects of conflict."[138]

In Turkana, too, a member of a local peace committee in Todonyang reported that "women work on preventing conflict and indulging in peace dialogues with the Dassenach women in Omo, Ethiopia."[139] In addition, a local government official in Kenya reported that women contribute to peacebuilding by organising cultural and festive events like baby showers, which they use to discuss and resolve conflict. These events are known to have increased cohesion amongst women from different communities, who use such occasions to collectively bargain as 'women for peace', with men.[140] The practice of inter-marriage between clans is considered to contribute to the success of the latter in particular, as women can influence men by appealing to, and asking them to respect and sue for peace with their kin.[141] Respondents in both conflict systems reported that state-led or state-backed peace committees have sought to include women as participants. However, at the same time, they reported that their influence is limited.[142]

> **" Men typically have greater representation in decision-making processes related to resource management and conflict resolution in the community.**

Women's exclusion from natural resource management and from processes and platforms for managing natural resource-based conflict has significant implications for environmental peacebuilding. As covered above, environmental peacebuilding, in part, aims to use improved and more cooperative resource management as a means to mitigate the role of natural resources in driving conflict. However, the exclusion of women can significantly undermine environmental peacebuilding, particularly given their valuable practical understanding of and skills in natural resource management. The next section explores the impact of climate change and conflict on gender norms, and what this means for women's roles in decision-making around natural resource management and natural resource-based conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The Impact of the Climate-Conflict Nexus on Gender

In both conflict systems, climate change and climate-induced natural resource conflict are creating new challenges. But by contributing to shifting traditional gender roles they are also catalysing opportunities for addressing discriminatory and harmful gender norms. Community respondents have reported that to cope with the negative impacts of climate change on communities' livelihoods, many women have reportedly had to take on additional burdens,

136   KII. Church representative. Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

137   UNDP. (2021). Assessment on the Role of Women in Peace and Reconciliation in Oromia and Somali Regional States. Available at: **Link**.

138   FGD. Peace Committee (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

139   KII. Peace Committee member (woman). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

140   KII. Local government official. Mandera County. June 2023.

141   Ibid.

142   KII. Community elder. Dollow, Somalia. June 2023; KII. Local government official. Dollow, Somalia. June 2023; KII. Local government official. Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; KII. Local government official. South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

> **Women contribute to peacebuilding by organising cultural and festive events like baby showers, which they use to discuss and resolve conflict.**

retaining their domestic responsibilities while also moving into new activities such as farming, livestock rearing, and even construction alongside their husbands.[143] Others report having entered into service roles, such as cleaning and marketing of farm produce.[144] This changing of roles for women at times can mean less time dedicated to household responsibilities, and higher exposure to risks such as sexual violence.[145]

Further, climate-induced water scarcity and conflict has meant that men, due to traditional gender roles, are often away from their homes for longer periods of time as they search for new pasture and water points, or participate in conflict-related violence and cattle raiding, leaving their wives fully in charge of the house during those periods.[146] At the same time, loss of livestock due to climate change and climate-induced conflict, related to cattle raiding, has meant that an increasing number of men cannot afford to pay dowries, leaving an increasing number of women unmarried.[147] Respondents in both research locations also reported the prevalence of widows, due to men dying in conflict.[148]As a result, women have increasingly taken on new responsibilities in natural resource management, which are traditionally associated with men. These

include pasture conservation, rearing of smaller household livestock, and engaging in income-generating activities.[149] In Turkana, women who "never take care of goats" are having to do so.[150] In South Omo, too, "women take on the task of managing and caring for the remaining animals, ensuring their health, nutrition, and proper husbandry practices are maintained."[151] In Lake Turkana, women are increasingly getting involved in fishing – traditionally a man's role – which has directly increased their vulnerability to conflict-related violence.[152] Men's absence has also led women to take responsibility for making decisions which men would normally make. This includes decisions around water and land and soil use and conservation.[153] In cases where men are killed in conflict, their wives become the head-of-household, taking on these responsibilities permanently.

