

# Impact of States and Non-State Armed Groups Collaboration on Conflict Management in the Horn of Africa, 1996-2016

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## Abstract

The article argues that conflicts in the Horn of Africa were fueled and sustained by the non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in collaboration with states within the sub-region. The somewhat symbiotic relationship that existed between states and NSAGs provided synergy that protracted conflicts and made them difficult to manage. While using realism theory, this study analyses why states, which are interest-driven, engaged NSAGs in their respective countries and worked with them to perpetrate conflicts. The study deployed purposive sampling in the selection of respondents and administered questionnaires as well as in-depth interviews to collect data. Additionally, the inquiry relied on secondary data where content analysis was carried out. The study found that Sudan conflict protracted because Uganda supported the Sudan People's Liberation movement/Army; Somalia conflict prolonged due to the involvement of Ethiopia, Kenya and Eritrea; and the South Sudan dispute was sustained because of the meddling of Uganda and Ethiopia.

**Keywords:** collaboration, states, Horn of Africa, non-state armed groups

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## Introduction

The emergence of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) is largely credited to two main reasons, greed and grievance. Greed is qualified as a reason for the emergence of NSAGs when rebel organizations marshal membership in order to acquire resources and finances.<sup>1</sup> NSAGs establish and sustain themselves so as to acquire resources like minerals, timber and oil. Additionally, greed is ascribed as a reason for mobilization of rebel organizations especially if the community in which membership of NSAGs is drawn is extremely poor.<sup>2</sup>

On the flip side, grievance is a cause for the emergence of NSAGs when emphasis is given to perceived deprivation along the lines of ethnic, lingual, religious or national identities.<sup>3</sup> For example, NSAGs such as Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLA/M) emerged due to perceived deprivation by the Sudanese administration. The SPLA/M decried that the Northern Sudan, largely occupied by Arab Muslims, discriminated the black South in the sharing of the national resources. This was despite the fact that most of oil resources were domiciled in the southern parts of Sudan. Largely, the Sudanese government, before the cessation of South Sudan, was perceived to have employed more people from the North in senior government positions and carried out more development projects, including infrastructure in the Muslim occupied regions.

The definition of NSAGs, despite a lot of research around it, has never been agreed upon. There is no consensus among the students of conflict on pertinent issues defining the group. On the one hand, NSAG is defined by Krause and Milliken as "an armed, non-state actor in contemporary wars with minimal degree of cohesiveness as an organization."<sup>4</sup> On the other hand, International Humanitarian Law (IHL) defines NSAG as "groups that are under responsible command; they are able to exercise control over territory to carry out sustained and concerted military operations; and they are able to implement the additional protocol II to the Geneva conventions". The International Council of Human Rights Policy defines NSAGs as "groups that are armed and use force to achieve their objectives and are not under state control."<sup>5</sup> The Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) defines NSAGs as "groups of five or more armed individuals forming an association outside the lawful state security organs, drawing its cohesion from; loyalty to the commander, receipt of material benefits, impunity enjoyed by members and shared ethnic and social background".<sup>6</sup>

The above definitions elicit a debate regarding the thresholds that exclude or include rebel groups into the NSAG category. The IHL definition for instance, because its threshold is high, excludes more than one thousand

<sup>1</sup> Paul Collier and Anke Hoeffler, "Greed and Grievance in Civil War" *Oxford Economic Papers*, 46(4), 2004, pg. 567.

<sup>2</sup> Keith Karause and Jennifer Milliken, "Introduction: The Challenge of Non-State Armed Groups", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 30(2), 2009, pg. 210

<sup>3</sup> Ted Gurr, *Why Men Rebel*, Princeton University Press. Princeton, 1970, pg. 23

<sup>4</sup> Keith Karause and Jennifer Milliken, "Introduction: The Challenge of Non-State Armed Groups", *Contemporary Security Policy*, 30(2), 2009, pg. 203.

<sup>5</sup> International Council on Human Rights Policy, *Ends and Means: Human Rights Approaches to Armed Groups*. Geneva, 1999, pg.5

<sup>6</sup> Disbandment of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG) website. (<https://www.diag.gov.af/diagproject>) accessed on 01/02/2020.

eight hundred armed groups operating in Afghanistan alone.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the DIAG definition lowers the threshold to accommodate even the smaller groups into the bracket of NSAG. This article uses the IHL definition of NSAGs.

The collaboration between states and NSAGs is not a new phenomenon; research shows that since 1945, 55% of belligerents perpetrating conflicts against different host states – all over the world – are getting support from other countries.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, most of the contemporary intrastate conflicts in Africa, and even in the entire world, involve at least one NSAG.<sup>3</sup>

The involvement of states in the conflicts of others, through the collaboration with belligerents, leads to the questioning of the nature of conflicts manifesting in the world today. Are these conflicts internal or international? Karlen opines that most of the civil wars witnessed in many parts of the world today are rarely internal, they represent the wider international tensions.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Salehyan and others agree that “although civil wars would seem to imply a domestic issue, they have a significant external dimension”.<sup>5</sup> In essence, most of the conflicts perpetrated by NSAGs in host countries are done in collaboration with foreign states.

Why do states collaborate with NSAGs in the perpetration of conflicts in other countries? Both the NSAGs and the sponsoring states are engaged in a kind of symbiotic relationship. Both parties benefit from the relationship that exist between them. This is because there is nothing that comes for free. The NSAGs benefit from its association with sponsor states by being provided with safe havens to operate from as well as military and financial support.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, states benefit from controlling the NSAGs and having them pursue policies that are aligned to their own interests.

