

Working Paper

Karamoja - Turkana Community Research: 'Peace is not the absence of crime, but how crime is dealt with'



Karamoja - Turkana Community Research Team

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1. Introduction

Communities of Karamoja in north-eastern Uganda and Turkana in north-western Kenya live with continuous insecurity including large scale and frequent cattle raiding, armed robbery, rape, and human rights abuses. Efforts by communities, governments, and civil society organisations over decades have repeatedly failed to bring protection and justice to the people of these borderlands.

This report presents the analysis of researchers from communities, engaging with their own people as well as with officials and civil society actors, and with support from research methodologists and civil society leaders. It helps explain the origins of the system of insecurity, how it works, whom it hurts, whom it benefits, and how it is sustained. It argues for a new approach to solving the problem.

The researchers explain the action research methodology they used and argue that it has enabled people from within the borderland communities not only to see the issues more systematically, but to convey them more powerfully and with greater determination to be heard. Although insecurity in Karamoja, Turkana and neighbouring territories has been extensively researched, this is the first comprehensive study done by community for community, pursuing questions about dangers that they have lived with for a long time. They make their analysis and draw their conclusions from discussions with hundreds of men and women in the rangelands and settlements of Eastern Karamoja and Western Turkana. The researchers are Turkana, Jie and Karamojong. They consider themselves to be members of an '*Ateker*' (people of one language, living adjacent to one another, with ancestors and laws in common), which includes Jie, Karamojong (Bokora, Pian and Matheniko), Turkana, Toposa, Nyangatom and Teso peoples, whose territories span the borderland of North-eastern Uganda, North-western Kenya, South-eastern South Sudan, and Southwestern Ethiopia.¹

The research was commissioned by Conciliation Resources as part of the Cross-border Conflict, Evidence, Policy, and Trends (XCEPT) research programme, a multi-year activity funded by UK International Development's Research and Evidence Division. The XCEPT programme seeks to shed light on insecure borderlands, how conflicts and insecurity connect across borders, and the drivers of violent and peaceful behaviour. This study is part of a series commissioned by XCEPT to understand changes to cross-border pastoral movements in Africa and the implications these have for peace and security. Community organisations Friends of Lake Turkana (FOLT) and Karamoja Development Forum (KDF) facilitated the study and the Institute of Development Studies provided methodological guidance. IDS and KDF had worked together using the same methodology to support 23 young people in Karamoja to research and find solutions to youth issues in 2013.

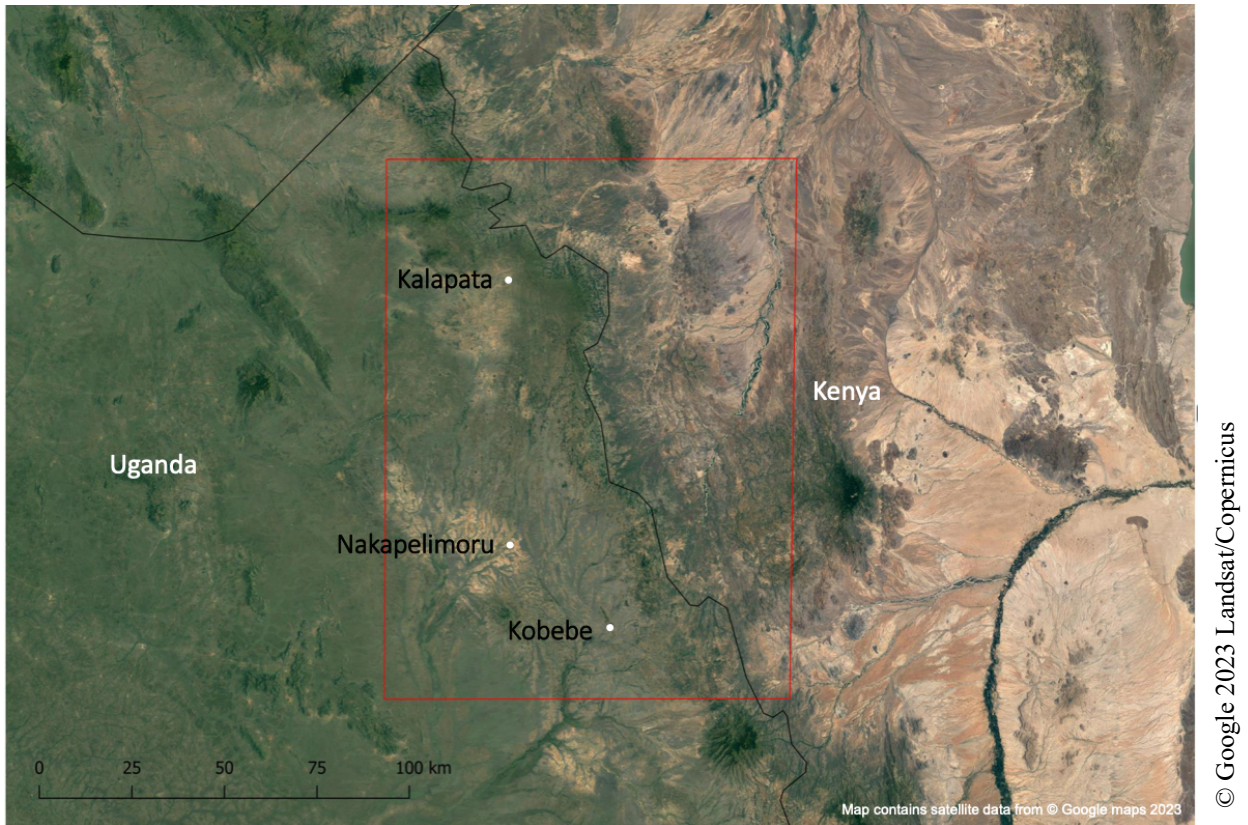
The context is a dryland territory inhabited by a majority population of mobile pastoralist cattle keepers. With the shifting availability of pasture and water that characterises a semi-arid environment with ever-more variable rainfall², the pastoralists herd their cattle over hundreds of kilometres of unfenced rangelands. Turkana County lies in a long valley whose topography creates peculiarly dry conditions. Its border with Uganda runs along a spine of hills that marks the boundary of the higher elevation Karamoja. A Google Earth image of the borderland, taken in the height of the dry season in 2023, shows

¹ Webster, J. B. (1973) 'The Iteso During the Asonya'. East African Publishing House

² See Annex 1 for a brief analysis of climate data.

how much drier Turkana to the west is than Karamoja to the east (Figure 1). This climatic difference explains why pastoralists from Turkana move every year into Karamoja for grazing and have done so for as long as people can remember. Turkana culture and society is closely entwined with that of the people of Karamoja. People move both ways across the international border for grazing, water, and markets on the Uganda side, and to access services and markets on the Kenya side. The two States and their contrasting political orders rub together as they attempt to deal with the implications of this movement.

Fig 1. Research Area



The challenge for pastoralists and governments alike is how to provide security to people and their livestock which are high value, highly mobile assets (in mid 2023, one bull might have been worth USD\$600 in a Karamoja market³ – and a herd might have been worth anything from USD\$25,000 – USD\$100,000 depending on its size, composition, and prevailing market prices). To arrive at workable solutions, the concerned parties need new insights into the system of violence, and they need these understandings to be widely agreed. However, despite decades of effort at solving the problem and considerable amounts of research there are significant differences of opinion as to the primary causes of the insecurity and therefore how it should be addressed.

³ Harvest Money, August 2023 <https://www.harvestmoney.co.ug/animal-prices-shoot-up-in-karamoja/>

Researchers have highlighted arms flows, inter-community raiding, pastoralist mobility, commercial raiding, youth impoverishment, competition for natural resources, boundary disputes and problems of justice. Many of these studies have shed useful light on different and profound aspects of the problem, and this report draws upon these sources to complement and triangulate the community analysis.

The Ugandan government emphasises the dangers posed by mobile nomadic populations carrying guns and having a tradition of livestock raiding. Its solution is disarmament and the introduction of settled livelihoods. Kenyan officials also focus on the presence of guns and the link to banditry. Peacebuilding NGOs tend to emphasise conflict between communities as a major driver of insecurity and promote conflict resolution, convening community meetings and agreements.

In this research, Karamoja and Turkana pastoralists argue that none of the actors, whether governments, civil society, the pastoralists themselves or the international community has fully understood the interlocking workings of the problem. They describe how weak governance has allowed criminality to grow. Their greatest critique is levelled at the disarmament campaigns carried out by both the Ugandan and Kenyan armed forces. Violent in themselves, they also leave people and herds vulnerable, while fuelling fear and division and giving a disproportionate degree of power to armed actors.

As one young female community researcher put it, *'it seems as if the government does not want us to be at peace. It looks like our peace will be interfering with their peace.'*

Definitions

One of the important aspects of action research is that it is those people who have a problem to solve who define the research questions that will elicit understanding and action. With support from the Institute of Development Studies in how to carry out rigorous action research, the community researchers began by observing and discussing with members of their own communities the meaning of peace and security among different people in the society to establish the scope of opinion as to what needed to be remedied.

Karamojong and Turkana people embody in their actions and words the kind of peace and security they most value, and wish could be better appreciated by those who govern them. They enact what Roger McGinty calls 'everyday peace', a mode by which they preserve such order and mutuality as they can, despite the provocations of violent circumstances largely beyond their control.⁴ Everyday peace may suggest something small scale, but it is not. It is the aggregation of everything that the people care about and work for – their families, friends, places of production and meeting, ways of life, and the agreements and institutions they make and respect to secure and manage these vital things.⁵ These everyday concerns influence people's contributions to and appreciation of how they are governed.

⁴ MacGinty, Roger (2021) *Everyday Peace: How So-Called Ordinary People Can Disrupt Violent Conflict*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. "Everyday peace" is "the capacity of so-called ordinary people to disrupt violent conflict and forge pro-social relationships in conflict-affected societies.

⁵ MacGinty, Roger and Oliver P. Richmond (2013) "The Local Turn in Peace Building: A Critical Agenda for Peace," *Third World Quarterly* 34(5).



People explain what they want to keep safe (people, animals, homes, and belongings), the environment they wish to protect (such as grasslands, water sources, forests, sacred sites, roads, markets, schools, and health facilities) and the social arrangements that they strive to maintain (including mutual aid, hospitality, shared resources, policing, justice, and leadership). They explained the different priorities of women, young people and older men. Herders say that they feel most secure when the animals of different pastoralist groups are grazing close to one another and when their kraals (enclosures in which the herds are kept at night) are close. Each protects the other. Before moving to the home territory of another group, most herder leaders negotiate access by sending envoys and making agreements. To graze and water their herds safely, they need sound agreements for sharing natural resources among one another within and across borders and they need trustworthy means of protecting their families and herds from depredation. They hope for a homestead where women, children and older people are safe, and where their belongings (which are few and often precious) are respected. They wish to move along a road freely and without fear of injury, rape, or theft. They want to sell to or buy from traders in ways that are fair, so they want to know that what and how they buy, and sell, is regulated and safe. They want to be able to give hospitality without fear that their visitors will want to harm, rob, or betray them. All this means they need to have trust in the systems of policing and justice that prevail. And, at the root, they want the security that comes with being valued and respected and having and enjoying rights as citizens of Kenya, Uganda, and the East African Community.

The next section explains the method of community action research and argues for its unique and useful contribution. The report then moves on to exploring the historic and contemporary manifestations of insecurity. Pastoralists explain how different insecurities have consolidated and intersected over time and across borders to lock in a violent system. The problem analysis then takes us into the policy space, exploring how citizens and the two states come into engagement, contention and inertia in addressing insecurity. In conclusion the community researchers propose a new overall analysis based on understanding the problem as a breakdown of trust between all the key actors in the system of governance.

2. Research Method

Community action research works because those who are affected by an issue are at the centre of decisions about how it is researched.⁶ When done well, it generates trustworthy, useful and relevant findings which often contribute to improving relationships in a society, political system or organisation.⁷ The rationale is that the questions and findings generate workable solutions because those who are embroiled in an issue take a step back and apply informed logic to its analysis.⁸ This is especially the case where the issues that need to be investigated involve the volatile mix of suffering and power that characterises violent insecurity.

'We are men and women, youth, and elders, from town and kraal, formally and traditionally educated. On the Turkana side we are from Loima and Turkana West Sub-counties. On the Karamoja side we are from Kotido, Nakapiripirit, Napak and Moroto. Local organisations Karamoja Development Forum and Friends of Lake Turkana supported by Institute of Development Studies invited us to form community research teams to help find solutions to insecurity. Over eight months we have been researching the insecurity faced by our communities. This research is different from other research, as we are community members.'
(Young male researcher).

The knowledge generated from community action research is 'vital to the well-being of individuals, communities, and for the promotion of larger-scale democratic social change.'⁹ It is in this light that the researchers worked with their own communities to generate an analytical overview of the issues they face. The intended audiences for this work are the communities themselves, those who govern them and those that seek to support them. The community teams hope that non-pastoralist audiences hearing the messages will gain new insight into a system of disorder that has been much studied, yet seldom fully understood. As members of government, civil and bilateral agencies, we are all part of the governance system that the pastoralists are criticising. Even as primary responsibility for a failure of governance must be laid at the door of government, secondary responsibility lies with those of us in civil society if we get in the way of accountable relations between citizens and their governments.