While some respondents see these dynamics solely as challenges for women, others interpret them as opportunities. In Dollow, Somalia, women who participated in focus group discussions reported that "the social disorder brought about by the war transformed gender relations." One respondent framed men's increased absence from the home as giving women the opportunity for leadership, and to "feel free".[154] Another claimed that the impact of conflict has enabled women to "leave the private sphere of domestic work" and participate in the public domain.[155] Also in Dollow, another focus group discussion involving both men and women reported that climate change had given women more power over decision-making within the household.[156] They

143   KII. INGO staff member. Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

144   KII. Clan elder (male). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

145   Kariuki, E. et al (2022). Water-related conflicts in Turkana County: Analysis of stakeholder interests and concerns. Water, Peace, and Security Partnership. Available at: **Link**. FGD. Adult community members (men). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Adult community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

146   KII. Clan elder (male). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; KII. INGO staff member. Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

147   Omolo, N. (2010). Gender and climate change-induced conflict in pastoral communities: Case study of Turkana in northwestern Kenya. *African Journals Online*, Vol. 10, 2. Available at: **Link**.

148   KII. Community member (woman). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

149   FGD. Adult community members (mixed). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

150   KII. Local government official. Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

151   FGD. Adult community members (male). South Omo, Ethiopia. June 2023.

152   KII. Peace Committee member (woman). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

153   KII. Clan elder (male). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

154   FGD. Community members (women). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

155   Ibid.

156   FGD. Peace Committee (mixed). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

also underlined that women's understanding of local natural resources can be valuable assets in building resilience to climate change and reducing disaster risks in their communities, highlighting how the imperative of climate change adaptation provides an opportunity for women to play a significant role within their communities.[157] In Turkana, there is evidence that women heads-of-households are increasingly being consulted on matters of public concern, raising the status of women in the community.[158]

However, others have framed these developments as challenges and burdens placed on women. Women in all three locations reported that climate change and conflict has added to the list of women's responsibilities, rather than changing them. In Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, women respondents in a focus group discussion involving both men and women reported that climate change and conflict force women to take on the additional burden of caring for livestock, whilst men are away fighting.[159] Similarly, a group of male participants in a focus group discussion framed climate change and conflict as driving a "significant expansion" of women's responsibilities, forcing them to engage in labour intensive work and other income generating activities to provide for their families.[160] In Mandera, an elder confirmed that conflict forces women to take on men's responsibilities, particularly the role of providing for their families.[161]

The research shows that climate change is contributing to shifting gender dynamics in both communities through different causal mechanisms. Climate change is contributing to extending men's temporary absence – in search of resources or due to involvement in climate-induced resource conflict. At the same time, climate-induced conflict leads to casualties amongst men who are involved in conflict, contributing to an increase in women-

> ❝ **In Lake Turkana, women are increasingly getting involved in fishing – traditionally a man's role – which has directly increased their vulnerability to conflict-related violence.**

headed households. Together, these dynamics are increasing the number of women-headed households and forcing women to take on gender roles which are traditionally male, particularly in relation to natural resource management. However, the research was unable to determine whether these changes in gender roles are contributing to shifts in gender norms.

Nevertheless, the shifts in gender roles provide an important entry point for environmental peacebuilding interventions that could contribute to women's political and economic empowerment in these contexts, with possible contributions to changing gender norms. Evidence from a pilot project by UNEP, UN Women and UNDP in Sudan demonstrates that natural resource management is a strong entry point for strengthening women's participation in peacebuilding in contexts experiencing shifts in traditional gender roles.[162] The project strategically focused first on delivering interventions to address communities' immediate economic needs and then used the resulting trust and buy-in to engage them in natural resource governance or conflict prevention efforts. This was central for women, as increased income and participation by women gave them the confidence and legitimacy to engage in the natural resource management committees established under the project, so as to prevent natural resource conflict through improved and more cooperative natural resource governance. Women trained and supported under the programme led peace dialogue forums, which

157 FGD. Community members (women). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

158 Omolo, N. (2010). Gender and climate change-induced conflict in pastoral communities: Case study of Turkana in northwestern Kenya. *African Journals Online*, Vol. 10, 2. Available at: **Link**.

