NUPI

Regional Conflicts and International Engagement on the Horn of Africa

Axel Borchgrevink and Jon Harald Sande Lie



Norsk Utenrikspolitisk Institutt
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs

NUPI Report

Publisher: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
Copyright: © Norwegian Institute of International Affairs 2009
ISBN: 978-82-7002-260-1

Any views expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They should not be interpreted as reflecting the views of the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. The text may not be printed in part or in full without the permission of the author.

Visiting address: C.J. Hambros plass 2d
Address: Postboks 8159 Dep.
0033 Oslo
Internet: www.nupi.no
E-mail: pub@nupi.no
Fax: [+ 47] 22 36 21 82
Tel: [+ 47] 22 99 40 00

Regional Conflicts and International Engagement on the Horn of Africa

Axel Borchgrevink and Jon Harald Sande Lie
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 7
The Gambella conflict formation 7
International engagement to the Ethiopia–Eritrea conflict 9
IGAD, peace and security 11
Regional dimensions of international engagement in the Horn of Africa – a synthesis 12

Synthesis Report:
Regional Dimensions of International Engagement in the Horn of Africa 15
Introduction 15
Approaches to Interlinked Conflicts 16
Conflict Patterns of the Horn of Africa 20
Key points on the Horn of Africa pattern of conflicts: 23
Gambella 24
Good International Engagement in Gambella 26
Ethiopia–Eritrea 28
Good International Engagement to the Eritrea–Ethiopia Conflict 29
IGAD 32
Good IGAD engagement in the field of peace and security 34
General Conclusions 36
Bibliography 40

Case Study I:
Understanding the Gambella Conflict Formation 43
Gambella – Context 44
The Gambella Conflict Formation 45
Ethnicity and Conflict 47
Ethnic Federalism in Gambella 51
The Gambella Resettlement Programme 53
Gambella and the Impact of the Sudanese Civil War 55
The Refugee Situation 57
International Involvement in the Gambella Conflict Formation 59
Conclusions: Challenges for Good International Engagement in Gambella 64
Bibliography 67

Case Study II:
International Engagement to the Ethiopia–Eritrea Conflict.....69
Introduction.....69
International Engagement to the Eritrea–Ethiopia Conflict.....70
Establishing UNMEE.....72
Reconfiguring UNMEE.....75
Restricting UNMEE.....81
Perceptions and Interpretations.....86
Responding to Deteriorating Consent.....91
Coda.....94

Case Study III:
IGAD and Regional Peace and Security.....95
Introduction.....95
IGAD.....95
IGAD's Peace and Security Activities.....98
Peace processes.....98
CEWARN.....100
ICPAT.....103
IGAD's new Peace and Security Strategy.....105
Other IGAD programmes of relevance.....106
The role of donors.....108
Conclusion: IGAD potentials and limitations.....109

Executive Summary

This report addresses the regional dimension to conflicts on the Horn of Africa. In particular, it looks at international attempts at addressing these conflicts, and the extent to which they have been successful in taking into account the regional or cross-border aspects.[1]

This volume consists of three case studies and a synthesis report. The three case studies are entitled 'Understanding the Gambella Conflict Formation', 'International Engagement to the Ethiopia–Eritrea Conflict' and 'IGAD and Regional Peace and Security'. The case studies seek to give an overview of the relevant conflict dynamics (for the first two cases) and of the structures for and experiences of addressing peace and security issues in the case of IGAD (case number three). In all the case studies, the role of international actors is an important part of the description and analysis.

The synthesis report builds on the three case studies, and seeks to draw out general conclusions about the nature of conflicts in the region, as well as about international engagement and the potential for addressing conflicts in a manner that takes into account the regional or cross-border perspective.

The Gambella conflict formation

The Gambella People's National Regional State is Ethiopia's western-most region, located in the south-western lowlands and bordering Sudan. It is one of Ethiopia's smallest and least populous regions, having approximately 307.000 inhabitants according to the 2007 census. The region has a long and complex history of conflicts, related to issues such as population movement and competition over resources; ethnicity; resettlement programs; relations to the central state; spill over from the war in Sudan and refugee influx.