The method is ethnographic and emphasises diversity. It uses storytelling by diverse people as a means of exploring key events, understanding interactions, and elucidating their salience. Storytelling is a mode of communication and learning that is fitting to the culture in the region, and at the same time has important ethnographic pedigree.¹⁰ It is often the case with action research that outsider research professionals assist insiders who want to lead change, and that has been the approach here.¹¹ Being both locally and internationally trustworthy, the research approach offers a bridge between people and policy: showing the vital understanding of people on the ground about the workings of the problem they

⁶ Brydon-Miller, Mary, Davydd Greenwood, and Patricia Maguire (2003) "Why Action Research?" *Action Research* 1, no. 1.

⁷ Bradbury, Hilary and Peter Reason (2010) *Broadening the Bandwidth of Validity*. Handbook of Action Research, Sage.

⁸ Greenwood, Davydd and Morten Levin (2007) *Introduction to Action Research: Social Research for Social Change*. Sage.

⁹ Brydon-Miller, Greenwood, and Maguire (2003) *ibid*.

¹⁰ Falconi, Elizabeth and Kathryn Graber (2019) *Storytelling as Narrative Practice: Ethnographic approaches to the tales we tell*. Brill.

¹¹ Coghlan, David and Theresa Brannick (2005) *Doing Action Research in Your Own Organization*, Sage.

face, while also including the insights of people across the governance system and offering points of debate and convergence.

In June 2022, FOLT and KDF sent out messages to communities in Karamoja and Turkana, inviting women, men, and youth to join the research. Candidates needed to be part of communities in the study area and interested to take part in the research, not as research assistants, but as research leaders. IDS gave 40 candidates a week of action research training at FOLT's airy meeting house in Lodwar, Turkana and FOLT and KDF selected 16 for the research. The selected researchers were a mix of formally and traditionally schooled community members, some urban, some rural, some elders, some youth, a mix of women and men, coming from different parts of the study area and having different livelihoods, predominantly pastoralist. This diversity of membership is essential to success, since each team member brings a capability and a perspective on the issues under discussion, and connections with diverse actors in the spectrum of people and institutions with understanding of the issues. Once the community members had started researching, the IDS team returned frequently to support multiple rounds of analysis and continue the training based on questions arising from each iteration of question, encounter, and interpretation.

The teams designed what to do in the first round. They began by identifying their research question. After much debate they settled on a question that would open explanation of insecurity and conflict in a way that is fitting with their own culture of knowledge exchange. They chose: *how is the peace here?* They then set out on what was to be four iterative rounds of research, each building on the last. They were uncertain at first, since all they had seen of research was that it was externally designed and left little room for local construction. It wasn't until they were out in the rangelands and settlements, with their question, that they began to realize the potential that the research held for them and their communities. The community researchers secured permission from men and women community leaders to hold discussions and develop analysis before moving on to speaking to others. They made commitments to return to validate the analysis and discuss the implications of the findings with all the people they met. They addressed researcher and participant security as a continuous process: agreeing the ethical and risk mitigating approach, securing commitments from IDS, KDF and FOLT in relation to dissemination, publication, travel and resources and discussing with community leaders each time they visited. Their research plans were also subject to an institutional ethics process by the Institute of Development Studies.

The difference between a storytelling approach with an open question, and a semi-structured focus group or interview approach, became clear. Story telling needs only one relevant question to get it going. It widens the scope, thus risking diluting the focus, but it rejects nothing.

'In the research we found many people who value the lives of the people and the animals. We will tell you the things that we heard. We will also show the value of this kind of research. I have admired how we have managed to research what people have told us about the challenges they face and about how pastoralists can work on them from our strengths. We have been speaking about these things, we are now aware of our own community story, and of the stories of all the communities. We can find solutions.' (Older male researcher)

Behind the question, how is the peace? lay questions that interlocutors answered in their stories without being asked directly, such as: what do we mean by peace? What good things does it afford? How is it kept here? Why is it not being kept? What are the effects of climate, politics, society, or the actions of customary institutions, security forces the administration and NGOs? 'Peace and security,' they

realised, meant *safe lives, lands, and livelihoods*, but it also meant *good relations within and between communities and with authorities*.

‘Although many people are upset, angry or tired of the insecurity, they spoke to us willingly. We are researching things that we know. The people trust us to raise their voice. It is our role as community researchers to be impartial and take the stories as we heard them, and not to take sides. There are stories of suffering, pain, and weakness. There are also stories of strength, struggling, managing, and sharing resources. Some of the challenges are defeated when we recognise our strengths.’ (Younger female researcher)

Each tour of fieldwork on both sides of the border was followed by an analysis meeting, involving retelling pastoralists’ stories, and comparing, and enriching a combined analysis with all the different perspectives gained. To develop an analytical overview, the teams created a ‘Story of Stories’ which they built on at each meeting, wherein they tried to encompass the different viewpoints and pull out the key messages. After each analysis session, they went back to the communities to ‘fatten’ it with more detail, in a way that fitted with the culture of storytelling in Turkana and Karamoja. They checked and re-articulated the key messages.

The last round of data collection and analysis involved validation and dissemination of the messages. The researchers took the findings to communities and, with community leaders, into the policy arena, seeking to inform and influence, while at the same time continuing their investigation about how politics



and policy was contributing to insecurity. They presented the authorities in Uganda and Kenya with evidence and arguments for improving security and cross-border relations. In this phase they encountered and built relations with military officers, members of the administrations and civil society at levels all the way up to the regional inter-governmental body IGAD. IDS led on writing up the findings, producing briefing notes, and an illustrated report¹² designed for use by the communities in their engagements with one another and government. A weekly online meeting of the team leaders with the three international analysts/research methodologists was another part of the analysis and a forum for discussing and agreeing methodological adaptation.

The next section presents evidence on and analysis of insecurity on the ground. It begins with a brief history of insecurity and disarmament interventions drawing on the literature, before turning to the communities’ descriptions of the impacts of the violence and their understandings of how it works. While most of the evidence and all the analysis presented is from the communities and the community

¹² Karamoja Turkana Research Team (2023) ‘One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Pastoralist Researchers on the Kenya Uganda Border’, IDS. The report has an innovative visual layout designed for community members who read and who do not read, to share among themselves and to use when discussing the issues of their security to government and others.

teams, we also make references to other research, media coverage, satellite data analysis and policy material where it adds historical depth, geographical scope, or gives us insight into policy arenas to which the community has less access. The section on the pattern and history of insecurity is followed by a section that analyses interaction of community members, community researchers and authorities over a period of several months in the light of this new comprehensive view of the problem. This was the ‘action’ part of the action research, wherein community members (including researchers) opened new pathways for solving the problems of violence and insecurity through dialogue and challenge. In so doing they found their understanding and analysis deepening and becoming ever more concrete and focused. and a means of deepening understanding and analysis.

3. Interlocking Insecurities

‘Until the government understands why people need to have guns, they will continue focusing on conflict, which is the wrong side to solve this insecurity. Even after the disarmament, theft did not stop. Arrows and eventually the gun re-emerged. Let us focus more on the criminal’ (Karamoja Official).

A brief history of insecurity and disarmament in Karamoja and Turkana

The current pattern of insecurity has its roots in the late nineteenth century when Swahili, Arab, Persian, and European traders came to Karamoja and Turkana to purchase ivory from pastoralists who hunted elephant for food.¹³ As demand grew and supply dwindled, traders offered livestock in payment and threw in guns to sweeten the deals. In the first years of the twentieth century, British colonial powers, encountering these armed populations, began a process of violent ‘pacification’.¹⁴ Rather than controlling trade and traders, the new authorities saw their task as controlling local populations.

Pastoralist oral history and archival material refer to large-scale state military intervention at several points throughout the 20th and into the 21st century, beginning with a northern patrol of the King’s African Rifles which ‘pacified the tribes’ westwards from the Nile in 1911, and followed in 1918 by campaigns across Turkana, one of which saw thousands of Turkana killed and over 250,000 animals seized.¹⁵ This mode of militarised security is still resonant today in both Karamoja and Turkana. The military interventions did dampen cattle raids and intercommunal wars in the years following each intervention but failed to establish a system of law and order that communities deemed legitimate. None of the pastoralist communities gave up arms or ceased to engage in violent defence or offense.¹⁶

¹³ Barber J.P. (1962) “The Karamoja District of Uganda: A Pastoral People Under Colonial Rule.” *Journal of African History* III(1): 111-124

¹⁴ Sana, Olang and Adams Oloo (2019) “Between the Borders and Internal Control: The Evolving Character of the Nation State in a Transnationalist Pastoralist Zone: A Case Study of the Turkana of Kenya and Karamojong of Uganda.” *Open Access Library Journal* 6(22)

¹⁵ Lamphear, John (1976) "Aspects of Turkana Leadership during the Era of Primary Resistance." *Journal of African History* 17(2): 225-243.

¹⁶ Knighton, Ben (2003) "The State as Raider Among the Karamojong: ‘Where There are no Guns, They use the Threat of Guns’." *Africa* 73(3): 427-455

In 1961, as part of preparations for Ugandan independence, the Bataringaya Committee report on Karamoja security advocated for military methods to resolve persistent violent raiding, continuing a now well-established pattern. After independence, the 1964 Administration of Justice (Karamoja) Act created special rules for courts in Karamoja, reducing normally strict rules for admissibility of evidence and juries. Commenting on these developments 30 years later in 1992, Mahmoud Mamdani defined ‘a general tendency to treat Karamoja as a warzone and reject the use of democratic methods.’¹⁷

In 2001, President Museveni deployed the Uganda People’s Defence Forces under the national military command structure to disarm Karamoja, using a voluntary surrender approach. By 2002 the campaign had netted some 8,000 guns, which was deemed inadequate, and a forcible campaign was instituted. In 2005 the Uganda government designed the Karamoja Disarmament and Development Programme (KIDDP). Under the supervision of the Prime Minister’s Office, it pursued a coercive approach to the surrender of arms, while offering some level of army protection for disarmed civilians, and development interventions that would lift them out of the poverty.¹⁸

The stories told by pastoralists about how this disarmament was done in practice are almost the same as those being told today:

‘The Jie armies are immobilised, because of the Disarmament Programme. If suspected of having a gun, then one has to produce it and receive a certificate, but that leads to further harassment and the certificate being taken. Failure to produce a gun on demand means a beating with batons, sticks, or whips. Information is sought of others. Jie have been killed like that. If someone runs with a gun, he is shot. (2003).’¹⁹

‘The government has harassed us. The authorities claimed that someone in the settlement had a gun, or a uniform, and they fired their guns and took his animals to the barracks. He was supposed to bring that gun and get back the cows. When he complained he didn’t have a gun, they put him in a container with bees which sting him. The army doesn’t follow stolen cows far, they find any cows, and take them instead.’ (2023)

At the time, many of the surrendered guns were redistributed to Local Defence Units (LDU), formed of disarmed young men who would provide local policing under UPDF command. Development activities did not start until at least 2008 and were not only several steps behind the military operation but were also largely inadequate. They were designed to settle the mobile pastoralist in alternative livelihoods, an approach that worked as a stopgap for dispossessed herders, but only until they could restock.²⁰

As had been the pattern for a century, disarmament-related livestock losses were extremely high. Protection of those who had given up arms was also inadequate. Data from the Inter-Governmental Authority (IGAD) shows that during 2006, while disarmament was under way, livestock raiding inside Karamoja increased by some 40%, not due to increased cross-border raiding from Kenyan raiders who

¹⁷ Oloka-Onyango, Joe, Gariyo Zie and Frank Muhereza (1993) ‘Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation in Karamoja.’ Drylands Network Programme, Kampala, IIED/Centre for Basic Research.

¹⁸ Government of Uganda (2007) ‘Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme: Creating Conditions for Promoting Human Security and Recovery in Karamoja 2007/2008-2009/2010’.

¹⁹ Knighton, Ben 2003 *ibid*.

²⁰ Stites, Elizabeth. and Darlington Akabwai (2010). “We are now reduced to women’: Impacts of forced disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda.” *Nomadic Peoples* 14(2): 24-43.

had avoided disarmament, but due to increased crime within Karamoja itself. Relations between the pastoralists and the Ugandan army and hit a new low.²¹

The Government of Kenya also initiated a round of disarmament in Turkana in the early 2000s, but like its counterpart in Karamoja, the voluntary surrender approach was unsuccessful.²² It was followed by a short coercive effort in 2006. At the time the UPDF disarmament operation had not yet begun, and many Turkana warriors crossed with their herds (some 60,000 head of cattle) into Karamoja to avoid having to hand over guns. Then when the UPDF operation began in Karamoja the Turkana returned to Kenya.²³ Over the period, the Government of Kenya equipped local Turkana pastoralists with arms and organised them under the Kenya Police Reserve system which mirrored the Ugandan LDUs.²⁴

In 2006, the UPDF introduced a 'protected kraal' system whereby cattle were brought to enclosures inside the perimeter of army bases to be protected overnight from raiders. Though officially abandoned in 2009, the system continues to this day and is used by those pastoralists who have no other form of protection. Persisting for so long, the protected kraal system changed the lives of Karamoja and Turkana pastoralists inside Karamoja, reducing their mobility and shifting the power to protect livestock into the hands of the UPDF and away from young men and women. It also left homesteads, and in particular women and the elderly, unprotected and vulnerable.²⁵

By 2010 most of the Karamoja and Turkana pastoralists were disarmed and had lost the greater part of their livestock. Between 2010 and 2019 an uneasy peace prevailed. Many young people at the time had to take up artisanal mining and road construction to restock.²⁶ At first there were few major raids because there were few livestock left to raid. Instead, there were reports of rising thefts and assaults on unprotected homesteads in both Turkana and Karamoja.²⁷ Increasing numbers of *lonetia*, 'armed young men who steal', took the opportunity to raid disarmed pastoralist households, while others acted as middlemen moving stolen cattle to local markets.²⁸ Many of these young men had themselves lost livestock during the disarmament programme, others felt it was an easy way to gain assets.²⁹ According to the herders, the only option to protect the herds and homesteads was to rearm.