159 FGD. Community members (mixed). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

160 FGD. Community members (men). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023.

161 KII. Community elder (man). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

162 UNEP., et al. (2020). Gender, Climate, and Security: Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change. UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and UNDPPA/PBSO. Available at: **Link**.

were attended by men including local customary leaders.

This was considered highly significant as a marker of a shift in social norms, as local leaders were reported to have never before accepted women to lead such dialogue forums.[163] This is highly relevant to peacebuilders when considered in light of evidence that peace processes in which women are meaningfully included lead to more durable peace outcomes.[164]

Another example from Sudan involves work by the NGO, SOS Sahel, which employed engagement with traditional male leaders as an entry point for seeking out their permission to involve women and youth in project activities. They then created steering groups with women representatives, which were registered as legal entities in accordance with Sudanese Law. Such legal standing enabled the committees to carry out voluntary work, including the demarcation of grazing corridors, which is a critical component for peacebuilding and conflict reduction for pastoral communities meant to avoid incursions.[165]

The next section presents the two case studies, of BORESHA and SEEK I/II, examining how each considered and integrated gender in their analysis of and interventions in the climate-conflict nexus in each of the two respective conflict systems.

5. Case Studies: Examining the Gender-Climate-Security Nexus in Practice

Recognising the intersection of climate change and conflict in their target areas, both BORESHA and SEEK I/II integrated environmental peacebuilding as a component in their interventions. Their consideration of gender within their approach to environmental peacebuilding was, however, limited, and differed between the two.

Whilst BORESHA specifically used natural resource management as an avenue for contributing to peace, SEEK I/II conversely focussed squarely on community conflict resolution mechanisms and peace dialogues — only one component of which is natural resources sharing and management. As a result, SEEK I/II's approach to gender integration focussed on peace structures and dialogues directly rather than on natural resource management as an entry point for women's participation in natural resource-based conflict resolution. So whilst SEEK I/II adopted an approach which can be considered more gender-transformative than BORESHA, ultimately, however, neither project sought to explicitly identify and capitalise on climate- and conflict-induced shifts in gender roles to address the underlying gender norms that exclude women from peacebuilding.

BORESHA

BORESHA was an EUTF-funded cross-border project implemented in the Mandera Triangle

163   UN Environment, UNDP, and UN Women (2019). Promoting Gender-Responsive Approaches to Natural Resource Management for Peace in North Kordofan, Sudan. Available at: **Link**.

164   Krause, J., Werner, K., and Piia, B. "Women's Participation in Peace Negotiations and the Durability of Peace," *International Interactions*, 44:6 (2018). Available at: **Link**.

165   UNEP., et al. (2020). Gender, Climate, and Security- Sustaining inclusive peace on the frontlines of climate change. UNEP, UN Women, UNDP and UNDPPA/PBSO. Available at: **Link**.

originally between 2017 and 2021. The project had two follow-up phases, a 10-month phase implemented between March and December 2021 (BORESHA II) and a 15-month phase implemented between January 2022 and March 2023. BORESHA was delivered by a consortium led by Danish Refugee Council (DRC) and comprising CARE International, World Vision, and the WYG Group (now TetraTech). The project's interventions aimed to contribute to three expected outcomes:

1. Selected communities in the Mandera Triangle are more resilient and better prepared for shocks, and response is more effective;

2. Selected individuals and communities are more self-reliant through increased skills and opportunities for cross-border employment, diversified enterprise and livelihoods; and

3. Cross-border rangeland and other shared natural resources are more equitably and sustainably managed.[166]

Although primarily focussed on building community's economic resilience to climate change, from June 2021, in BORESHA's second phase, the project collaborated with another EUTF-funded project titled 'Regional Approaches for Sustainable Conflict Management and Integration (RASMI)', which aimed to promote peacebuilding, conflict management and conflict resolution in cross-border communities of the Mandera Triangle. This represented an explicit recognition that supporting resilience in the Mandera Triangle required more integrated and collaborative programming which also addresses the drivers of conflict and harnesses climate

adaptation as an avenue for environmental peacebuilding.