The question that this article seeks to answer is, could there be a nexus between the collaboration between states and NSAGs operating in the Horn of Africa and the protraction and intractability of conflicts within the sub-region? There is evidence that the major conflicts in the Horn of Africa, that is, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, have protracted for decades. It is also palpable that there is involvement of NSAGs, that are supported by other states, in the three Horn of African conflicts. The problem of this study therefore is, could this relationship – that seem symbiotic – be responsible for the intractability as well as protraction of the aforementioned conflicts?

While this article agrees that the role of states emanating from outside the Horn of Africa has been instrumental in conflict management, it chooses to only examine the role of states coming from within the sub-region. The role of the Gulf states, the United States of America, Russia, China as well as the European states in the conflicts of the Horn of Africa cannot be overemphasized. However, the study is restricted to examining the role played by Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Uganda, Sudan and South Sudan between the year 1996 and 2016

### **Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

To collect data, the study employed both primary and secondary sources of information. The primary sources were reached through purposive sampling and interviews as well as questionnaires were administered to them. Among the targeted respondents were research institutions, experts, policy makers, mediators, diplomats and practitioners. The confidentiality of respondents was assured save for those who agreed to be mentioned in the study. The respondents who requested anonymity have had their identity withheld throughout this article and codes have been used to describe them. The collected data was thematically analysed and seamlessly presented in prose. Additionally, deep content analysis was carried out on the secondary information that was collected from previous studies disseminated in books, journals among others.

Consequently, the researcher deployed realism theory to analyse the findings of the study. Realism is anchored on the perception that states must engage in violent coercive activities, power politics and war. Realism school of thought is likely to clarify the reasons, as portrayed in this study, why states get involved in the affairs of others. One of the justifications, for states to involve themselves in the conflicts of other states, is the environment in which they operate; the lack of a government in the international political space to supervise how states engage.<sup>7</sup> The absence of an international government, therefore, allows the law of the jungle to prevail.

Structural and classical realists, although for different reasons, admit that states exist to pursue their interests. On the one hand, classical realism avers that because states are governed by human, selfish behaviours are likely to manifest. Hobbes, for instance, argues that men constantly fight to gain and destroy each other.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Idean Salehyan, “Transnational Rebels: Neighbouring States as Sanctuaries for Rebel Groups”. *World Politics*, 59(2), 2007, pg. 218.

<sup>3</sup> Claudia Hofmann, “Engaging Non-State Armed Groups in Humanitarian Action”, *International Peacekeeping*, 13(3), 2006, pg. 397.

<sup>4</sup> Niklas Karlen, “Sponsors of War: State Support of Rebel Groups in Civil Conflicts”, *Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet*, 2017, pg. 13

<sup>5</sup> Idean Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, “Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups”, *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 709.

<sup>6</sup> Idean Salehyan, “Transnational Rebels: Neighbouring States as Sanctuaries for Rebel Groups”. *World Politics*, 59(2), 2007, pg. 218.

<sup>7</sup> Fredrick, Schuman, *International Politics: the Western State System in Transition*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1941, pg. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, edited by CB MacPherson, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986, par 3

Further, Donnelley perceives human as egocentric and glory seeking.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, Machiavelli describes man as arrogant, insatiable, crafty and shifting.<sup>2</sup> With the aforementioned attributes of man, states – led by men – are likely to exude certain selfish behaviours in the international political arena.

On the other hand, Structural realists do not blame the human nature in explaining the conduct of states in the international political arena; they accuse the environment in which they operate in. The anarchical environment from which states operate force them to conduct themselves in an aggressive manner. This is because of the fear that prevails due the ungoverned international political space. With anarchy, states always seek preservation and drive for domination.<sup>3</sup> Notably, Waltz argues that state survival is irreplaceable in international politics: when their existence is at stake, states will go to war.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, states strive to preserve their core interest, which include but not limited to, territorial and political integrity.<sup>5</sup>

“Power and interests are constant variables in space and time” argues Morgenthau.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, when states are making their decisions, they are always guided by interests.<sup>7</sup> Without doubt, it seems, states’ actions within or outside their boundaries are dictated by national interest. In essence, states must pursue policies that serve their interest.<sup>8</sup> The collaboration between states and NSAGs in the perpetration of conflicts in other states, therefore, must be geared to meeting certain interests of states. This is also the case in the Horn of Africa.

### Why do States and NSAGs Collaborate?

The interaction between states and NSAGs is mutually beneficial. For states and belligerents to work together, supply and demand must exist. On the one hand, demand connotes that there is a rebel group that is readily available and willing to work with states in order to meet some its needs. On the other hand, supply denotes that there is a state that is willing and able to support an insurgent organization for its own benefit.<sup>9</sup> For a state to take the option of collaborating with a rebel organization, it must consider the interest at hand, legal implications and the cost of other options such as direct military intervention.<sup>10</sup> When direct military intervention proves to be too costly or incommensurate to the interest being pursued – in terms of legal ramifications or budgetary implications, states may opt to collaborate with NSAGs.

The risks associated with direct military intervention among states is a serious issue for consideration. The first risk that is cautiously considered by states is the cost aspect. States’ direct military intervention in other countries is a very expensive venture – in terms of mobilizing and sustaining of troops. The Israeli and Rwandan cases of direct military intervention, in Lebanon and Eastern Congo respectively, provide classical examples. Rwanda invaded Eastern Congo in 1990s while Israel entered Lebanon in 1982. Notably, each of the two interventions lasted for more than two decades and ended up with the heavy expenditures.<sup>11</sup> If the two states are presented with the same situations today, it is highly unlikely that they would intervene in the same countries the same way.