By 2023, armed raiding and assaults were once again widespread, civilians had re-armed, and the UPDF was ordered to resume disarmament operations.³⁰ Violent 'cordon and search' operations³¹ (first given that name in 2002) were authorised once again and soldiers had permission to kill persons suspected of carrying guns illegally. New accusations of human rights abuses became commonplace, but none were

²¹ Karamoja Action Research Team and P. Scott-Villiers (2013). 'Ekoi and Etem in Karamoja, A study of peace-making in a post-conflict society.' Institute of Development Studies.

²² Sana and Oloo (2019) *ibid*.

²³ Sana and Oloo (2019) *ibid*.

²⁴ Bevan, J. (2008) Crisis in Karamoja: Armed Violence and the Failure of Disarmament in Uganda's Most Deprived Region. Small Arms Survey, Government of Uganda

²⁵ Stites and Akabwai (2010) *ibid*.

²⁶ Karamoja Research Team and P. Scott-Villiers (2013) *ibid*.

²⁷ Elizabeth Stites and Anastasia Marshak (2016) "Who Are the Lonetia? Findings from Southern Karamoja, Uganda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 54(2).

²⁸ Dave Eaton (2010) "The Rise of the 'Traider': the Commercialization of Raiding in Karamoja." *Nomadic Peoples* 14(2)

²⁹ Stites and Marshak (2016) *ibid*.

³⁰ Stites, Elizabeth (2022) 'Conflict in Karamoja: A synthesis of historical and current perspectives', 1920-2022, Karamoja Resilience Support Unit.

³¹ Bevan, J. (2008). *ibid*.

ever brought before a civilian court of law.³² In the closing months of 2023, the Kenya Government began ‘Operation Maliza Uhalifu’, an anti-banditry campaign.

Violent crime, abusive military response, immiseration and growing mistrust between people and state is a pattern set in place more than a century ago. It has changed surprising little in its essentials. It helps explain how the current quasi war footing that determines justice and security in rural Karamoja and Turkana has become normal.

The Geography of Insecurity

We now turn to how it works across space and between different people. Here we lay out the community description of how the insecurity system works, how one form of violence leads to another, and how a violent economy locks the system into place.

Over the course of the research, the team collected stories and analyses from hundreds of the actors who play a part in the violent drama that makes up daily life in the borderland. The key players are grouped by their affiliations: the armed forces of the two nations, the Ugandan People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) and the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), the Karamoja sub-regional administration and its counterpart the government of Turkana County, the members of named pastoralist communities, notably the Turkana whose sub-groups whose *ng’ireria* (places to which they return in the rainy season) lie in the Turkana rangelands of north western Kenya,³³ and the Jie, Matheniko, Dodoth, Tepeth and several other sub-groups of the Karimojong whose *ng’ireria* create a mosaic across the Karamoja rangelands of north eastern Uganda. The differently positioned actors described their perspective on the regularity of violent incidents including theft, raids, rape, and murder. People explained who was involved and how kraal leaders, women, herders, young people, community elders, administrators, politicians and security forces responded to these crimes. Community members showed how one crime leads to another, and no crime is effectively addressed. We give brief extracts from the many stories heard by the researchers, selected to show how violence, impunity, revenge, crime, vulnerability, corruption, suspicion, and institutional failures work together to cement a familiar system of insecurity.

The researchers collected hundreds of testimonies from herders about cattle raiding. The majority concerned the large-scale raids that have come to dominate. In this example, the herder describes how cattle raiding works today:

‘A group gathered in the bush and raided a kraal at night. They took hundreds of animals and made rendezvous with trucks. The animals left Karamoja, passing government roadblocks on the way. The animals are sold, and the raiders get mobile money. The criminals have been calling on their phones and getting weapons. If I, as a kraal leader, get weapons, what would I use them for? I have cows here and I would use the gun to protect the cows.’ (Male pastoralist leader)

In these commercialised raids, armed criminals from different communities steal large numbers of animals in ways that are well organised. They are connected into networks that supply them with guns

³² Human Rights Watch (2007) "Get the Gun!" Human Rights Violations by Uganda's National Army in Law Enforcement Operations in Karamoja Region. Vol.19 no.13(A).

³³ Rodgers, Cory (2021) “Community engagement in pastoralist areas: Lessons from the public dialogue process for a new refugee settlement in Turkana, Kenya.” *Journal of Pastoralism*, 11(1).

and assist them to trade the cattle to markets many hundreds of kilometres away. The herder in this example is pointing to a criminal economy and a supply chain involving people from within different parts of society, including pastoralists, administrators, armed forces, and the private sector.

It differs from the kind of cattle raiding that used to dominate, in which young men from one community would raid those of another, revenge raids would follow and eventually elders of both communities would intervene to make peace, restore stolen animals, punish perpetrators and compensate victims. The new commercialised crime is not subject to communal responsibility and does not fit with the old institutions of compensation and restoration. Elements of the traditional inter-communal raiding culture are still present, with elders calling for shows of strength at times or backing youth to revenge on communities suspected of benefiting from thefts or colluding with authorities.³⁴

Both the Ugandan and the Kenyan governments understand pastoralists to be communally responsible for the frequent violent raids, though it has been a long time since raiding was a way of ‘alleviating communal hardship’,³⁵ a practice which was once a form of competition between young male pastoralists armed with bows and spears, in raids regulated and resolved by customary leaders. Today, cattle raiding is a lucrative enterprise carried out by armed criminals seldom aligned with a single community.³⁶ The raiders sell the stolen stock to herders turned traders who sell on to larger traders, who move the animals to urban markets.³⁷ According to pastoralists on the ground, sales of stolen livestock and sometimes the raids themselves, are facilitated by the administration and security forces. The only way to respond to the new crime in the absence of state policing and protection, say the herders, is for herders to arm themselves and to use unreliable state infrastructure as little as possible.

The research teams also spent some time in local markets to learn traders’ perspective on security. The trader in this example describes abuse perpetrated by a person in authority in the market system and an absence of recourse to due process.

‘At a market near Moroto, a young man brought a cow. The authorities accused him of stealing the animal and confiscated it. They told him to bring 1 million Uganda Shillings (approx. USD\$267) the following week on the market day. He paid, but they did not return the animal. They kept on pushing him for more money, so he left it.’ (Male trader)

In several similar descriptions, sellers and buyers describe how taking animals to market is hazardous. Getting there on the unsafe roads is also a problem, affecting men and women in different ways:

‘A woman on her way back from market was raped and robbed. The authorities don’t take this violence against women seriously. The pain is bigger for a woman than a man. During a raid most of the women’s possessions are burned by raiders, including traditional items that are irreplaceable. There is rape and there is loss of husbands and children. This issue of raids will eventually finish us.’ (Female herder)

The female pastoralist telling this story is describing how violence is gendered not only in its effect, but also in the official failure to respond. She refers to violent robberies at homesteads, a phenomenon that

³⁴ Eaton, Dave (2010) *ibid.*

³⁵ Olaka Ongango *et al* (1993) *ibid.*; Eaton (2010) *ibid.*

³⁶ Greiner, Clement (2013) "Guns, land, and votes: Cattle rustling and the politics of boundary (re)making in Northern Kenya." *African Affairs* 112(447): 216-237.

³⁷ Eaton, Dave (2010) *ibid.*

grew significantly after the disarmament campaigns of the early 2000s. The disarming of herders left isolated homesteads unprotected from raiders, who had either avoided disarmament or acquired new ones. She also describes vividly not only the physical danger, but also way in which women's personhood and her symbolic role in community reproduction is attacked. Beyond the horror of the injury itself, rape without justice generates discord and despair within households and communities. The violence and negligence combine to prevent healing. Family members may react with revenge.

Several women, including those on the research teams, went on to explain how they responded to these attacks. With no institutional response from the respective governments, and little effective response from traditional institutions, women are broadly in support of the males in the household carrying arms in defence of their homes and herds. Many also accept that it makes sense to promote revenge and call for counter attacks. The team also heard and described several instances of women rallying other women to lobby administrations, kraal leaders and elders to take the situation in hand.

An uncounted number of individuals have been injured and killed in the security operations.³⁸ The disarmament and policing approach has developed into repertoires of attack, abuse, and counterattack which help to perpetuate warfare between citizens and state forces on both sides of the border:

'Three young Turkana robbed a Jie trader who was doing business with them. The trader went to the UPDF barracks and complained, and, at 5am the next day, soldiers came to the kraal where the Turkana men were sleeping. Hearing the commotion, and thinking it was Jie community come to raid them, the Turkana opened fire. The soldiers returned fire and at least one of the three Turkana was killed. They had laid a trap. You cannot say that it was the Jie community who killed the Turkana. It was government mishandling. They came fighting, they did not come and investigate.'

'The soldiers have started to just shoot people. Soldiers said some people have their uniforms. So, they break people's houses and confiscate their stock. Every time cows are confiscated not all of them are got back. After following cows taken on a raid, they will slaughter to reward themselves.'

'Soldiers came and took all the cows to the barracks, the cows suffered there, the bitterness grew among all the shepherds. Young men exchanged fire with the UPDF.'

The failure of the Ugandan and Kenyan armed forces to count and account publicly for the deaths and injuries and to prevent the largescale appropriation of livestock leaves pastoralist men and women incensed. People express distress, anger, and profound pessimism in equal measure. Confiscated stock is also not accounted for, and the animals disappear from Karamoja and Turkana through the supply chains of the raiding economy. From the people's perspective, soldiers are untrustworthy and dangerous, as the incentives for them to make money from unchecked extortion, coercion and confiscation are too strong.

Meanwhile young herders, unable to call on insurance or justice, become increasingly drawn to become raiders or market intermediaries themselves. In some cases, they are tempted by the ease of making a living and the glamour of warriorhood. Other youth act as informants for raiders or the security forces, either for money for under coercion:

³⁸ Sana and Oloo (2019) *ibid.*

'Everywhere there is suspicion and fear. Our settlements have been infiltrated by spies and criminals. Our own young men are part of networks of raiders taking a cut of the profits. Traders don't come only to buy and sell but to also see where the herds are grazing.' (Female herder)

'Young men have become informers. They come with the army and point out which households have hidden a gun, or an army uniform.' (Female elder)

In this example, a double betrayal takes place:

'Young men decided to raid a kraal. Within the kraal was an informant. The soldiers caught the informant and instructed him to communicate with the raiders. The moment the raiders came the soldiers started firing. The raiders were all killed except one who was taken alive. Later, the locals followed a man who was selling bullets to the raiders, and he led them straight to the barracks. Some soldiers work hand in hand with raiders.' (Male herder)

In their distress they can supporting taking revenge on neighbouring communities, creating and sustaining conflict:

'Sometimes women are prevented from joining meetings about dealing with raids because they have suffered so much the loss of sons and husbands, that their emotion is too strong. Somehow women contribute to spreading the conflict, promoting revenge.' (Female elder)

Suspicion within and between communities has risen with increasing levels of loss and a sense of powerlessness. Revenge attacks contribute to an assumption among authorities that the people themselves are lawless and the only solution is a militarised one. But the fundamental problem, say the pastoralists, is the state's failure to provide reliable policing, justice, and governance. They point out the clash between traditional modes of policing and punishment and those of the government:

'When you punish your son for raiding, he runs to government. They come and arrest you and the thief is left unpunished. If you say as an elder that this one should be arrested, the young man threatens to kill you, so we live in fear of death and we are silent about the criminals.'

'Police arrest thieves and after three days the person is back, free, justified. The person pays part of what he has stolen to the police. The owner is left with nothing. It has continued happening over and over.'

Young people in the society say they have lost confidence in the traditional system of policing and punishment, helping to create divisions within the society.

To conclude, one of the research team members, himself a herder, winds these different interlocking aspects into a single statement. He put it together during our third analysis meeting in January 2023, when we were refining the 'story of stories', a summary of what had been learned about the pastoralist experience of insecurity up to that point.

Researcher

I appreciate the time to speak. This is our combined analysis. Many pastoralists have entered government, but do not solve the problems. Politicians have guns in their homes and never mention it. The army says we are all criminals. They come and beat everyone until they reveal. The authorities say the criminal is never seen in our community until the soldiers come. Soldiers are punished if they make a mistake, but local government is like a father who says, my children have not made mistakes. The locals will hide their raider children and never mention. We asked elders everywhere, you used to make peace that lasted. What has made it fail? They replied: 'two things: government policies and laws on the one side and police and army on the other.' The army does its work in a very strong and harsh way. Police, all their activities are associated with money.

The law is against people. Elders cannot implement their traditional law. Police catch some thieves. They arrest them, but after three days the person is back, free, and justified. The thief pays part of what he has stolen to the police. The victim is left with nothing. It has continued happening over and over. The authorities say that community members always give excuses, but never give information. They say that they are tired of excuses, and they now will do what they need to do.

The army responded, return our guns. But the elders asked, is it the gun that prevents peace? Many people are dying because of your activities, more than when we made peace without you. The government is not working with us. The Turkana need water, but the only water in the dry season is in Kobebe in Uganda. As the Turkana are not safe at Kobebe, they bring guns. The armies of Uganda and Kenya say that they must not.