In parallel, the project also effectively identified that its natural resource management interventions could serve as an entry point for peacebuilding in the Mandera Triangle. The project established and trained natural resource management (NRM) committees and rangeland management committees to drive improved and more sustainable management of natural resources. Recognising the link between natural resources and conflict, these committees were supported to engage in intercommunal peace dialogues.[167] Community respondents in Mandera reported that the project trained NRM committees on conflict management skills and supported intercommunal exchange visits and peace dialogues.[168]

Women reportedly accounted for 47 per cent of the membership of the project's NRM and rangeland management committees.[169] Community respondents in all three research locations in the Mandera Triangle reported that through their inclusion in these committees, women were able to participate in rangeland management processes, and also participated in exchange visits and peace dialogues between NRM committees.[170] However, a technical brief produced by BORESHA in 2022 stated that despite their participation in these committees, cultural norms meant that women were not actually able to directly participate in rangeland management activities.[171]

Community respondents in Dollo Ado, Ethiopia, and Dollow, Somalia, confirmed this, underlining how men were the primary interlocutors in NRM

166 Akvorsr. (2021). CTR - Building Opportunities for Resilience in the Horn of Africa (BORESHA). Akvo Really Simple Reporting, EU Trust Fund. Available at: **Link**.

167 BORESHA. (2022). Managing Shared Natural Resources Among the Cross-Border Pastoralists in the Mandera Triangle. Technical Brief. Available at: **Link**.

168 FGD. CMDRR Committee members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023. FGD. Peace committee members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023. FGD. Community members (women). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

169 BORESHA. (2022). Managing Shared Natural Resources Among the Cross-Border Pastoralists in the Mandera Triangle. Technical Brief. Available at: **Link**.

170 FGD. CMDRR Committee members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023; FGD. Peace committee members (mixed). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023. FGD. Community members (women). Mandera County, Kenya. June 2023.

171 BORESHA. (2022). Managing Shared Natural Resources Among the Cross-Border Pastoralists in the Mandera Triangle. Technical Brief. Available at: **Link**.

committees' conflict management activities.[172] The evaluation for BORESHA II found that gender roles had not been appropriately considered in the implementation of the project.[173] This is in line with the broader evidence that shows that approaches focused on increasing women's participation are not sufficient and are unlikely to contribute to substantive change unless they address the factors underlying the gender norms that exclude them.[174]

SEEK I/II

SEEK is a cross-border project being implemented in the Turkana-South Omo borderlands area. Like BORESHA, SEEK is funded under the EUTF's 'Collaboration in Cross-Border Areas of the Horn of Africa Region' programme. Its first phase, SEEK I, was implemented between January 2018 and January 2021. SEEK I was succeeded by SEEK II, a 30-month follow-up phase which began in March 2021.[175] SEEK I was delivered by a consortium led by Pact and comprising the Peace and Development Centre (since renamed 'Ethiopian Institute of Peace'), St. Peter's Community Network (SAPCONE), and Strategies for Northern Development, whilst, SEEK II was implemented solely by Pact. SEEK I/II had three objectives:

1. Strengthen peace structures by working with existing traditional and formal peace structures so that they can respond effectively to conflicts;

2. Increase social capital and cohesion by linking youth and women to early warning structures, integrating at-risk-youth through mentorships, increasing involvement in community decision-making discussions, and creating opportunities for youth from different tribes and areas to socially engage; and

3. Provide support to investment and development actors through conflict sensitivity training.[176]

SEEK I/II is an environmental peacebuilding project, which has explicitly sought to use shared natural resource management as a means to address natural resource conflict and bring communities together in peace dialogue. For example, SEEK's ability to distribute material peace dividends such as fishing inputs directly contributed to reducing conflict on Lake Turkana, complementing its peace dialogue interventions.[177] Crucially, the project explicitly sought to increase women's involvement in community decision-making processes around natural resource-based conflict resolution. In seeking to do this, the project took a different approach to integrating gender than BORESHA. The project supports existing, elder-led intercommunal conflict resolution mechanisms. Recognising that due to prevailing patriarchal norms, women's participation in local elder-led peace processes would be largely tokenistic, the project has not sought to increase women's participation in these mechanisms.[178]

Instead, the project has established a separate, women-only track, supporting intercommunal women's groups to engage in dialogue to build peace and social cohesion among women across intercommunal conflict lines.[179] The project has adopted an approach that identifies and supports uniquely influential women leaders to be peace champions in their communities.[180] These women champions serve as bridges between women and traditional and formal authorities, and indirectly engage with and influence local peace processes, even if they are not directly part of peace dialogues.[181] This was based on the theory that women could coordinate and collaborate

172   FGD. Community members (men). Dollo Ado, Ethiopia. June 2023; FGD. Community members (men). Dollow, Somalia. June 2023.