The other risks that face states during military intervention are the obstacles created by the international legal framework. Contravention of international laws by unlawfully (without the approval of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)) intervening in another state attracts international condemnation and scrutiny.<sup>12</sup> States find it easy to use proxy rebel organizations because it is far difficult to be linked with, and if they are found culpable of associating with NSAGs, history shows that it doesn’t attract serious punishment from the international community. Both the Israeli intervention in Lebanon and Rwandan incursion in Eastern Congo received several United Nations resolutions condemning them for violating international laws by invading sovereign states without the approval of the UNSC.<sup>13</sup>

The relationship between countries is important in analysing the willingness of a state to support armed groups.<sup>14</sup> If the states in question are not in good diplomatic relationship or are pursuing interests that are

<sup>1</sup> Jack Donnelley, *Realism and International Relations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, pg14

<sup>2</sup> Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince*, translated by Harvey C. Mansfield. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1985, pg.736

<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, Random House, New York, 1979, pg. 118

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Waltz, “Evaluating theories” *American Political Science Review*, 91(4), 1997, pg. 913

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Krasner, *Defending the National Interest: Raw Materials investment and the US policy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1978, pg. 41

<sup>6</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*, (2 edn.) Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1954, pp. 8-9

<sup>7</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics among Nations: the Struggle for Power and Peace*. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1948, pg. 440

<sup>8</sup> Hans Morgenthau, *Politics in Twentieth Century: the Impasse of American Foreign Policy*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1962, pg.121

<sup>9</sup> Idean Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, “Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups”, *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 711.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Idean Salehyan, “Transnational Rebels: Neighbouring States as Sanctuaries for Rebel Groups”. *World Politics*, 59(2), 2007, pg. 223.

<sup>12</sup> Idean Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, “Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups”, *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 713

<sup>13</sup> Idean Salehyan, “Transnational Rebels: Neighbouring States as Sanctuaries for Rebel Groups”. *World Politics*, 59(2), 2007, pg. 223.

<sup>14</sup> Idean Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, “Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups”, *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 711.

mutually exclusive, the probability to support each other's armed group is high. For instance, South Africa supported armed groups in Mozambique and Angola in 1970s and 1980s respectively. South Africa's supported NSAGs Mozambique and Angola because they were against apartheid that was going on in Pretoria at the time.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, in the Horn of Africa, Uganda and Sudan supported each other's rebel groups because of their poor diplomatic relations between the two states. While Uganda collaborated with SPLM/A to destabilize Sudan, Khartoum in reciprocity supported the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), an armed group that was fighting Kampala administration.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from the willingness to support an armed group in another country, states must also have the requisite capability – in terms of resources – to be able to manipulate the NSAG. While rebel groups may cede part of their freedom to the sponsoring countries, states must also compensate NSAGs accordingly.<sup>3</sup> State capability is the reason why support of rebel organizations is largely a business of the superpowers. Nevertheless, even the not-so endowed countries, in terms of capabilities explore other avenues like geographical proximity to entice rebel groups. They can offer training grounds and sanctuaries to the armed groups where they can easily launch attacks on their countries.<sup>4</sup> Apart from financial, military and logistical support, sanctuaries and training grounds are also very important to belligerents. Geographical proximity has been utilized by some of the economically struggling Horn African states like Eritrea, Uganda, Sudan, and Ethiopia to support NSAGs fighting in their neighbouring states.

Conversely, from the NSAGs perspective, rebel groups seek relationships, with the states, that guarantee them more support – militarily, financial or otherwise – but with minimal control.<sup>5</sup> But this is difficult to achieve because states wish to commit less and less resources and achieve maximum control over NSAGs. An equilibrium has to be established. Reaching an equilibrium is not easy; the armed groups must be able to cede some of its autonomy and objectives so that they be directed by their patron states. For example, when the Nicaragua's contra collaborated with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), they were provided with actionable intelligence on where to strike but they lost their autonomy – they were controlled from Washington.<sup>6</sup>

The collaboration between states and armed groups is highly a secretive issue. It is based on solid trust. Therefore, for chemistry to exist between the two parties, there must be convergent preference. Preferences such as culture, religion, ideology and ethnicity among other things are very important for states and NSAGs to work together with little constraints.<sup>7</sup> For that matter it is easier for an Islamic country to support a jihadist group fighting for liberation in another country. It is also easier for a pro-democratic state to support a democratic movement fighting to topple a dictator in another country. Further, a colonial master can support a rebel group because of historical convergence.

### **Impact of State-NSAG Collaboration on Conflict Management?**

Conflicts, when there is collaboration between states and NSAGs, manifest very differently compared to cases where states are not involved. With the synergy between states and NSAGs, conflicts become more protracted and intractable. Moreover, the severity and chances of recurrence of conflicts is manifested when states collaborate with NSAGs. For instance, as Karlen puts, violent conflicts that parties receive support from foreign states are more likely to recur than those that do not receive any state support.<sup>8</sup>

Consequently, studies show that conflicts where there is collaborative relationship between states and NSAGs, in terms of support and direction, are more difficult to manage and in most cases get prolonged.<sup>9</sup> Additionally, Heger and Salehyan, in their study found that conflicts where states and NSAGs work together result in more fatalities and are severer than those where parties in conflict are not getting any support from foreign governments.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Cunningham adds that conflicts where NSAGs receive support from states are

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<sup>1</sup> William Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An inquiry into Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*, 1994, Zed Books, London, pg. 12

<sup>2</sup> Gerard Prunier, "Rebel Movements and Proxy Warfare: Uganda, Sudan and the Congo (1986-1999)", *African Affairs*, 103(412), 2004, pg. 361.