The pastoralists believe that some of the soldiers work with the criminals to raid. When 1,000, or 3,000 animals are stolen, and you go to the army, and they don't help you – what else can you think? The different communities would like to stay together in Kobebe, with the army providing real protection. But some in the government work together with criminals. There was a time when pastoralists from Kotido

Team commentary

Pastoralists joining government or elite levels of business must navigate a different culture.

Pastoralists expect security forces to operate with violence, so they attempt to protect their children from it. Local government is torn between acting like a 'father' and protecting the citizens from abuse or acting in accordance with national policy.

State law and traditional law are contradictory in important respects. Community law and order cannot solve major problems of crime that include perpetrators who are not of the community. Given the weakness of traditional law in relation to this kind of crime, there young people and women have lost some respect. This has helped fragment traditional institutions.

Communities point out that actors within the armed forces and administrations are directly involved with and benefiting from raiding.

raided and then went to a nearby place. Some of the cows were recovered, but the rest were lost. The cows had been transported by vehicles. There are government checkpoints on the way out of Karamoja, how did they not stop them? It's how the herders feel sure that raiders work with some officials. Once there was a planned raid on a community, and someone was caught guiding the raiders by phone. The soldiers laid a trap. The moment the raiders came, the soldiers started firing. Most of the raiders were killed. When they picked up the bullet casings afterwards, they found that the raiders' bullets came from the army.

The soldiers are not bad all the time, but they have not established a working relationship with the community. In a kraal where soldiers are not far, there are chances to rescue the cows. There was a raid in my home. I was in another village. I went into the barracks. The soldiers went in the wrong direction and the cows disappeared. I could excuse the soldiers. They tried. There was a raid at Rengen. I told them, you people you do not know the paths of cows when they are raided. A plane was brought, I was in the plane to track the cows. We zigzagged until we got the cows. The soldiers on the ground got them back. I have stayed for many years with soldiers. They prefer people to speak the truth. We became part of their patrols. In 2007/8 I was asked to get 10 warriors. They joined 10 soldiers on patrol. Those operations were successful.

The elders accept that part of the problem comes from them. There was a time when we didn't have these large raids. When the elders prayed, God listened to our prayers. Now it doesn't rain, and all our spears are covered in blood. The rainmaking spirits also died. Now go back to your elders and ask them what they did for rain. Whenever anyone goes to speak to them, all they want is alcohol. Those days, when an agreement was made, we were at peace. But now people say, we are at peace with so and so and we are staying with them, but there are others from the same community with whom we are not at peace. How can you say that one part of your body is at peace when the other is not? Jie and Turkana used to be one person. When they made peace, it lasted. If they accept local ways to make peace it will work but if not, this thing will never end.

The problem is not only the militarised policy, but also lack of accountability.

Ultimately effective law, order and governance stem from people's trust and collaboration with one another and with those who govern them.

Violence leads to crime and conflict. If the conflict between the people and their governments and the disjuncture between the two neighbouring administrations is not resolved, there will be no hope of peace or security.

4. The Policy Arena

In this section we turn to the arena of politics and policy, with multiple actors and powers operating at, and between, different levels of the state hierarchy. It is an arena of formal and informal engagements and institutions by which law, order, rights, investment, and accountability are navigated and argued over by the different interests, between the two countries, and between the different levels of the administration. The pastoralists of Karamoja and Turkana do not have easy access to this space, yet community researchers argue that the problem of insecurity plays out here.

As the researchers moved from kraal to kraal and settlement to settlement up and down the border, returning three or more times to the same communities to give feedback, deepen the analysis and discussion with community members, they alerted community leaders about upcoming opportunities for engagement with government, security agencies, and NGOs. In so doing they seeded community discussions and helped extend the community leaders' analysis of the politics involved in finding solutions to the problems of crime, law, and order. In this section we detail a series of events which gave understandings among the team members and community leaders. The community teams followed them in real time as participant observers, communicating findings and researching as they went. They spoke, listened, watched, and made and collected records. Two broad areas of policy are considered, the military disarmament programme and a cross-border agreement that approached security through the lens of natural resource sharing between the pastoralists of the two countries. The analysis illustrates the way in which security in these borderlands and their security are governed, where and how trust does or does not operate, and how different interests navigate the spaces of power.

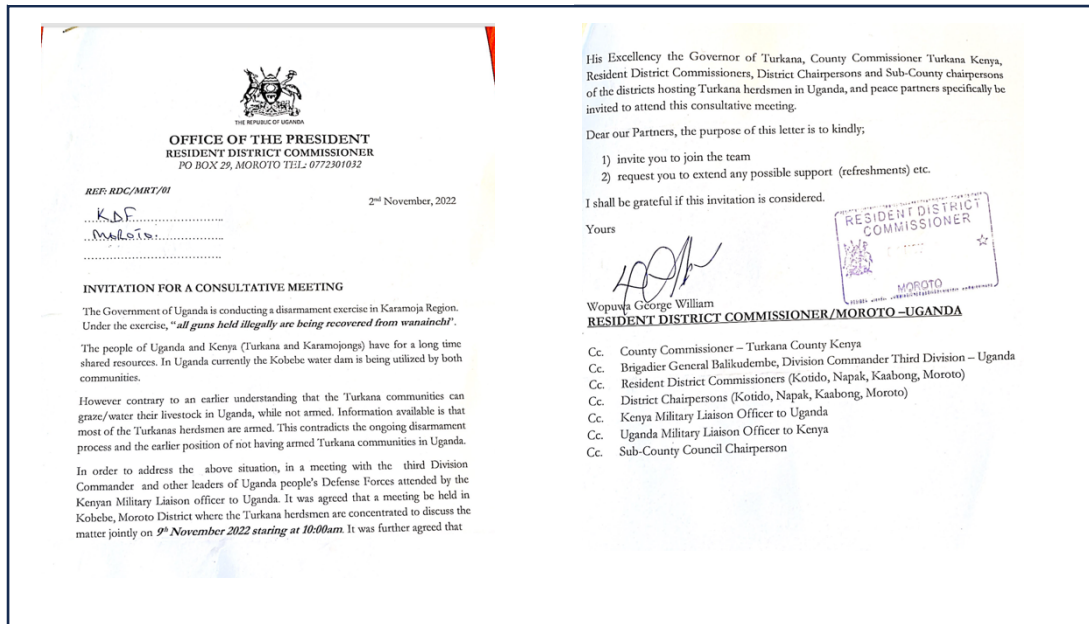
The Twists and Turns of Disarmament 2022-23

A Consultative Meeting

On an afternoon in early November 2022, eight Karimojong community researchers went to the office of George Wapuwa, the Resident District Commissioner of Moroto District in Uganda to meet him and Brigadier General Joseph Balikudembe, Commander of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Third Infantry Division, which, as one newspaper puts it 'oversees Karamoja sub-Region'.³⁹ Sitting in a small circle of chairs under the trees outside the RDC's office, the team listened as the Brigadier General explained that there had been 'a near exchange between armed Turkana [from Kenya] and the UPDF in Moroto'. He advised that the government planned to invite community leaders to a meeting the following week. The meeting would be held at Kobebe in Karamoja, beside a large dam around which Karamoja's Matheniko, Bokora and Jie, and Turkana pastoralist herders had their kraals (mobile cattle camps) and temporary homesteads.

³⁹ <https://www.newvision.co.ug/news/1513143/updf-changes-commanders-3rd-infantry-division>

Fig. 3. Letter from RDC Moroto to KDF



The following day, a letter from the RDC arrived at the offices of the Karamoja Development Forum, the NGO facilitating the community research on the Uganda side. The same letter went to several other NGOs working on peace in the sub-region. It announced the government's intention to hold a consultative meeting to discuss with Turkana herdsman the matter of guns (Fig. 1). It noted that despite a prohibition agreed with Kenya's President Kenyatta in 2019, 'most of the Turkana herdsman are armed'. The letter invited the NGO peace partners to attend and requested help with refreshments.

Mzee Imana Echor, a Kenyan member of the community research team, Turkana community elder and ex-Member of the Kenya Parliament, told the research team that he called the Brigadier General the following day. Balikudembe told him that he had invited the recently elected Governor of Kenya's Turkana County to meet him at Moroto and they would then go on to meet the communities at Kobebe on 9th November. Imana travelled to Moroto in advance of the Kenya delegation. When the Turkana Governor swept into town on 8th November in his convoy of 15 cars, accompanied by the County Secretary and some 20 others, Imana took him aside at his hotel and advised that although the Government of Uganda want the Turkana to disarm, the Turkana would not be safe without their guns.

The community leaders gathered at Kobebe on the morning of 9th November at the appointed early hour and waited. They had agreed who would provide and slaughter bulls to provide the ritual welcome for the occasion. At last, at 3pm, the cars arrived and the RDC, MPs, Turkana County and Karamoja Sub-Regional staff, the Turkana Governor and the military men and women stepped under the shade of temporary awnings. Soft drinks provided by the NGOs were handed round. The formal introductions and protocols proceeded. Then, as the sun began to set, the Turkana County Commissioner, rose to speak.

I want to ask our Turkana: you have been hosted so that at least your animals can survive the drought, but instead you turn to crime while being assisted. The President of Uganda, His

Excellency Yoweri Museveni, signed the MOU with Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta. It allows Kenyans to bring their animals to graze in Uganda, but they should not come with guns. The Uganda Government is clearing the guns and then you come with them. Guns create confusion and tension, with raids and crime. We want to maintain good relations with our neighbours. Leave your guns behind with His Excellency the Turkana County Governor. If you are involved in crime, the law of Uganda will take care of you.⁴⁰

The Turkana County Governor, Hon. Jeremiah Lomorukai, then spoke. He drew attention to the friendship between the Presidents of Kenya and Uganda, noted that the Kenyan President was committed to ‘ending criminality and disarming all citizens with illegal guns,’⁴¹ and emphasised his role within the geopolitical relationship,

Together as the leadership of Turkana County, as the leadership of Kenya, as leadership of East Africa and as leadership of Uganda, we are not going to entertain banditry and we are going to sign any document that discards that kind of activity. As the Governor for Turkana, mine is to marshal support for activities that will take us forward through provision of water, medical facilities, drugs for our livestock and other essential needs.

He went on to promise roads and dams that Kenya would build to assist in helping ‘the people of Ateker’ (Turkana, Karimojong, Jie and other associated groups), and referred again to the East African Community.

Kraal leader Ikaale Akwaan, a respected Turkana herder responsible for the welfare of families and their herds of hundreds of cattle, stood to reply. With elegant diplomacy he thanked all the organisers of the meeting, then asked the Turkana governor to provide animal health services, and then went on to point out that he knew that animals stolen from him were being held by Karimojong in Kotido. It was a message that in his case, at least, it is not, or not only, Turkana who raid cattle. He went on to say:

Karamoja pastoralists have not been fully disarmed. There are still illegal guns that terrorise the Turkana people. If I voluntarily give out my gun, all my animals will be taken because I will be defenceless. The government should look for a fair solution. You can see me as the one responsible for the peace we are enjoying in Kobebe.

Kraal leader Lotee Ekorikol stood to speak for the Karamoja pastoralists. The notes say that he spoke briefly because of time. He highlighted how conflict arises from misunderstandings between business traders from both Turkana and Karamoja communities. And then the meeting closed. The research team noticed the dissatisfaction of the community leaders present; they had not been given a chance to give their side of the story, no opportunity to make formal complaint regarding military abuses, time was too little to discuss the matter amicably and they had been offered no place on the decision-making table. One said that it would have been better if pastoralists were allowed to point out the problems before the delegation came up with their resolutions.

⁴⁰ Friends of Lake Turkana (2022) Report on Disarmament Meeting Held at Kobebe Dam in Moroto Uganda, 9th November 2022

⁴¹ <https://www.updf.go.ug/uncategorized/uganda-kenya-commit-to-end-gun-violence/>

The bulls were not offered for the people to share, as the meeting had not met the criteria for a formal traditional decision-making gathering. Reflecting on it afterwards, Imana asked, ‘how can you call that a meeting? We were supposed to hear from Karimojong and Turkana and mediate a decision.’ Another elder present described it thus:

‘At the Kobebe event the Turkana had mobilised two cows to eat after the meeting when the government officials came. They introduced themselves: he is the MCA [Member of the Turkana County Assembly], he is the Governor. They showed their power. We didn’t hear anything of us. They had already gotten their own food. There was no resolution for the community. So, there was no bull killed for them. Everybody just walked out of the meeting. The meeting was a big mess.’ (Elder male researcher)

A few days later, Ikale Akwaan’s kraals at Kobebe were raided by armed men. Six herds, about 170 cows, were stolen from under his protection. The animals were taken to Kaabong, a district to the north of Kobebe. The UPDF Divisional Commander mounted a military operation, ‘showing his power’ as one of the research leaders put it:

‘Peace is not the absence of crime, but how you deal with it. The divisional commander tracked the stolen cattle, found some exhibits, and rounded up a lot of herds. A few of the cows he rounded up may be those lost by Ikale Akwaan, but most were not. Some innocent person suffers, a few stolen cows are recovered, the others which are impounded are innocent cows and the owners usually lose them.’ (Research leader)

What did the community researchers observe about the roles, interests, and powers of different actors at the Kobebe event? They pointed to the way in which local pastoralist leadership had been excluded from deliberation and they recorded how, later, the Turkana had been particularly bitter at the lack of concern for their safety and their need for water and grazing. The event was not a negotiation, but a performance in which the visible power of the state was set against the relative weakness of the people’s local leaders. The asymmetry was evident, accentuating the problem of mistrust between the state security institutions and the traditional institutions of the pastoralists.