The region's ethnic composition is complex. In addition to several smaller indigenous groups, Gambella has traditionally been dominated by the Anuak and the nomadic Nuer, of whom the latter is a relative newcomer, moving in from Sudan in search of pasture areas for their cattle. The Nuer have only relatively recently outnumbered the Anuak, something which is hard to accept for the Anuak who have a strong attachment to what they consider their land. Another set of tensions stems from the relatively large group of highlanders, i.e. recent immi-

1 This research has been funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for Peace and Reconciliation.

grants from the Ethiopian highlands, with distinct linguistic, cultural and physical characteristics. Many of the highlanders came to Gambella in the 1980s, through the resettlement program of the Derg. The refugee population has fluctuated in response to political developments in Sudan as well as in Addis Ababa, but at its height it outnumbered the non-refugee population. Competition for resources and conflicts with local population were of course inevitable, and the ethnic composition of the refugees (mostly Nuer, but also Dinka and other groups with sometimes uneasy relations with fellow refugees of other ethnic backgrounds) have added to the tensions. International refugee law also brings the challenging issue of citizenship to the foreground as populations have traditionally moved back and forth across the border in areas with weak state presence.

While ethnic contradictions, stereotyping and enemy images certainly are one factor behind the Gambella conflicts, they should not be essentialized as simply ethnic conflicts. On the one hand, there is an important pattern of cooperation and interdependence between ethnic groups, and on the other, there has also been a significant amount of intra-ethnic violence. Indeed, over the last years, most violent conflicts have been between different Nuer groups (clans and sub-clans, ending up in competition over the same resources, due to different reasons). The underlying causes of conflicts relate on the one hand to such resource conflict emerging from population movements and overall increase in numbers of people, and on the other hand, on political issues related to the ways that the state and central (federal) government has attempted to impose control and order. Other underlying causes are the spill-over from the war in Sudan and massive influx of refugees, as well as the recent spate of inter-community violence and cattle-raiding in Southern Sudan, which also directly involves Gambella through cross-border attacks. While the Derg regime appeared to favour the Nuer as well as to some extent the highlanders who were resettled in the region, the federalism after 1991 brought a new game which initially favoured the Anuak. Gradually, however, they have been losing the grip on regional power, as ethnic tensions have risen, culminating in the massacre of Anuaks in December 2003. The highlanders stand in a curious position with respect to access to the power of the state: as a group that is not recognized as endogenous to the region, they lack political representation, while as the best-educated group, they dominate as employees in the administrative structures.

The involvement of international actors in the region is limited. For the most part, this involvement has been directly linked to the refugee situation. UNHCR is the dominant organisation, being assisted by a handful of other UN organisations and national and international

NGOs. A few of the NGOs have 'peace programmes', aimed at addressing and reducing tensions and conflicts between communities. Only one – PACT – has sought to develop a cross-border programme, involving communities and authorities on both the Sudanese and Ethiopian sides. The difficulties encountered in this work illustrate the challenges of applying such a perspective in a complex situation such as Gambella.

International engagement to the Ethiopia–Eritrea conflict

This case study focuses on the process after the June 2000 ceasefire agreement that ended the Ethiopian–Eritrean border war (1998–2000). Although the *war* ended, the border *dispute* remains and is a key challenge in the region with ramifications for other conflicts in the Horn of Africa.

The Eritrean–Ethiopian war between May 1998 and June 2000 has been characterised as a traditional border war over contested territories. As many as 100,000 people were killed in the intermittent fighting, and up to one million were driven into exile or internal displacement, diverting hundreds of millions from development activities into arms procurement. The Algiers agreement of June 2000 not only evoked a ceasefire agreement but also called upon the UN to establish UNMEE – United Nations Mission in Eritrea and Ethiopia. In December 2000 a second and more comprehensive Algiers agreement was signed to aid the prospects for lasting peace. This second Algiers agreement also established the Eritrea–Ethiopia Claims Commission (EECC) and the Eritrean–Ethiopian Boundary Commission (EEBC) to determine the origin of conflict and demarcate the border, respectively. The two Algiers agreements stipulate the framework for international engagement to the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict.

This case study analyses UNMEE and why it was terminated, to provide better insights into international engagement in the Ethio–Eritrean conflict. UNMEE was set up as an observer mission, to monitor the cessation of hostilities and separate the parties by establishing a buffer zone. Although war never erupted, the conflict has persisted as the parties have never managed to settle the border dispute that initially triggered the war. UNMEE was, however, detached from engaging practically and politically in mediating the border dispute. This is due to the compartmentalisation of the Algiers agreements: while the first agreement made UNMEE responsible for monitoring the ceasefire agreement, EEBC and EECC emanating from the second agreement were to address the border issue and determine the instigator of the war.