<sup>3</sup> Niklas Karlen, "Sponsors of War: State Support of Rebel Groups in Civil Conflicts", *Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet*, 2017, pg. 19

<sup>4</sup> Niklas Karlen, "Sponsors of War: State Support of Rebel Groups in Civil Conflicts", *Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet*, 2017, pg. 19

<sup>5</sup> Idaen Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups", *International Organizations*, 65, 2011, pg. 716

<sup>6</sup> New York Times, 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1987.

<sup>7</sup> Idaen Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups", *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 716

<sup>8</sup> Niklas Karlen, "The Legacy of Foreign Patron: External State Support and Conflict Recurrence" *Journal of Peace Research*, 54(4), 2017, pg. 499

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Regan, "Third Party Intervention and Duration of Intrastate Conflicts" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46(1), 2002, pg. 58.

<sup>10</sup> Lindsay Heger and Idaen Salehyan, "Ruthless Rulers: Coalition Size and the Severity of Civil Conflicts" *International Studies Quarterly*, 51(2), 2007, pg. 388.



more difficult to resolve.<sup>1</sup> Further, Balch-Lindsay notes that states' support to parties in conflicts makes the fight deadlier and less likely to end through a negotiated settlement.<sup>2</sup>

The above scholarly observations, regarding the impact of collaboration between states and NSAGs, have been backed with reasons to explain why civil wars with support from states last longer, are deadlier, and often difficult to manage. First, states' support to NSAG increases the willingness and ability of the rebel organizations to instigate political violence.<sup>3</sup>

Consequently, the involvement of other states in a civil war makes the conflict complex. This is because the foreign state comes in with a range of interests that must be met before conflict settlement is reached. This complicates conflict management. The introduction of new agendas into a conflict increases the scope of disagreement and complicates the bargaining environment because the entry of other states presents different and new agendas that must be settled.<sup>4</sup> The complexity of a conflict and a conflict management process increases with the increase in the number of states involved in the civil dispute.

Apart from financial and military support that states provide the NSAGs fighting in their countries, they also provide them with sanctuaries. NSAGs' access to the international boundaries is very important for their survival and performance. When rebels are hosted in the neighbouring countries, they find safe haven to train and operate from. External sanctuaries, apart from giving NSAGs operational base and the opportunity to mobilize, it also complicates the negotiating environment.<sup>5</sup> It is extremely difficult to negotiate or even pursue rebels operating from abroad because of jurisdictional challenges. Additionally, it is problematic for respective governments to apply force or monitor NSAGs harboured in another country.<sup>6</sup>

### **States-NSAGs Collaboration and Conflict Management in African**

The collaboration between states and NSAGs – as projected in the examples of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia and Nigeria conflicts – depict a substantial influence on conflict and conflict management in Africa. The conflicts in DRC, Liberia as well as Nigeria lasted longer and got complex because of states-NSAGs collaboration. This study acknowledges that there are many other conflicts in Africa, but just uses DRC, Liberia and Nigeria as examples to further the discussion on states-NSAGs collaboration and conflict management.

The DRC conflict in 1997 witnessed a peculiarity when Rwanda joined in to collaborate with Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo (ADLF) that was led by Laurent Kabila who later became president. As depicted in the realism theory, states do not just join into another country's conflict without interest. Rwanda was concerned about its security in the eastern DRC.<sup>7</sup> Rwanda feared that the Hutu refugees that were camping in eastern Congo, but near the Rwandan border, were regrouping and reorganizing to retake power in Rwanda.

Considering the costs and international legal implications, the Rwanda government knew it was difficult to carry out a direct military intervention to deal with the militarized Hutu refugees in the camps in Eastern Congo. The decision by the Rwanda government to support ADLF was reached after its plea to Kinshasa to relocate the refugee camp deeper into DRC, and far from the Rwandan border, had failed.

The collaboration between Rwanda and ADLF enhanced the capacity as well as the will of the rebel organization to instigate violence against the Mobutu Sese Seko's regime. The Kabila led rebel group, now with the financial and military support from Rwanda, could initiate a fiercer and deadlier fight against the government of the day in DRC.<sup>8</sup> The empowered ADLF, by mid-1997, easily overran the Mobutu army. This development resonates with the existing literature which postulates that conflicts where NSAGs are supported by external states last longer,<sup>9</sup> are more difficult to resolve,<sup>10</sup> and are often deadlier.<sup>11</sup>

The Liberian conflict, as well, provides a classic example on how the states-NSAGs collaboration and their synergy thereof, can influence conflicts and conflict management in the African continent. The conflict in

<sup>1</sup> David Cunningham, "Blocking Resolutions: How External States Can Prolong Civil War", *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(2), 2010, pg. 119.

<sup>2</sup> Dylan Balch-Lindsay, Enterline Andrew and Joyce Kyle, "Third Party Interventions and the Civil War Process" *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(3), 2008, pg. 352.

<sup>3</sup> Patrick Regan and Scott Meachum, "Data on Interventions during Periods of Political Instability" *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(1), 2014, pg. 133.

<sup>4</sup> David Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War Duration" *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(4), 2006, pg. 880.

<sup>5</sup> Idean Salehyan, "Transnational Rebels: Neighbouring States as Sanctuaries for Rebel Groups", *World Politics*, 59(2), 2007, pg. 219

<sup>6</sup> Navin Bapat, "The Internationalization of Terrorist Campaigns" *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, 24(4), 2007, pg. 269.