‘There was peace until this meeting at Kobebe, when our government officials and a delegation from Kenya ordered us pastoralists, especially the Turkana, to surrender guns or leave them behind before crossing to Uganda. A few weeks later our peaceful co-existence began to change. I blame the way our security officers are disarming pastoralists, especially our brothers from Kenya. When our soldiers are tipped off about possession of a firearm, they use force and violence and we Karimojong are also affected. When our soldiers cordon a homestead and drive away cows to compel the Turkana to surrender their guns, the Turkana think it is us that have tipped off the soldiers. The Turkana raid us in revenge and conflict escalates. Our government should ask the Turkana council of elders and their representatives to intervene.’ (Karamoja male trader).

A High-level Military Meeting

On 20th February 2023, the Government of Uganda hosted a High-Level Joint Military meeting at Moroto. The line-up was high powered. In attendance were Uganda’s Minister for Security, Jim Muhwezi and General (Rtd). Caleb Akandwanaho (more usually known as General Salim Saleh), Uganda Presidential Advisor on Defence and Coordinator in Chief of Operation Wealth Creation. The

Kenya delegation was headed by Rebecca Miano, Kenya’s Cabinet Secretary for the East Africa Community and the most senior military delegate from Kenya was the Commander of the Kenya Army, Lieutenant General Peter Njiru. On the Uganda military side was UPDF Commander Land Forces, Lieutenant General Kayanja Muhanga, and Deputy Chief of Military Intelligence, Colonel Abdul Rugumayo.

A joint communique issued at the end of the meeting appealed to the President of Uganda to exercise his Prerogative of Mercy in favour of nine Turkana herdsman who had been arrested and imprisoned for having illegal arms. It went on to list many issues to be addressed to facilitate development, enhance peace, and strengthen security along the border between the two countries. Out of 13 issues listed in the communique, four touched on law and order and the administration of criminal justice with regards to cattle raids, six touched on the implementation of a cross-border MoU signed between the two countries in 2019,⁴² and three touched on coordination of security arrangements between the two countries. While at first it seemed to align with the everyday peace desired by communities, a closer look showed that the communique was heavily tilted towards military concerns. Communities did not feature in the communique other than as beneficiaries of state interventions. Neither their institutions nor their social and cultural relations that are an integral part of interactions between the Turkana and Karamojong were mentioned.

A Cordon and Search Operation

In the months that followed, some Turkana moved away from Kobebe deeper into Karamoja and held meetings with Matheniko, Jie and Bokora kraal leaders. Many others moved back across the border into Kenya, even though there was almost no grazing and water on the Kenya side at this stage of the dry season. Turkana Kraal leaders held a series of anxious meetings at sites close to the Uganda border and discussed what to do. The Turkana County Government and the local Members of Parliament began to engage vigorously, encouraging the pastoralists to abandon hope of returning to graze in Uganda, and to consider moving to Turkana South and East instead. Kraal leaders, women’s leaders and elders considered the idea, and sent emissaries to the south and east. They found that it would not work – not enough grazing or water.

Meanwhile the disarmament campaign was also proceeding apace. On 8th April 2023 there was a cordon and search operation at Lokeriaut, 50 km from Moroto where Turkana were encamped in a protected kraal with Matheniko herders. By many accounts it was a violent event. Five children and a woman were hospitalised with bullet wounds. UPDF social media posted a message reporting the successful operation. Three days later, 32 pastoralists, most of whom were Kenyan citizens, came up before a court martial convened at Moroto and each was convicted to 20 years in prison under anti-terrorism laws. The harsh sentences generated a buzz of media coverage across Kenya, and mobilised Kenyan politicians to call on the Government of

**MOROTO DISTRICT USALAMA KWA WOTE
DISARMAMENT OPERATION** Joint Security Forces
Recover 31 Guns.

On the wee hours of 8.4.2023, Joint Security Forces conducted simultaneous intelligence led a cordon and search Disarmament operation in the Turkana kraals located in Lokereyot village, Nadunget Subcounty, Moroto District about 50km away from Moroto Town where our intelligence had indicated to be a hide for illegal guns and stolen animals.

Present in this operation were:-
3Division commander Brig. Gen. Joseph Balikuddembe,
2nd in command 3Division Brig. Gen. Busizoori Felix, RPC
Mt. Moroto ACP Chemust Francis and regional team,
Operation ASTU commander SP. Kayongo Musa, Lt Col. Shem Nakora Div. I.O , men and women of UPDF and Police.

These particular operation has been rated by Joint security forces as the most successful since we started the Disarmament operation where a total of 31 guns, 752 live ammunitions, 19 bow and arrows, and 3 uniform parts have been recovered in one big kraal at once in one day.

⁴² <https://www.undp.org/kenya/news/new-dawn-kenya-and-uganda-peace-agreement-signed-end-conflict>

Kenya to intervene. It was not long before the issue dropped off the front pages, however. Meanwhile the herders were in despair.

We had relative peace, sharing grasses and water until the soldiers attacked the kraals, throwing bombs randomly, displacing and killing everyone including livestock near Lokeriaut, (Karamoja male herder)

A government official from the home area of many of the convicted Turkana compiled a report based on interviews with people who had been present. He ended with a plea:

'The Turkana and Matheniko have common cultural ties. They have lived together and seem to understand each other better. The countries where pastoralist live have rules and regulations to be followed. Whether people are safe while following restrictions is a question that begs for answers. A long-lasting solution needs to be found for peaceful coexistence as all aspire to promote their traditional livelihoods. It is true to say, some decisions may destroy the existing peace dividends achieved. There is still room to live in harmony.' Lokorikeju Titus Ekiru, Sub-County Administrator, Loima (Kenya).

The operation at Lokeriaut is not unique, but, coming at a time when the community researchers and local community leaders were feeling relatively optimistic about finding new solutions, it provided a harsh reminder of the powers of the armed forces to dictate the terms of governance affecting both Karamoja and Turkana.

The Executive Order

A month later, on May 19th, President Museveni of Uganda issued Executive Order no 3 of 2023. Even though the legality of the directive was questioned by legal counsel in Kampala, the claim was refuted by Uganda's Attorney General. He said, 'The Executive Order was issued to the (political) executives to ensure it (nomadism) does not happen; so there is nothing unconstitutional about it.'⁴³ Included in the Order, the President connected the bringing of arms into the country with the charge of terrorism. The Order required resolution of the murder of a team of geologists who were killed near the border apparently by Turkana raiders, through 'blood settlement' (compensation), and gave the Turkana population 6 months to implement the directives, the failure of which would result in expulsion of 'all the Kenyan Turkanas and their cattle' in perpetuity. There was consternation among the pastoralists on both sides. Although the text of the Order mentioned shortcomings inside military, police, and justice institutions, it gave no directives on addressing these problems. Instead, it only gave orders for containing communities, particularly the armed Turkana from Kenya.

The Executive Order is guided by one-sided information given to the President. In the spirit of the East African Community, we are one people, the Ateker, and the only devil spoiling us is the raiding and killing. For us, even before going to government, we should really be able to do something at our level. It should be the Karimojong saying, no, no, no, do not chase our brothers and sisters! And likewise, for the people of Turkana. Our leaders of Ateker should say, 'Mr President, this is too much.' They should de-escalate the situation. The Executive

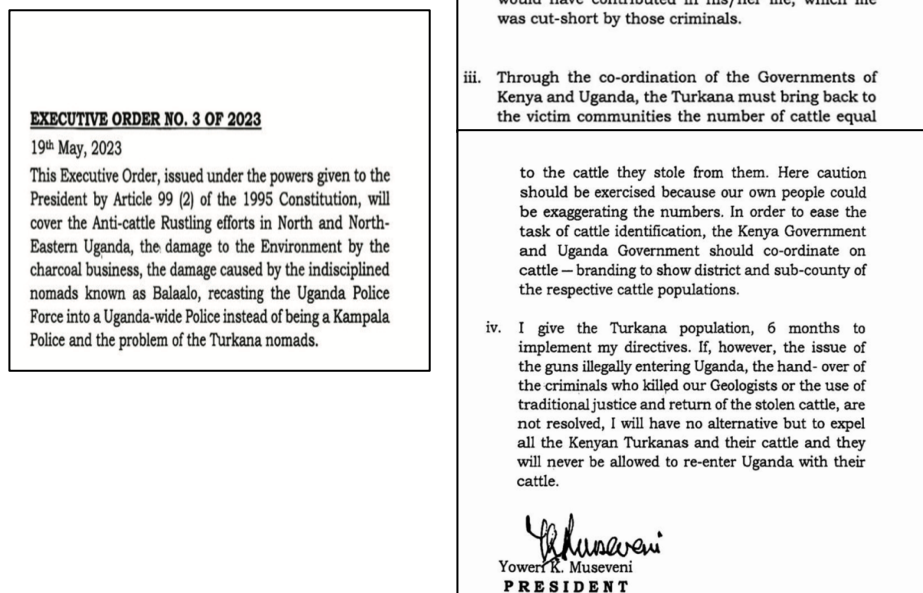
⁴³ <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/ag-kiryowa-lawyers-differ-on-executive-order-legality-4246650>

Order gives powerful mandates to security forces. They have powers to do anything. But they should know that in law you are innocent until proven guilty, (female herder, Karamoja).

Turkana pastoralists, now back in Turkana County and suffering the drought there, were very worried.

Our government is slow in acting towards sensitive things and that is why our problems keep on growing. ... Why is Uganda mistreating us and our government is quiet? The researchers read us the Executive Order from Museveni. The letter tells us we are no longer required in that country. If we are not going to take our animals to Uganda where they have been grazing for years, better you leave us to die. The Government of Kenya, especially the current one, has failed us terribly. We are in deep fear in our hearts, we have sleepless nights because of what has happened to our people in Uganda.

Fig 4. Executive Order No. 3 of 2023
(excerpts from first and last page)



This latest phase in the disarmament campaign struck the communities a hard blow, particularly the Turkana. But even Karamoja communities were distressed – they reported more incidents of herders being shot, as they might have had a gun, and they felt endangered by the anti-nomadic sentiments of the Executive Order. While kraal leaders on both sides of the border had a clearer understanding of the actions of the two states and the political processes at play, these events helped undermine the confidence generated by the research. On the one hand the research process was stimulating new levels of engagement, on the other, the Order and the imprisonments were driving a wedge between Turkana and Karamoja. Pastoralists disagreed as to how to respond; their respective political representatives cast

blame on communities on the other side of the border. The Turkana County Governor encouraged the Turkana to stay in Turkana despite the lack of grazing.

An Administrative Solution? The Cross-Border Resource Sharing Agreement

Immediately after the disarmament meeting in Moroto in February 2023, a Turkana County delegation, senior Karamoja administrators and Members of Parliament and high-ranking members of the security forces from Kenya and Uganda met to draft a Cross-Border Resource Sharing Agreement, which would outline the routes, maps, and modalities of natural resource sharing between Karamoja, Turkana and Pokot pastoralists moving across the border. General (Rtd). Caleb Akandwanaho (Salim Saleh) was in the lead and encouraged the assembled officials to ‘shift the overreliance on pastoralism as a source of livelihood and explore the economic potential of the region through cross-border trade and exploitation of minerals.’⁴⁴ Participation in the meeting did not include any direct representation of the communities.⁴⁵

The pastoralists were encouraged however. A well-articulated and well-managed resource sharing agreement could do much to improve conditions on both sides of the border if it helped improve trust. When the General invited the Director of Karamoja Development Forum, Simon Long’oli, to lead a civil society group to provide background documentation, Simon accepted with enthusiasm. Simon, who is the Uganda leader of the research team, formed and led a working group to provide technical information to inform the clauses of the agreement. The community researchers saw this as an opportunity to enhance the quality of the Agreement’s provision with realistic understandings. But Simon was given very little time, not enough for him to go to communities in any kind of systematic way. While he was able to incorporate findings from the community research into the text of the background document, few of his written and verbal contributions made their way into the agreement itself.

On his advice the government drafters proposed that the Agreement should be discussed by communities before it was signed. It wasn’t clear what rights they might have to make amendments, however. Allotted time allowed for only three community events, one for each of the major groups Karamojong, Turkana, and Pokot. When the researchers informed community members of this consultation process, most felt that that it would be a waste of their time. They argued that the conversation should have started concurrently from the communities and their governments, and inputs from community members and their leaders (women, elders, and youth) should have informed the deliberations by the military, security and political elite gathered in Moroto. In the event only one consultative meeting took place, the others were interrupted by the disarmament process.

Even though the Agreement was presented as a mechanism for enabling the sharing of resources between the two cross-border pastoral communities, it was also shaped by the security priorities of the two States. For the Government of Uganda, the main concern was, and remains, to avoid reversals in

⁴⁴ <https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/turkana-karamoja-leaders-to-develop-resource-sharing-agreement/>

⁴⁵ The list of participants is confusing about the nature of the meeting(s). The list is on headed paper of Operation Wealth Creation, and the meeting title is indicated as “CC-OWC & SPA-D Joint Security Meeting at Hotel Africana, Moroto District, 20 Feb 23.”

the gains of disarmament of the past two decades; while the Kenya government was keen to control incursions on its borders as well as promoting the mobility of Kenyan pastoralists into Karamoja, given the impacts of droughts that have ravaged Kenya for going on four years.