173   Ibid.

174   Dwyer, A., and Nuckhir, G. (2023). Q&A: A new way forward for gender and peacebuilding. Conciliation Resources. Available at: **Link**.

175   Akvorsr. (2021). CTR - SEEK II. Akvo Really Simple Reporting, EU Trust Fund. Available at: **Link**.

176   Pact (2019). SElam, EKisil (SEEK) - January 2018 - January 2019. Pact Inc. Available at: **Link**.

177   Juma, G., and Brazill, C. (2022). Advancing Peace Dividends: Methods to Inform Responsive, Community-Led Programming. ConnexUs. Available at: **Link**.

178   KII. Virtual. SEEK Project representative. July 2023.

179   Pact (2019). SElam, EKisil (SEEK) - January 2018 - January 2019. Pact Inc. Available at: **Link**.

180   Pact (2020). Lullabies of peace: Women peacebuilders in the SEEK project. Pact Inc. Available at: **Link**.

181   KII. Virtual. SEEK Project representative. July 2023.

on efforts to engage and influence the men in their respective communities towards peace. It also aims to foster a change in culture, enabling young men to see their mothers engaging and interacting with women from other communities, thereby decreasing the likelihood that they will grow up with the perception of neighbouring communities as rivals.[182] In this sense, the project is deliberately aiming to shift gender norms by engaging with, and seeking to, disrupt prevailing perceptions held by men about women's roles.

A peace committee member in Turkana reported that due to the project, women peace champions have been involved in peace dialogues between the Turkana and the Murrule. She added that "women are now listened to and they advise their husbands and sons against resource-based conflicts," and reported that "thanks to women's lobbying for peaceful coexistence, the death rate in the community caused by conflicts has reduced drastically," a claim the research was not able to independently verify.[183]

Women community respondents in Loarengak, Turkana, confirmed this, stating that SEEK I/II taught women and empowered them to engage with and dissuade their sons from engaging in violence.[184] Nevertheless, the research was unable to verify whether the project has indeed been able to shift gender-based perceptions and norms as intended.

6. Conclusions & Recommendations

Our research has demonstrated that in the Mandera Triangle and South Omo-Turkana cross-border conflict systems, climate change contributes to cross-border natural resource conflict indirectly, through four different indirect causal pathways, each with a distinct set of intervening variables. By increasing resource scarcity, climate change can 1) fuel out-group conflict and raise the risk of violence as a means to secure access to vital resources; 2) force pastoralists to change transhumance patterns, increasing the likelihood that they trespass on land or seek to use resources claimed by local groups, thereby raising the risk of violent conflict; 3) induce migration which can drive opportunistic land-grabbing, in turn, raising conflict over land; 4) disrupt livelihoods, forcing pastoralists to diversify livelihoods in ways which increase inter-group competition.

We have also contributed to filling a key gap in the climate-conflict literature by demonstrating that gender is a key intervening variable. We have shown that gender norms not only determine the differences in how men and women experience and are impacted by conflict, but also that women are active participants in natural resource conflicts. We found that in Mandera County (Kenya), South Omo (Ethiopia), and Turkana (Kenya) women instigate and encourage men to fight and publicly shame men who don't want to undertake revenge attacks.