<sup>7</sup> Cheryl Hendricks, "South Africa's approach to conflict management in Burundi and DRC: promoting human security" *Strategic Review for Southern African Studies*, 37(1), 2015, pg. 22

<sup>8</sup> Peter Kagwanja, "power and peace: South Africa and the refurbishing of Africa's multilateral capacity for peacemaking" *Journal of contemporary African Studies*, 24(2), 2006, pg. 163

<sup>9</sup> Patrick Regan, "Third Party Intervention and Duration of Intrastate Conflicts" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46(1), 2002, pg. 58.

<sup>10</sup> David Cunningham, "Blocking Resolutions: How External States Can Prolong Civil War", *Journal of Peace Research*, 47(2), 2010, pg. 119.

<sup>11</sup> Dylan Balch-Lindsay, Enterline Andrew and Joyce Kyle, "Third Party Interventions and the Civil War Process" *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(3), 2008, pg. 352

Liberia became complex because states supported all the parties in conflict. Both the government and the NSAG got support from other countries.

While the Anglophone states of West Africa offered support to the government of Samuel Doe, the Francophone countries, within the sub-region, collaborated with the Charles the Taylor-led belligerent group, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL).<sup>1</sup> With both the government and the NPFL getting military, financial and logistical support from foreign states, the conflict in Liberia became deadlier, intractable and protracted.

The Nigerian civil war also witnessed the involvement of other states. The European powers, because of their interests, invested so much in meddling with the Biafra war. More specifically, Britain and France collaborated with the Nigerian government and Biafra rebel group respectively. The impact of the collaboration between Biafra and France in the Nigerian civil war was far reaching. Essentially, Biafra was effectively defeated just before collaboration and the subsequent assistance by France in 1968.<sup>2</sup>

When the French government provided the Biafra with finance and military wares, the NSAG grew stronger to the point that it could threaten the government of the day. If the French government did not accord any support to Biafra in 1968, the Nigerian civil war could have ended the same year.<sup>3</sup> The involvement of France in the Nigerian civil war contributed substantially to the protraction, severity and complexity of the conflict. That is why the conflict lasted up to 1970.

### **States-NSAGS Collaboration and Conflict Management in the Horn of African**

The conflicts of the Horn of Africa, like most of the other conflicts all over the world, are significantly meddled by other states. Importantly, as previously pointed in this text, all the Horn of African conflicts involve at least one NSAG. This article, when talking of the Horn of African conflicts, it refers to the three main conflicts that have protracted in the sub region. The conflicts of Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan have been examined. In the Horn of Africa, it is largely the three conflicts in question that have received various third-party interventions with little success in as far as conflict management is concerned.

### **The Somali Conflict**

The Somali conflict has received an array of interventions from its neighbouring states which have substantially influenced the conflict dynamics in the country. Because of the stake at hand, the neighbouring states applied both direct military incursions as well as indirect interventions through the sponsoring of NSAGs within Somalia.<sup>4</sup>

The involvement of Horn of African states in the conflict of Somalia manifested differently. Largely Kenya and Ethiopia got involved, to a significant level, in the conflicts of Somalia. Kenya and Ethiopia deployed both direct military intervention and indirect involvement through the support of NSAGs. While this study is not committed to discuss about direct military interventions, that Kenya and Ethiopia deployed in Somalia, it is important to note that the two states faced legitimacy, legal and financial challenges when they directly deployed their forces into Somalia. This is in agreement with literature postulated by Salehyan and others which argues that states avoid direct military action because of financial and legal ramifications.<sup>5</sup>

The involvement of Horn of African states in the Somali conflict, through collaboration with NSAGs is conspicuous, but the role of Ethiopia and Kenya is more visible. This could be because the two states have more interests in the stability of Somalia than any other country within the sub-region. The instability of Somali posed serious security, political and socio-economic challenges to both Kenya and Ethiopia. This is why the two neighbouring states are in the forefront in intervening in the Somali conflicts. This is not to say that other Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states are not involved. Djibouti and Eritrea intervened, but not as much as Kenya and Ethiopia are.

The role of Ethiopia in as far as collaborating with NSAG in Somalia is concerned was seen when Addis Ababa assisted the Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council (SRRC) to frustrate the young – United Nations (UN) and African Union (AU) recognized government – the Transitional National Government (TNG).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Klaas Van Walraven, “containing conflict in the Economic Community of West African states: lesson from intervention in Liberia, 1990 – 1999” *Netherlands Institute of International Relations*, 1999, pg. 33

<sup>2</sup> Akinbi, O. J. (2015b), “Historising British and Russian interventions during the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970”, *International Affairs and Global Strategy*, Vol. 34, pp. 1-6

<sup>3</sup> Saul Marigat, “External States in the African Conflicts: A Historization of the Role of European Powers from 1967 to 1970 in the Nigerian Civil War” *African Research Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 7(3), 2020, pg. 52

<sup>4</sup> Prof. Abdirahman Abdulahi during a round table discussion on the root causes of the Somali conflicts on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2019 at the Africa Policy Institute, Nairobi

<sup>5</sup> Idean Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, “Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups”, *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 711.

<sup>6</sup> Elmi Abdi and Abdulahi Barise, “the Somali conflict: Root courses, obstacles and peace building strategies” *Africa Security Review*, 15(1), 2006, pg. 41

The Arta negotiation that was held in Djibouti had just been concluded and an agreement establishing the TNG signed after resolving issues between the warlords and clans. The international community had welcomed the Arta declaration and recognized the TNG.