The involvement of the Commander of Uganda's Land Forces and the Commander of the Kenyan Defence Forces, the presence of General (Rtd.) Akandwanaho and fact that the Uganda delegation was led by the Minister for Internal Security, all point to the security imperative for both governments even in the resource sharing discussions. The focus on resource sharing also highlights an investment imperative; for Uganda the quest to create an enabling environment for the exploitation of the mineral resource wealth of Karamoja and a dream of an agricultural breadbasket, and for Kenya the exploitation of energy wealth in Turkana.⁴⁶ General Akandwanaho's role as Chief Coordinator of Operation Wealth Creation emphasises this agenda.⁴⁷ Whether or not the General has personal business interests in the mining sector in Karamoja as some of his detractors claim, the Ugandan government has been keen to issues licences for mining and other industrial land uses on land previously considered by pastoralists to be held in trust for their communities. The national security and economic interests at play mean that community interests and priorities compete with other local, national, regional, and even global interests.

Pastoralist leaders were sanguine, recognising the forces at play and looking for opportunities for influence. The team members who interacted with General Akandwanaho felt that he understood community arguments about the unique needs of pastoralism, the importance of mobility and the need to secure the practice going forward. They described the way he reacted to the letter addressed to him by President Museveni when he was initiating the technical process of negotiating the Resource Sharing Agreement. The letter dated 3rd March 2023 asserts that the strategic goal of the National Movement⁴⁸ in Karamoja is 'to end nomadism and subsistence, traditional cattle keeping and build a settled society based on commercial agriculture of cattle (ranching and dairy), crops, minerals and factories based on value addition to crops and minerals.' The General, while acknowledging the President's guidance, was clear that those were the President's views, and he looked forward to hearing from the participants what they thought was feasible and appropriate. Whether the General will be able to persuade the President about a different trajectory for the future of Karamoja and its borderlands is another question. Experience to date suggests that NGO enthusiasm for putting the point of view of pastoralists seldom translates into influence. The research showed that pastoralists also viewed the NGO role with scepticism. Well intentioned as it may be, it was keeping pastoralists away from the table and displacing their opportunities to present their own analysis and proposals.

Couched in language that suggests that the Agreement is for the benefit of the pastoral communities of Karamoja and Turkana, the absence of organised community representation in its negotiation seems a

⁴⁶ Mutaizibwa, E (2022). Is there a link between insecurity and mineral wealth in Karamoja? Monitor, Monday April 18, 2022, <https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/is-there-a-link-between-insecurity-and-mineral-wealth-in-karamoja--3786030>, accessed 7th April, 2022

⁴⁷ Sserunkuma, Y. (2023). Who will write Gen Saleh's memoir, Uganda's underground co-president?, The Observer, January 25, 2023, <https://observer.ug/viewpoint/76626-who-will-write-gen-saleh-s-memoir-uganda-s-underground-co-president>, accessed 7th April, 2023; Taylor, L. (2022). Ugandan Communities Battle to Benefit from Mining on their Land. Aljazeera, March 11, 2022, <https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/ugandan-communities-battle-benefit-mining-their-land>, accessed 7th April, 2023

⁴⁸ Uganda's ruling party

missed opportunity. Who among those involved in the process were representing the two communities? The elected leaders who were present? Pastoralists leaders argued that their MPS had failed to represent their reality, respond to their concerns, or argue for community participation in delivering solutions.

The Agreement attributes cross-border mobility to climate change, citing ‘the current situation in which climate change and its adverse effects in the region, has *necessitated involuntary migration* of herders and their livestock among the people of Karamoja, Turkana and West Pokot in search of pasture and water’ [*author’s italics*]. Rainfall in Turkana and Karamoja has long been low and variable from year to year and place to place. There is no month in either territory when rainfall exceeds evaporation potential. Its scarcity and variability are the reasons why pastoralism is the dominant mode of production, and it is why agreements to share access to grazing and water between different territories and in safety are so important. The extensive grazing system involves mobility across often large distances, a way of production that requires security arrangements to be largely maintained by herders themselves. The evidence from the community research and from satellite data analysis (see Annex 1), is that while there has been an increase in the frequency and extent of mobility in response to changing rainfall patterns, and the period that Kenyan pastoralists take before they are able to return home, the reality of seasonal mobility has always been an aspect of pastoralism in this cross-border area. Thus, according to the communities, climate change is not *causing* pastoralist mobility, but it is causing it to change.

The Agreement indicates that the State Parties may commit ‘to provide for urgent and transitional arrangements for free, safe and orderly movement for a period of 15 years.’⁴⁹ The presumption here, judging from the vision articulated by the President of Uganda in his letter to the General, is that at the end of this period, the pastoralism practised in the region will have transformed into commercial agriculture and there will no longer be any need for mobility. The pastoralists do not agree, and their position is backed by considerable research on rangeland ecology, pastoralism, and pastoralist mobility.⁵⁰ While they are keen to see transformation in their livelihoods and economy, and to benefit from modern technologies of production, the many hundreds of people met during this research in communities on both sides of the border yearn for an approach to development that is grounded on their rights as citizens and respect for their culture, indigenous knowledge, and institutions.

Unlike Uganda, Kenya recognizes pastoralism as a legitimate production and livelihood system and has integrated imperatives to support it in a wide range of policies and laws, including the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, Kenya Vision 2030, the National Policy for the Sustainable Development of Arid and Semi-Arid Lands, the National Land Policy, and the Community Land Act. Communities on the Kenya side hope that their country will not sign up to an Agreement that is founded on a narrative of pastoralism being a backward practice that should be eradicated.

⁴⁹ Preamble

⁵⁰ Catley, Andy Jeremy Lind, and Ian Scoones (2013) "Development at the Margins: Pastoralism in the Horn of Africa," in *Pastoralism and Development in Africa: Dynamic Change at the Margins*, ed. Andy Catley, Jeremy Lind, and Ian Scoones London: Routledge; Scoones, Ian (1996) *Living with Uncertainty: New Directions in Pastoral Development in Africa* London: Intermediate Technology; Krätli, Saverio (2022) *Valuing Variability: New Perspectives on Climate Resilient Drylands Development*; FAO, "Making Way: Developing National Legal and Policy Frameworks for Pastoral Mobility," in *FAO Animal Production and Health Guidelines*, Rome.

While there is no denying that the issues of security and mobility in the communique and the draft agreement are of relevance to communities, the community research suggests that the Agreement would look different if community voice and institutions were put centre stage. Their explanation of how insecurity works in the cross-border areas should have been key to the construction of the Agreement’s provisions. Some of the provisions run the risk of contravening international human rights norms and even national laws and policies, others are based on a flawed understanding of transhumance, while many of them have nothing to do with, or may undermine, the sharing of pastoral resources between the two communities (see Table 1).

A year after they were scheduled, two of the three community consultations had yet to take place. It may be that the Agreement was ‘put on the back burner’ as one commentator put it when disarmament events we described above (the Lokeriaut Cordon and Search and the President of Uganda’s Executive Order) interceded to create difficulties between the two nations, their respective administrations and the pastoralist communities. It is also likely that the draft is with the relevant ministries at national and sub-national level of both States, where it must patiently navigate the technicalities of policy rather than the easy rhetoric of political announcement.

Table 1: Examples of Provisions Problematic to Pastoralists

Provision	Pastoralist Perspective
Art 6: collective punishment for communities of perpetrators of cattle rustling	This draws on customary law but only applies if communities are in control of the justice process. They are aware that it is contrary to international human rights resolutions to which the Preamble commits the Agreement, and national constitutional and penal laws. It is more of a political provision than a practical one.
Art 7: transhumance corridors to be manned by joint civil administration and security forces	Transhumance corridors are not “roads” or “paths”, but ecosystems, hence not amenable to being “manned.”
Art. 13: establishing and enforcing movement plan that indicates “the maximum periods of departure and return of the migrating pastoralists”	Migration periods and patterns are uncertain, as they are dependent on weather patterns, which are increasingly unpredictable due to climate change. Pastoralist resource sharing agreements are open-ended.
Art. 18-22: Social services (education and health)	Save for Art. 22, Pastoralists feel that though valuable in themselves, these provisions relate to obligations that the two States owe to the two communities in their capacities as citizens under national constitutions and law.
Art. 23-27: Commercial agriculture	Pastoralists have not asked for resource sharing to incorporate the interests of commercial agriculture which likely to cause them to lose livelihoods. To the extent that they are realistic and relevant to the needs of the communities, they belong in national development policies for the two regions.

Pastoralist Navigation of the Policy Space

A Political Leaders Meeting and a Kraal Leaders Meeting

In May 2023, the Karamoja Development Forum convened a Political Leaders' Meeting in Moroto. Also in May, there was a meeting at Lokiriama among Turkana kraal leaders convened with the assistance of FOLT. Each speaks to the communities' growing willingness to engage in concerted negotiation to seek and agree solutions with the state.

The political leaders' meeting in Moroto brought together some 45 political/administrative leaders from Turkana and Karamoja to hear the research evidence and debate new ways forward. Participants included the Ugandan Minister of State for Minerals and Energy, and senior members of the Turkana County executive and MPs from either side. Pastoralist community leaders joined the research team and presented a coherent analysis of the interlocking insecurities. They argued that their exclusion from decision making has been fundamental in the failure of every initiative to improve the situation. The quality of their evidence and the confidence of their analysis sparked a different kind of discussion. The assembled administrators, politicians and soldiers slipped effortlessly into a different way of talking. For once, they did not blame the pastoralists and their provocative mobility for the insecurity. Instead, they frankly admitted problems of military over-reach, administrative corruption, and failures of justice and policing, in creating fertile conditions for insecurity and violence. Minister of State Lokeris said '*if you read this report the children [the community research team] have written you will find everything is here... they are doing a very good job. Now all over we must all work together.*' It is a small advance, easily lost if the pressure is not sustained by the community leaders, but it is nonetheless important and builds some confidence inside the community. It may also build confidence of government and others in the ability of community leaders to offer useful and reasonable contributions.

Disarmament has not restored security. Disarmed communities are not able to defend themselves. Politicians from Kenya should have a look at the policies, legal frameworks and justice systems surrounding firearms. We must create peace for our people, and the ones who are stubborn shall be held accountable by the security forces (Minister of State Lokeris).

It was a surprisingly frank conversation. It was agreed that security, weapons, traders and raiders are killing us, and it is only teamwork that will end it, (Research leader).

Not long after, 35 Turkana kraal and other pastoralist leaders gathered on the Kenya side of the border at Lokiriama. They heard the findings of this research. They also shared their perspectives on what they should do next and, after lengthy discussion agreed despite the Governor's exhortations, it would be madness to migrate to the south of Turkana County. There was no free grazing or water, and insecurity on the southern border of the county was intense. So, they agreed among the different Turkana sections present that they would, as far as they were able, comply with the Executive Order. They would navigate and negotiate. They would collectively find the resources required for compensation to the families of those the Order mentioned.

The people's wish for the kind of peaceful existence that they should enjoy as citizens is not reflected in the content or approach to policy. In the description of these two major policy areas, we see how power is distributed asymmetrically within the policy space. Community leaders did their best to take advantage of the policy opportunities using the research and connections with civil society actors to get heard, but their power was limited. Pastoralists are sometimes consulted, but their perspectives and

suggestions are never pivotal. To increase their influence, pastoralists have realised a need to rebuild their fragmented institutions and reformulate their ability to navigate and their power to negotiate. Therefore, the question we turn to in the final section is how a system so much interlocked, built on foundations of violence that stretch so far back in time, can change.

5. Discussion: Building Trust

The pastoralists' research journey has taken us from the terrors and bitterness of the violence that hurts everyone in the society, into the spaces where it is inside the system of governance. Half of the community research was in the communities' own places, working out how to articulate the complex interactions of the insecurity and the community's part in failing to solve it. The other half was in the policy space, asking why the problems persist, and what is the way forward.

Local people feel that no one cares for the safety of the people or the animals. They argue that disarmament is a violent approach that gives those in authority a right to kill on sight without giving account to communities and it does not deal with underlying problems of crime and justice. Pastoralists have argued here that the militarised solution is the reason they must keep on rearming, as it provokes more violence and crime than solutions. Violent theft is followed by revenge, rape hurts and undermines women's power, and raids are organised in a web of connections that link individuals inside different herding communities to collaborators in the administration, the army, and the business community within and across the international borders. Disarmament renders the people defenceless, generates rumouring and revenge and can easily be evaded by crossing the border. The two governments may agree on a military solution, but in other respects they fail to coordinate. Each aspect of insecurity consolidates another aspect. Each unresolved crime leads to the next.

Karamoja and Turkana pastoralists produce tens of thousands of livestock every year, and every year lose a high proportion of them. Those who benefit from the criminal economy of livestock raiding have little need for trust in institutions of law and order. But for everyone else it is vital that these institutions work. The thread that runs through it all is the failure of governments to provide protection, justice, and redress. If these systems were working, people explain, then a crime is an event that can be dealt with. When the institutions fail, crime, self-defence and revenge become habitual and everyday peace is lost. When citizens fear those that are appointed to protect them, and when they are patronised or blamed by policymakers, they lose the confidence that anyone can put the system to rights.