They also provide material support and shelter to men during cycles of conflict. However, more research is required to understand the role of women in conflict on the Ethiopian (Dollo Ado) and Somali (Dollow) sides of the Mandera Triangle, where most male respondents claimed women

---

182   Ibid.
183   KII. Peace Committee member (woman). Todonyang, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.
184   FGD. Community members (women). Loarengak, Turkana, Kenya. June 2023.

played no role in conflict. Our research also shows that despite women's conflict roles in Mandera, South Omo, and Turkana, and their unique knowledge of natural resources, they play a limited role in decision-making processes around resource-based conflict resolution and NRM, due to prevailing patriarchal gender norms.

Addressing a key gap in the gender-climate-security research, we also interrogated the converse relationship, examining how climate change and climate-induced natural resource conflict affect gender norms. We found that the impacts of climate change are contributing to changing gender roles in communities in both conflict systems, driving women to take on responsibilities traditionally associated with men. Climate change has driven men to stay away from their communities for longer periods of time, and climate induced conflict has increased the number of widows, driving a rise in female-headed households. As a result, women have been burdened with roles and responsibilities traditionally undertaken by men, in addition to the roles and responsibilities traditionally allocated to women. But in Dollow and Turkana, this is reportedly providing, and being seen as, an opportunity for women to engage in local decision-making processes, gaining more agency as a result. More research is needed to assess the extent to which these shifts in gender roles could act as 'forces of change' for shifting gender norms.

On the basis of these findings, we drew on programming experiences in Sudan and on two EUTF project case studies to identify recommendations for policy and programming interventions to leverage natural resource management as an entry point for integrating gender into environmental peacebuilding and climate adaptation. These are presented below.

1. Adopt a multi-dimensional and integrated gender-climate-security nexus approach to climate-vulnerable and climate-affected cross-border conflict systems. Piecemeal approaches, in which different projects that aim to address different conflict drivers will not achieve sustainable peace unless they are working in close collaboration and coor-

dination under a coherent strategy. In these contexts, climate and conflict solutions need to be framed and pursued together – and must integrate gender. Gender is a key intervening factor in the climate-conflict nexus, so understanding its role and integrating a gender-sensitive approach is integral for effective and sustainable results.

2. Going further, adopting a gender-transformative approach will enable programming to contribute to shifting the gender norms that limit women's meaningful engagement in decision-making around natural resource management and conflict. An explicit approach requires moving beyond tokenistic efforts to ensure women are simply represented in activities. It requires using analysis to identify and target communities where the impacts of climate change and conflict are driving a shift in gender dynamics. This includes supporting women in those communities – particularly women heads of households and other women leaders – to leverage these shifts to gain more agency.

3. Engage with influential men to secure their buy-in and catalyse opportunities for addressing patriarchal norms – which are also detrimental to men – to allow women to play a greater role in natural resource management and decision-making processes associated with them, including around conflict and peacebuilding. Educating men on the useful natural resource management knowledge that women have, and the benefits of their meaningful participation in decision-making can help to create male champions and allies for addressing harmful gender norms. In more conservative areas, such as Dollow and Dollo Ado, where male respondents reported that women aren't involved in conflict, engaging men may require a more culturally sensitive approach, which is situated in and utilises local language and beliefs to open discussions about women's roles – and the benefits, including for men, of more meaningful inclusion of women.

4. The gender-climate-security nexus needs to be integrated into international policy frameworks. A growing call for integrating conflict into cli-

mate adaptation frameworks and programmes needs to be broadened to include gender, ensuring climate-conflict policies, frameworks, and targets are gender-sensitive and, where feasible, gender transformative. Women are at the coalface of the climate-conflict nexus, and male allies need to be included in policy discussions, heeding the growing call for localisation and locally-led initiatives.

5. There needs to be continued investment in research on the gender-climate-security nexus, particularly by women researchers. Understanding how gender roles and norms contribute to natural resource conflict is crucial to addressing conflict and peacebuilding. Ongoing local-level analysis of the gender-climate-security nexus is essential to further policy and programme actors' understanding of climate change and conflict's contribution to shifting gender norms, and how these changes can be capitalised upon for more effective, gender-transformative climate change adaptation and environmental peacebuilding outcomes. Providing funding for local, particularly women researchers interested in this field will ensure this knowledge is locally produced, locally-owned, and can actively contribute to strengthening women's agency in addressing discriminatory gender norms.