The collaboration between the SRRC and the Ethiopian government became the game changer. The weak and devastated SRRC – because of Ethiopian financial, military and logistical support – became emboldened to fight and defeat the new government. The collapse of TNG led to its replacement by Transitional Federal Government (TFG), after another peace process midwived in Kenya. The emboldened and fiercer SRRC reflects the Balch-Lindsay postulation that parties in conflict that get support from other states are likely to perpetrate deadlier conflicts that are difficult to end through negotiated settlement.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, the Ethiopia's intervention in Somalia attracted the attention and the involvement of Eritrea, its long-time foe, leading to a protracted proxy war.<sup>2</sup> In 2006, when Ethiopia was fighting Islamic Court Union (ICU) in an attempt to liberate Mogadishu, Eritrea offered military and financial support to it. This is because of the rivalry between the two states.<sup>3</sup> The decision by the rival states to instigate a proxy war, by supporting different faction in Somalia agrees with the previous argument by Salehyan and others which submits that states willingness to support NSAGs in other countries is influenced by the relationship between the states in question.<sup>4</sup> The role of Eritrea in strengthening the ICU was significant in influencing the conflict in Somalia. ICU became too strong that Ethiopia had to stage a direct military intervention against them on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2006.

Apart from the undisputed interventions of Ethiopia in the Somali conflicts, through the support of the NSAGs, the role of Kenya, as well, is prominent. Kenya deployed both direct and indirect strategies to meet its interests in Somalia. While Kenya deployed Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) under the operation "Linda Nchi", on 16<sup>th</sup> October, 2011, it also provided some material support to NSAGs in Somalia. Kenya supported Ras-Kamboni and Isiolo militia groups to fight the legitimate government in Somalia.<sup>5</sup> Kenya's support to Ras-Kamboni and Isiolo militias produced a devastating effect on the conflict and conflict management in Somalia. This is because the belligerents became more emboldened than the government of the day and could claim to be independent of the federal Somalia.

However, the KDF direct intervention to Somalia faced legal and legitimate questions apart from the financial burden that fell on the country. By 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2012, barely four months after deployment, KDF re-hatted into African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).<sup>6</sup> The re-hating of KDF mission was to save Kenya from legal and legitimate issues that would have led to international condemnation and scrutiny.

In a nut shell, the involvement of the neighbouring states has complicated the Somali conflict. This is agreed upon by Bradbury who argues that Somali problems are worse because of the involvement of states; they have caused protraction and complication of conflicts and conflict management.<sup>7</sup> Importantly, as realism theory presents, the involvement of the neighbouring countries in the Somali conflicts was guided by their interests. Both Ethiopia and Kenya were concerned of the security threats posed by the insurgents thriving in the ungoverned spaces in Somalia.

### The Sudan Conflict

The role of states in the Sudan conflict cannot be overstated. The sub-regional, regional as well as extra-regional states tried to influence conflict management in Sudan. For instance, Sumbeiywo explained how the Sudan conflict was affected by interests of states. He reflected that "I personally went to Egypt twice with letters from President Daniel arap Moi assuring his Egyptian counterpart, Hosni Mubarak, that Kenya would not interfere with Cairo's interests in Sudan during the anticipated peacemaking process".<sup>8</sup> "After delivering the letters to Egypt, we waited for feedback agreeing that we could start the peace process", continued Sumbeiywo.<sup>9</sup> The consultations took some time and in the long run delayed the peace process.

The involvement of Horn of African states in the conflicts of Sudan featured conspicuously but the role of Uganda was second to none. Because of the deteriorated diplomatic relationship between Uganda and Sudan,

<sup>1</sup> Dylan Balch-Lindsay, Enterline Andrew and Joyce Kyle, "Third Party Interventions and the Civil War Process" *Journal of Peace Research*, 45(3), 2008, pg. 352.

<sup>2</sup> Allison Fedirka response through a completed questionnaire on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2018

<sup>3</sup> Ken Menkhaus, Sheikh Hasan, Ali Joqombe and Johnson Pat, "Annex 12: Timeline of key political-security events late 2001-2009" *International Peace Keeping Alliance*, 2009, pg 104.

<sup>4</sup> Idean Salehyan, Kristian Gleditsch and David Cunningham, "Explaining External Support for Insurgent Groups", *International Organizations*, 65(4), 2011, pg. 711.

<sup>5</sup> Respondent D response through a completed questionnaire on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018

<sup>6</sup> Mary Wamboi, "Kenya: Why KDF Will Extend Mission in Somalia" Nation Media Group, October 11, 2021 available at: <https://nation.africa/kenya/news/why-kdf-will-extend-mission-in-somalia-3579182>, retrieved on 03/06/2022

<sup>7</sup> Mark Bradbury during an interview on the 30<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

<sup>8</sup> Major General Retired Lazarus Sumbeiywo, during an in-depth interview on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

Kampala blatantly supported the Sudanese rebel group, the SPLA/M.<sup>1</sup> This is in agreement with the postulations of Karlen Where he articulated that states support each for other's rebel groups is influenced by the diplomatic relationship between them.<sup>2</sup> The frostier the diplomatic relationship between states, the higher the chances they could support each other's NSAGs.

Uganda offered an operational base for SPLA/M in addition to acting as a conduit for supply of weapons.<sup>3</sup> The Uganda's provision of sanctuary and operational base to the SPLA made it difficult for the Sudanese government to pursue the rebels because of the jurisdictional challenges. This is in agreement with the articulations of Karlen.<sup>4</sup> According to Karlen, states have challenges in combating rebel groups that are hosted in other countries.