Too many people in too many different parts of society have become embroiled for a simple solution to present itself. It would be foolish to underestimate the difficulties inherent in reforming institutions that have been adapting to militarised violence for over a century. As long ago as 2005 there were arguments put forward to government that the real causes of insecurity were not arms proliferation but a 'lack of governance, the absence of law and order, and the failure of the government to develop the region.'⁵¹

Each of the encounters of people and their states depicted here, from Kobebe, to the Executive Order, to the Resource Sharing Agreement, demonstrate the effects of asymmetrical power relations. Government is divided from the people by a crucial fault line of violence and distrust and community

⁵¹ Stites & Akabwai (2010) refer to an interview with Ugandan Joint Christian Council in Kampala in 2005.

knowledge and influence is excluded from the policy process. We can also see the heightening of divisions between the Karamoja and Turkana pastoralists because of blame and suffering. These interlocking relationships – between the states, the militaries, the citizens and the communities – need to be improved.

The geopolitics and diplomacy of two neighbouring states is an important factor. Its high politics introduces inertia, but also potential. There is growing realisation among pastoralist leaders of the need for engagement across *all* of these fault lines, supporting the geopolitical relations, the engagement between people and their government and the healing of internal community divisions. The two nations of Uganda and Kenya have complementary concerns about security and economic issues, including interests in mineral and energy production and cross-border trade. It is in their political and administrative structures that the two countries differ most, and this creates delays in their interaction that the less scrupulous powerbrokers use for gaining ground. And while the two states have been actively seeking to harmonize security, neither has taken real action to bridge the gulf between government and citizens that they so lack, and which lies at the heart of their own cross-border political failures. Instead, the two countries have agreed to a militarised approach that tackles only one aspect of the problem inadequately and leaves the other parts of the system of crime, abuse, suspicion, and revenge room to flourish.

The pastoralist researchers have shown that foundational elements of the governance system (the distribution of power, productive resources, and values) are in dispute. Each major actor group is operating in ways that routinely assume that others are going to behave in untrustworthy ways, especially in relation to power, resources, or values.⁵² And the situation is getting worse: distrust takes a lot of energy in conflict, defence and suspicion, and leaves people with little room to innovate in unprejudiced ways.

If now we consider that the problem is distrust, then the solution will be different from that which has gone before. Community, civil society, government and the armed forces can reform their actions on basis of positive policies and actions that build trust, be they in forging a cross-society collaboration to deal with crime, or in promoting local livelihoods, celebrating cultures, or reforming services. Many of the existing policies have the potential to work, but only if every one of the major actors is on board to reform how they are designed and delivered, building trust along the way. Military solutions can change to community-agreed policing that spans the borders. Resource sharing solutions can start with the residents who are going to implement the policy on the ground and whose traditional institutions have already worked out a lot of what the policy should involve. Judicial solutions can begin with initiatives that bring the state and customary systems of justice into first small and then larger scale agreements.

The responses should be small trust-building steps that build one upon the other. They need to consist of equal negotiations rather than ‘consultations’, which can lead to agreements on specific activities within and across a given sector, geography or political unit, with actual budgets and real promises (with sanctions for failing to deliver), which in turn can lead to binding agreements on institutions, laws and sanctions. The reality, as Luhmann suggests, will not be a roadmap, but a commitment to ensuring to bring the actors together into agreement at every stage.

⁵² Luhmann, Niklas (1979) *Trust and Power*, Wiley

6. What can pastoralists do?

To conclude this report, we present some of the pastoralist arguments for what their own community leadership needs to do in the light of all the above. The first comes from a group of women who, fed up with inertia by both pastoralist elders and the two governments, took the initiative to negotiate more vigorously. It shows the powers and capacities of women and their organising.

'there were so many deaths, so we asked the men for help to stop the revenge and mistrust between communities, and when they didn't escort us, we women went anyway, out of desperation. We made a list of women who would go from every parish in Nakapelimoru (Karamoja) [to talk to the Turkana about stopping the raiding]. We had a meeting, made noise. Some women were negative. Why did we want this meeting? We said, the men are getting finished in big numbers. We are left by ourselves. The men told us that if we want to get killed, we should be going for raids. In Kotido, we moved to other places to have these conversations. A small number went to Kaabong and Dodoth. We sent a message to Turkana at Loyoro in Kenya, but they refused us. We decided to move to Turkana by ourselves. The Turkana women in Nakitongo stayed for four days, asking what we must do to save our children. The men felt the women were defeating them, so they started to work on solutions too.' (Older female researcher)

The following comes from a conversation between different male and female members of the community teams, discussing how communities with excellent analysis and increased confidence can increase the power of their negotiation through engaging the state, rather than turning away from it:

'The stories we have heard from women, men, and young people, have affected all of us. We will call for policies that everyone knows and follows. We're thinking of an office run by pastoralists, with people from each community, Bokora, Jie, Turkana, Matheniko, Dodoth etc. When there are issues, the people from that place know how the issues are arising.' (Younger male researcher)

'We had such an office before [in a traditional way], but the leaders stopped listening to one another. They got diverted by running after the raided animals. They didn't focus on the institution that we need. Pastoralist leaders have become older and weaker. They are not followed.' (Older female researcher)

'The new office should deal with any issues related to pastoralists, not only raids. The representatives would be like teachers, organising meetings, bringing awareness to people as to what they should be doing. It will give information to the government and NGOs. The kraal leaders will form a network. Kraal leaders negotiate resource sharing with other kraal leaders. If they need further permissions, they go to the broader pastoralist association. When they need to influence something beyond the pastoralists, they then will engage government. Success will come if we all believe that any problem that comes has a solution within us.' (Younger researcher).

Citizen's own institutions have come under intense pressure from the web of intersecting insecurities and the erosion of trust. For all the reasons of power and money, they have been unable to stop abuses and failures of representation. But the pastoralists who were part of this research are united in a belief that rebuilding vital community institutions could well be the only means by which community members, young and old, women and men, will have any chance of changing the way they are governed. Kraal leaders still administer decisions affecting much of the productivity and the safety of much of the rural population. Female and male elders and seers still give the people a sense of moral direction. Women, refusing to accept the horrors of gendered violence, are making alliances and associations that bind communities together. Young people are capable of a wealth of innovation if they have the chance. The younger members of the research team were clear that divisions between youth and the elders are not irreparable. It is not a long stretch to imagine a renaissance of the people's own institutions that could offer them a house from which to engage powerfully with their governments. Civil society organisations could do much to back the communities in this regard. Much, of course depends on governments, and particularly security forces, to change the conditions by which the people are trusted to take part in the policy process as a matter of right.

Afterword

The Turkana Karamoja Research Team members continue to work on the issues that we have reported here. They can be contacted c/o the two organisations. For any questions about this report feel free to contact the researchers, or contact Patta Scott-Villiers at IDS:

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7. Annex 1 - Climate Data Analysis

Rainfall in Turkana and Karamoja is, and has long been, very low and highly variable from year to year and place to place. There is no month in either territory when rainfall exceeds evaporation potential. Its scarcity and variability are the reasons why pastoralism is the dominant mode of production here and it is why agreements to share access to grazing and water between different territories and in safety are so important. The extensive grazing system involves mobility across often large distances, a way of production that requires security arrangements to be largely maintained by herders themselves.

In the border zone, herds and families are sometimes scattered across open rangeland and sometimes gathered close around dry season waterpoints and in pasture reserves. Both the importance of mobility and the difficulty of securing people and herds explain why the rules of cooperation rely on sophisticated and historically evolved cultural, technical, and legal (customary law) norms and practices. The current generosity of Matheniko and Jie towards Turkana bringing herds out of the much dryer land of Turkana West into wetter Karamoja is a contemporary manifestation of a very old practice. It demonstrates how economic and social relations have a basis in climate and suggests that strategies for adapting to climate change will draw on these relations. In this research it was Turkana who talked most about the changing climate as their territory is significantly drier than Karamoja, and they must move across an international border to maintain their livelihood, where their citizenship of another state puts them at a disadvantage.

Men and women elders in Turkana described that the six months of wet season and six of dry that they remember has changed to more patchy rain at any time between the months of April and November:

*'It used to rain, six months in the dry season and six months in the wet season and when it rained, we got wild fruits from this and that tree. When it rained, we could plough. We got cheese and honey. And the cheese would let us survive the dry season.'*⁵³

Their descriptions of the changing climate are in line with meteorological studies. Extreme drought events in Turkana have increased in the past decades, with only 29% of drought occurrences falling in the two decades between 1950 and 1970 in contrast to 48% of drought years occurring during the last two decades between 1990 and 2012⁵⁴ yet rainfall is slightly higher than in the past.⁵⁵ Turkana lies in a long valley that runs southeast to northwest and separates the Ethiopian from the Kenya highlands to the north and south respectively. An investigation by climate scientists into the low-level jet stream that blows through this depression, and is associated with the area's aridity, suggests that large-scale climate dynamics, including rising surface temperatures, has weakened the jet over the last 30–40 years. A weaker wind is associated with higher rainfall in the valley.⁵⁶

⁵³ Interestingly, an elder recorded by a team of anthropologists in Turkana East said almost the same thing, see Derbyshire, Samuel, J. E. Nami, G. Akall and L. Lowasa (2021) "Divining the Future: Making Sense of Ecological Uncertainty in Turkana, Northern Kenya." *Land* 10(9).

⁵⁴ Opiyo, Francis, M. Nyangitu, O. Wasonga and P. Omondi (2013) "Trend Analysis of Rainfall and Temperature Variability in Arid Environment of Turkana, Kenya," *Environmental Research Journal* 8.

⁵⁵ Opiyo, Francis (2014) "Climate Variability and Change on Vulnerability and Adaptation among Turkana Pastoralists in North-Western Kenya". Doctoral Dissertation

⁵⁶ King, J. A., S. Engelstaedter, R. Washington and C. Munday (2021) "Variability of the Turkana Low-Level Jet in Reanalysis and Models: Implications for Rainfall." *Journal of Geophysical Research: Atmospheres* 126.

Among pastoralists these changes in temperature and rainfall distribution are understood to have come about because of changes in human and non-human activity including the ways in which rituals are maintained, land is looked after, and society behaves. For instance, one young herder noted that ‘*when the conflict came, the drought got worse*’. In Komio people spoke of a plethora of seers (*ngimurok*) emerging where there had once been few, all offering conflicting advice and instructions. One elder commented that all these competing *ngimurok* ‘mess up each other’s work’ on rain. ‘*That is why now we have all this.... That is why God is distant from us and that is why the sun is burning us. Ehh.*’ The herder expressed a sense of loss which we heard quite often. It was one way in which climate change was affecting conflict – not by causing it, but by making it seem that old institutions had lost their way. It is these same institutions that declare war and peace and that arbitrate over justice in the traditional realm, so when their power is manifestly failing, their function in peace is undermined.

Karamoja is at a higher elevation than Turkana and has overall higher rainfall. Between 1979-2009 there was a progressive rise in temperature, with mean temperature across the sub-region increasing by 1.3°C and maximum temperatures by 1.6°C.⁵⁷ Rainfall increased over the same period, but the increase is small and possibility not significant. Year-to year rainfall variability increased between 1981 and 2015.⁵⁸ The very high quantitative variability is shown in the graph below for Karamoja. Variability within each month has increased and the overall season of rains has lengthened.

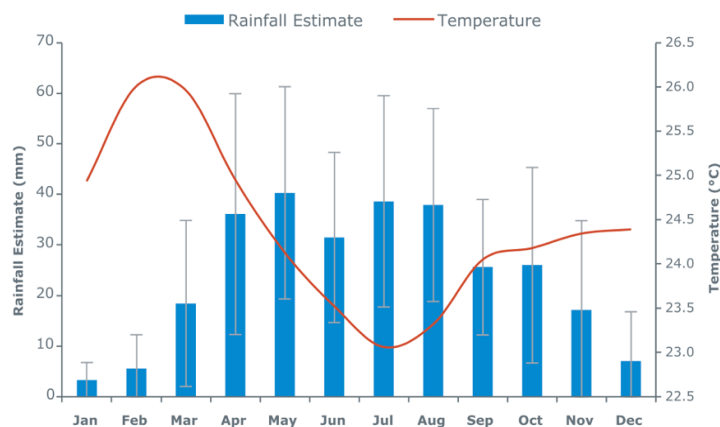


Figure 5: Average monthly rainfall estimates and temperature for Karamoja from 1981 to 2015. Error bars represent standard deviation in average monthly rainfall estimates.

Source: Chaplin et al 2017

Rainfall, and therefore pasture and standing water variability is the reason why community agreements to share access to grazing and water are particularly important and why the cultural basis for them is so profound. The deep economic and social relations that cross the Kenya-Uganda border in this region are rooted in climate and land, as much as in a shared heritage. Extending the findings of our ethnographic research across the geography, a climate analysis using satellite data adds a spatial and

⁵⁷ Chaplin, D., Byekwaso, F., Semambo, M., Mujuni, G., Bantaze, J., Nyasimi, M., Wabyona, E., Krishnaswamy, S. (2017) "The Impacts of Climate Change on Food Security and Livelihoods in Karamoja," Kampala: Government of Uganda/CCARS/WFP.

⁵⁸ Chaplin et al (2017) *ibid.*

temporal grounding to the social and political analysis. In a first round, a team at Satellite Catapult generated maps of vegetation indices and surface soil moisture covering the study area and a period of 14 months. The maps show the dynamic changes to the location and duration of pasture and water at selected sites, showing the variability and confirming pastoralist arguments for mobility. In a second round they extended the analysis back to 2017, showing change over a longer period.