Consequently, the support that Uganda accorded the SPLM/A in terms of finances, logistics and military wares complicated the civil war and conflict management as well. The support made the conflict graver because it emboldened the NSAG to fight and resist more. This development agrees with postulations of Regan<sup>5</sup> and Heger and Salehyan.<sup>6</sup> The authors argue that the emboldened rebel groups are able to fight longer and cause more casualties.

The support from the neighbouring states also influenced the demands of SPLA/M leadership. Initially, John Garang', the leader of SPLM, wanted a 'new Sudan' where there would be justice and fairness in terms of resource distribution.<sup>7</sup> The SPLA/M initially did not have the idea of cessation. They were advised by their sponsor states.<sup>8</sup> The pressure from the interested states led to the introduction of the declaration of principles (DOP) into the negotiation table. In this case it becomes clear how other states can create and instill ideas into NSAGs so that they can completely change the dynamics of conflict management and their outcomes – of course to suit their interests. The role of the neighboring states led to the conception and push for the split of Sudan, a position that was not previously held by the parties in conflict.

### **The South Sudan Conflict**

The problems of South Sudan started in December, 2013 when President Salva Kiir fell out with his Vice President, Dr. Riek Machar. With immediate effect, after the fall out, the government of Uganda deployed Uganda People Defense Force (UPDF) to rescue the South Sudanese government from being overthrown by Vice President's faction, the SPLM/A in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). The deployment of the UPDF into South Sudan attracted Sudan, Uganda's longtime foe, to engage in a proxy war. The enmity between Sudan and Uganda started when Khartoum was struggling with SPLA. During the time, the two states supported each other's rebel group. While Uganda supported the SPLM/A, Sudan sustained the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) that claimed to fight for the liberation of Uganda. This was in the spirit of reciprocity.

The hostility between Uganda and Sudan was because prevailing interest between the two states in South Sudan. The two states have economic interests, which has led to competition between them.<sup>9</sup> The proximity of the UPDF to the oil fields in the upper Nile created some discomfort in Khartoum.<sup>10</sup> The suspicion by the Sudanese government has made them to, at all times, to assist antigovernment rebels in South Sudan. At any given point Sudan is grooming a rebel in South Sudan. Apart from Dr. Riek Machar who has been getting immense support from Khartoum, Paul Malong and Peter Gadet are on the Sudanese support list to ensure that South Sudan is never stable.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, the deployment of UPDF into South Sudan had negative ramification which delayed the commencement of the conflict management process. The Riek Machar faction decried the presence of foreign forces and declined to negotiate as long UPDF were still in Juba. The SPLM/A-IO demanded for immediate withdrawal of Ugandan troops before negotiations could commence. "Even though we lastly managed to convince the SPLA-IO to negotiate and table the withdrawal of the UPDF as a negotiation demand, tension remained high", noted Gen. Sumbeiywo.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tim Murithi, "Intergovernmental Authority of Development on the ground: comparing interventions in Sudan and Somalia", *African Security* 2(2-3), 2009, pg. 9 138 of 135-157

<sup>2</sup> Niklas Karlen, "sponsors of war: state support of rebel groups in civil conflicts" *Department of peace and Conflict Research, Uppsalla Universitet*, 2017, pg. 19

<sup>3</sup> Respondent A during in-depth interview on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018

<sup>4</sup> Niklas Karlen, "sponsors of war: state support of rebel groups in civil conflicts" *Department of peace and Conflict Research, Uppsalla Universitet*, 2017, pg. 22

<sup>5</sup> Patrick Regan, "third party intervention and duration of intrastate conflict" *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 46(1), 2002, pg. 58

<sup>6</sup> Lindsay Heger and Idean Salehyan, "Ruthless Rulers: Coalition Size and the Severity of Civil Conflicts" *International Studies Quarterly*, 51(2), 2007, pg. 388.

<sup>7</sup> Irit Back, "John Garang's vision for a 'new Sudan' – a contemporary perspective" *Tel Aviv Notes* 10(13) 2016, pg.1

<sup>8</sup> Major General Retired Lazarus Sumbeiywo, during an in-depth interview on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Respondent B response through a filled questionnaire on 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2018

<sup>10</sup> Respondent C response through a completed questionnaire 1<sup>st</sup> December, 2018

<sup>11</sup> Respondent D response through a completed questionnaire on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2018

<sup>12</sup> Major General Retired Lazarus Sumbeiywo, during an in-depth interview on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019



The role Sudanese government in the instability of South Sudan was serious obstacle to conflict management. It was satirical for the international community to entrust Sudan to lead the mediation and allow them provide security in oil fields in South Sudan. This is because Sudan provided sanctuaries for South Sudan's rebels, a counterproductive development that emboldened the belligerents. According to respondent A, "the involvement of Sudan in the South Sudanese peace processes has led to collapsed of agreements, stalemates and prolonged mediation processes".<sup>1</sup>This was augmented another respondent that "the interest of Sudan infiltrated into the agreements and things that were not palatable to South Sudan found their way in. This is basically the reason why agreements cannot be held for long"<sup>2</sup>

The role of Ethiopia in the conflicts management of South Sudan, contrary to what other respondents are postulating, was key. "Seyoun Mesfin, the chair of the mediation team unashamedly inserted his own clauses into the agreement. Issues that the parties in conflict had not discussed and agreed." said General Sumbeiywo. Sumbeiywo continued, "As Kenyan delegation we had to walk out of the table. This is because the chair, on many occasions presented an altered agreement." "Ethiopia's role as the chair of the mediating team is the main reason why the South Sudanese agreement does not work," General Sumbeiywo, further notes. "Ethiopia is being influenced by America to scuttle the peace process in South Sudan. The American interest is to declare South Sudan ungovernable" discussed General Sumbeiywo. In essence, Ethiopia's meddling with the peace process have resulted in agreements that are unpalatable parties because it doesn't reflect what is discussed and agreed at the table.

### Conclusion

The Horn of African conflicts have witnessed interventions from the sub-regional states in various ways. The states, because of the interest in the outcome of the Horn of African conflicts, engaged in proxy wars and in some cases direct military interventions. However, the states-NSAGs collaboration in the perpetration of conflicts in Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan had devastating implication on the conflict and conflict management compared to cases where states deployed direct military action. The deployment of direct military action by Ethiopia in Somalia into 2006, Kenya into Somalia in 2011, and Uganda into South Sudan in 2013 did not produce dire results as much as the state-NSAG collaboration because of international scrutiny.

Additionally, it is notable that states-NSAGs collaboration in pursuing foreign policy is more preferable to states, compared to direct military intervention because it is financially and logistically less costly, attracts less international scrutiny and condemnation, and have less ramifications. This is not to say that state-NSAG collaboration is free from condemnation and expenditure. Direct military intervention is so costly that many third world countries may grapple with. Nevertheless, even the not-so well-endowed countries, in terms of financial capabilities may take advantage of geographical proximity to entice rebel groups by giving them sanctuaries to operate from.<sup>3</sup> This is proven by the short-lived direct military interventions launched in the region. The Ethiopian incursion into Somalia in 2006 did not last for a year before they withdrew, despite having immense support from the US. Additionally, Kenya could not sustain the *Linda inchi* operation in Somalia for a long time. KDF had join the AMISOM umbrella to legitimize, legalize and to get financial support from the UN and the AU

More importantly, this study has attempted to prove that the role of the Horn of African states, in collaboration with the NSAGs, has exacerbated the conflicts and jeopardized conflict management in the sub region. The support that some of the states within the sub-region gave to the belligerent groups fighting in their countries resulted in phenomenal influence in the severity, complexity and protraction on the conflicts in Sudan, Somalia and South Sudan. This is because when parties in conflict receive foreign support, they become more willing and able to instigate political violence.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, support from foreign governments, which does not come for free, complicate conflict management because their entry increases the range of interests that must be met before the conflict is settled.<sup>5</sup> This may complex and derail conflict management.

### Recommendation

1. The actors in conflict management should revamp their strategies to include carrying out a comprehensive mapping of parties in conflict so as to capture all the stakeholders – including other states. This is because the traditional conflict management strategies have been focusing on the visible disputants while omitting those behind the scenes – who are the most important.

<sup>1</sup> Respondent A response through in-depth interview on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2018

<sup>2</sup> Major General Retired Lazarus Sumbeiywo, during an in-depth interview on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2019

<sup>3</sup> Niklas Karlen, "Sponsors of War: State Support of Rebel Groups in Civil Conflicts", *Department of Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala Universitet*, 2017, pg. 19

<sup>4</sup> Patrick Regan and Scott Meachum, "Data on Interventions during Periods of Political Instability" *Journal of Peace Research*, 51(1), 2014, pg. 133.

<sup>5</sup> David Cunningham, "Veto Players and Civil War Duration" *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(4), 2006, pg. 880,

2. The actors in conflict management should deploy diplomatic effort as a strategy to conflict management, where the identified states collaborating with NSAGs can be engaged diplomatically with the intension of amicably settling the underlying issues. This is because there is a significant involvement of states in the Horn of African conflict.

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### **Profile of the Respondents**

S/No	Respondent	Profile
1.	A	The respondent is a senior analyst at the Ministry of Interior Coordination. He is in is involved in the analysis of the Sudan and South Sudan politics. He has more than fifteen years of experience in analysis of Sudan and South Sudan conflicts
2.	B	Senior Security and policy analyst who works with the United Nation Mission in South Sudan. She has more than ten years working as the UN international employee based in Sudan and South Sudan. Respondent B, a Sudanese national, has extensively mingled with the parties in conflict in Sudan and South Sudan.
3.	C	The respondent is a works as a national employee at the UN and has been largely involved in the South Sudan peace processes since 2013. Respondent C is also a resident and citizen of South Sudan and doubles as a peace advocate in South Sudan
4.	D	He is a Senior analyst and researcher of the conflicts of the Horn of Africa He works for the Institute for Security studies. He has a wide range of experience on policy, security, humanitarian and social issues in the Horn of Africa
5.	Maj. Gen. Rtd. Lazarus Sumbeiywo	Chief Mediator during the Sudan-SPLA conflict and a member of the mediating team in South Sudan Conflict. He is also a retired Kenyan Military General. He has a wide experience in the Sudan and South Sudan Conflicts. At some point he was the IGAD special envoy.
6.	Mark Bradbury	Mark Bradbury is a social analyst with 20 years’ experience in international development and humanitarian aid. He has worked in Somalia, Somaliland, Sudan, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Uganda, and Kosovo. He is author of <i>Becoming Somaliland: Understanding Somalia and Somaliland</i> (Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 2008). He is the current Rift Valle Institute Regional Director for East Africa and the Horn of Africa.
7.	Prof. Abdirahman Abdullahi	Professor is a former Somalia presidential candidate and the founder of the Mogadishu University. He is a former military officer (Brigadier) of the Siad Bare army. He is also an advocate for peace, social justice and democracy in Somalia.
8.	Allison Fedirka	Senior analysts at the Geopolitical Futures. She has researched and written widely on the Somalia conflicts and conflict management. Allison has also worked in Somalia for more than five years