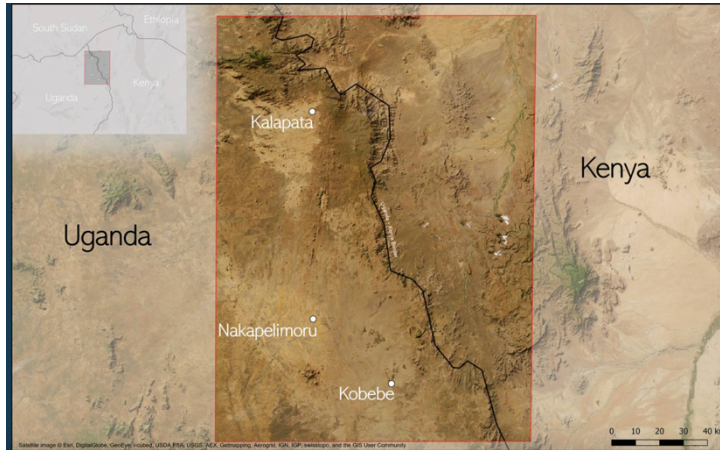
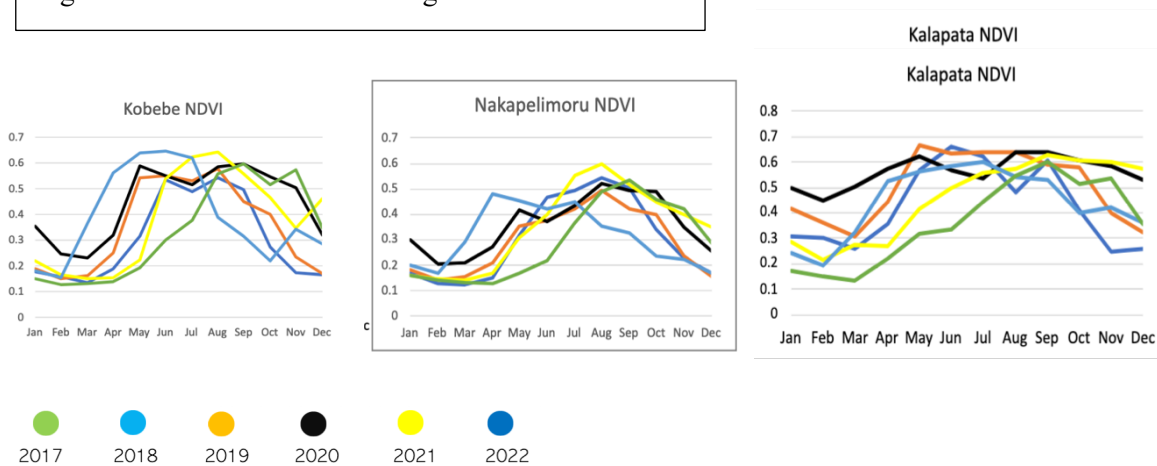


Fig 4. Normalised Difference Vegetation Indices



Analysis of satellite data recording vegetation greenness allows a view of changing patterns of pasture over time and space, in a geospatial register. Vegetation cover in the study area shifts from one part of the territory to another, except along some permanent watercourses. The graphs in Fig 4 above show the vegetation at three sites, Kobebe in the south of the study area, Nakapelimoru, 45km to the northeast and Kalapata 120km to the north, using the Normalised Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI).⁵⁹ Each

⁵⁹NDVI is an index for quantifying green vegetation. It normalizes green leaf scattering in Near Infra-red wavelengths with chlorophyll absorption in red wavelengths. The value range of the NDVI is -1 to 1. Negative values of NDVI (values approaching -1) correspond to water. Values close to zero (-0.1 to 0.1) generally correspond to barren areas of rock, sand, or snow. Low, positive values represent shrub and grassland (approximately 0.2 to 0.4). It is a good proxy for live green vegetation. Source: Sentinel Hub 2023

colour shows the ‘greenness’ of the vegetation for a different year between 2017 and 2022. The individual graphs demonstrate the high degree of variability in the same site from year to year. Comparison of the three graphs demonstrates the variability between the sites in any one year. While there is a clear dry and rainy season (drier from October to March and wetter from April to September) the graphs demonstrate how pastoralists accessing the pasture must make decisions to move into an area or away from it *at different times each year*.

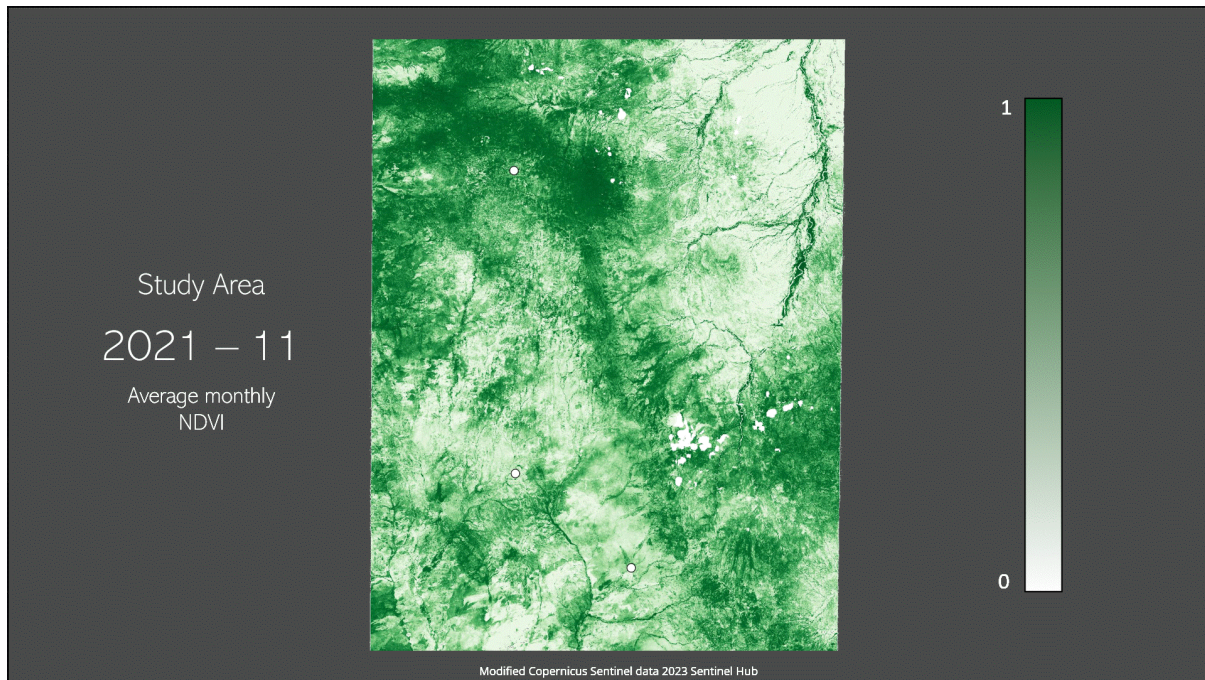


Figure 5: Normalised Difference Vegetation Index GIF for the study area 2021 (November) to 2022 (December)

The GIF in Figure 5 above shows how the greenness changed across the whole study area (100km x 200km) month by month between November 2011 and December 2022. It indicates the extremely large variation across the territory and month by month.

In Figure 6 below, the mosaic can be seen across the whole study area (approximately 20,000 km²) over a period of 14 months. It demonstrates why the changing mosaic of pastureland is not subdivided to different owners, but shared between large groups who negotiate access. In Figure 7, homing in on a 5km radius of Kobebe dam at the centre, the variation in pasture levels across the years is shown in a comparison of cover between November 2021 and November 2022. It suggests why pastoralists are not transhumant in the sense of having fixed summer and winter grazing areas. The decision as to where to move is based on where there is grass, and where an agreement can be made to graze. The satellite coverage for the years 2017 to 2022 shown in the graph demonstrates the variability over a longer period, indicating further the complexity of movement patterns needed in different years.

The mosaic pattern of pasture helps us place into a geographical context the events at Kobebe described in this paper. Pastoralists had gathered by the dam in large numbers because the drought in other areas was intense, an unusually extreme series of annual dry seasons particularly on the Turkana side. The

response of the military authorities to the presence of so many herders in one place, many of whom were carrying guns was therefore not surprising.

Figure 6: NDVI for the study area November 2021-December 2022

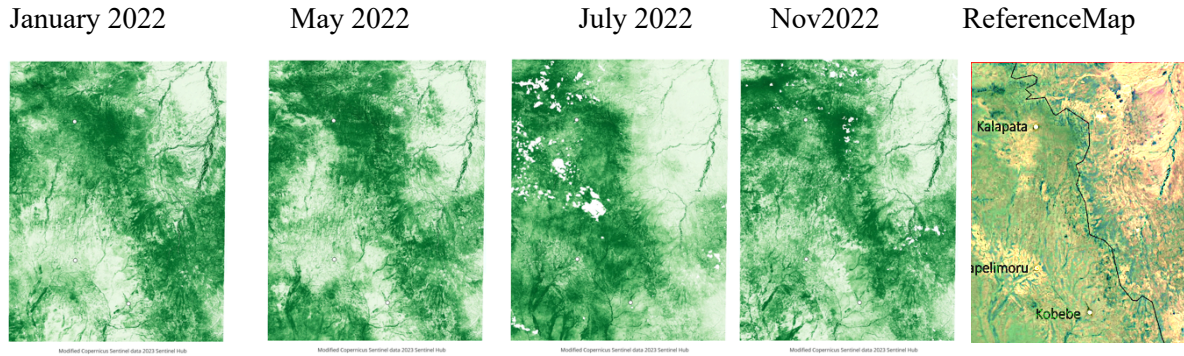
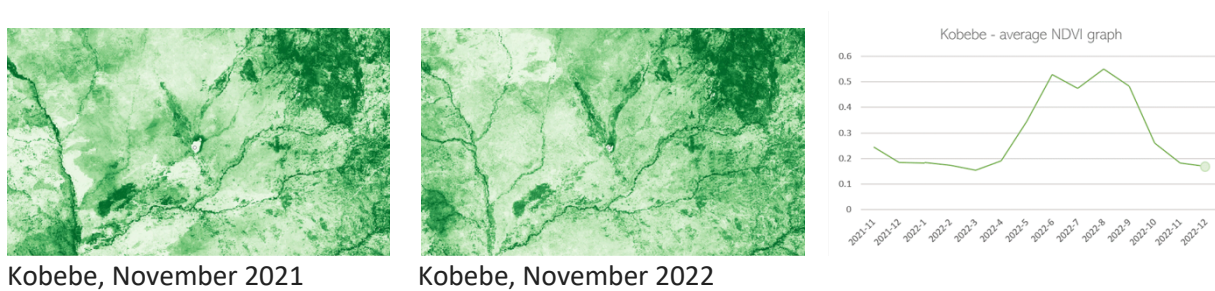


Figure 7: NDVI for Kobebe (5km radius) November 2021 and November 2022



Pastoralist mobility and capability for making natural resource sharing agreements is an adaptive response to low and variable rainfall patterns. Mobility takes a variety of forms, including moving to more distant pastures, to protected dry season grazing reserves, negotiating with neighbouring pastoralists for access to their reserves, distributing small stock among extended family, while other techniques include exchanging grain for stock with farmers, drying milk, and collecting bush foods. Different ways of dealing with the new rainfall patterns have included increasing the number of times that a herd moves, splitting the herd into more smaller sections and scattering them to different locations or keeping a smaller herd and relying on other sources of livelihood, including cropping and/or food aid. Recent adaptations have also added to the repertoire of dry season management, including selling animals to buy imported food in markets.⁶⁰ People’s responses to climate change are entwined with their response to many other changes. Their repertoires have been influenced by new infrastructure, livelihood opportunities, settlements, and markets. Pastoralists move, for instance, to take advantage of price differentials between markets on different sides of the international border.

⁶⁰ Derbyshire *et al.* (2021) "Divining the Future: Making Sense of Ecological Uncertainty in Turkana, Northern Kenya," *Land* 10, no. 9.

Herders, women, and elders pointed to the ways in which the ever more uncertain climate had strengthened the need for security and agreement with neighbours. These agreements must be honoured even if a government intervenes to undermine them. One Jie kraal leader reminded us that in 2016 the Uganda government asked Turkana to leave Karamoja. But the Jie moved their herds out of Kotido into neighbouring Abim and Lango and invited Turkana to bring in their herds to graze on the pastures they had left. This year 2022/23 the communities have made similar agreements. A changing climate only increases the need for a reliable system of sharing in which security of people, herds and agreements is crucial, and in which not only laws and practices, but also beliefs are essential elements.

Climate change is not only affecting the way pastoralists move and how often and with whom they need to negotiate, but it is also affecting geopolitics. While rainfall and heat clearly affect grazing and water which in turn affect herder decisions, pastoralists are more adept than most at responding to a variable climate.⁶¹ Mobility is the ability to turn scarcity into an advantage over those who cannot move. We find, as we will see in Section 5, that the effects of climate change on insecurity in the borderland area are greatest in their geopolitical effects. National governments, concerned about gross production levels, economic growth, borderland insecurity and the protection of their affected populations, are creating new reasons for bilateral and multilateral arrangements. It is in this context that we return now to the way insecurity works on the ground. and how it impedes productivity and threatens to fracture the bonds that hold society together.

⁶¹ Krätli, Saverio (2015) Valuing Variability: New Perspectives on Climate Resilient Drylands Development. London: IIED.