As the situation evolved – notably after EEBC gave its ruling, favouring Eritrea, in April 2002 – UNMEE became increasingly sidelined from constructive involvement in the conflict. Whereas Ethiopia was supportive to UNMEE and tried to downplay EEBC, Eritrea focused on EEBC and the border issue while undermining UNMEE. Eritrea imposed restrictions on UNMEE, forcing it to downsize and later to relocate from Eritrean territory. Eventually the situation became intolerable for UNMEE, which led the Security Council to terminate the mission.

Some initiatives outside UNMEE and UN bodies evolved as UNMEE found itself facing critical challenges. The Friends of UNMEE group was established as an informal gathering of diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, Asmara and New York that met regularly to discuss and share information about UNMEE. This group had no role vis-à-vis the mission, however.

In 2004 the UN Secretary-General appointed Lloyd Axworthy as special envoy for Eritrea and Ethiopia. This diplomatic initiative was unsuccessful in trying to merge UNMEE and EEBC.

The few non-UN attempts to address the conflict largely emanate from the USA. In 2006 Washington made a unilateral initiative to break the impasse by sending Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer to the region. Frazer met with Ethiopian political leadership and visited the Ethiopian side of the border region, but was refused meetings with Eritrean leaders, who were unwilling to discuss the border issue which they saw as settled by the EEBC.

The witnesses to the last Algiers agreement attempted to address the challenges in implementing the accord. The attendance of Eritrean and Ethiopian leadership was considered a significant step, but the meetings failed to generate any substantial momentum in implementing the agreement or lifting the restrictions put on UNMEE. The parties rather used the occasion as a platform to restate their earlier position, showing little inclination to reach an agreement.

International engagement in the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict has been scarce, and predominantly involved UNMEE. The story of UNMEE – from its inception, via the challenges it encountered in its wider lifespan, until its termination on 31 July 2008 – is basically the story of international engagement to the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict. It seems reasonable to conclude that UNMEE's lack of success is closely linked to the fact that it was established by the June 2000 Ceasefire Agreement, and thus had no mandate in relation to the EEBC and the political issues arising from it.

IGAD, peace and security

This case study describes and analyzes IGAD from the perspective of its role and potential in dealing with conflict, in particular regional or cross-border conflict.

IGADD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification) was established by the countries of the wider Horn of Africa (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda) in 1986, with relatively narrow mandate. In 1996 it was transformed into IGAD, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development, a regional organisation with a wide mandate, including conflict management and resolution as well as preventive diplomacy.

IGAD has had a selective engagement in the region's peace processes. A significant achievement has been its hosting of the peace negotiations leading to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the Government of Sudan and SPLM in 2005. IGAD played an active and constructive role in the process. Since 1997, IGAD has also participated in the series of Somali peace processes. While the limited achievements of these processes cannot be blamed on IGAD, it is also clear that IGAD has not had a particularly strong role in them. The absence of IGAD as a key mediator in other conflicts of the region – i.e. Ethiopia–Eritrea, Darfur, Northern Uganda – is noteworthy. One problem for IGAD has been the ability to appear as an honest and impartial broker in conflicts in which so many of the countries of the region are entangled.

One achievement of IGAD is the establishment of the CEWARN – the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism. This is an innovative 'bottom-up' system for monitoring and responding to conflicts relating to the nomadic populations inhabiting the borderlands between the countries of the region, which has received considerable praise from conflict monitoring experts. This success, however, remains limited to only covering one type of conflicts, and only pockets of the region's vast borderlands. The potential for expanding the scope and scaling up may in practice be quite limited. Another security-related programme is ICPAT, the IGAD Capacity Building Programme against Terrorism. This seeks to build the capacities of the IGAD member countries and promote regional security cooperation. While apparently successful as far as it goes, the programme has been characterized as donor-driven.

Thus, while the directly peace- and security-oriented activities of IGAD are positive in themselves, they lack the potential to significantly alter the underlying causes of conflict or lead to general stabilisation of the region. IGAD's ongoing work of drafting a comprehen-

sive Peace and Security Strategy appears to point in a similar direction: any durable peace will have to be built on the creation of strong interdependencies among the states, and on development efforts that reach out to the marginalised populations of the Horn of Africa. Given the current characteristics of the region – weak states with limited capacity to include and integrate its population groups living in peripheral areas, the contradicting interests and ideologies of the regimes, the importance of armed insurgent groups, and the shifting alliances between these non-state actors and neighbouring states, the vast unmarked borders, etc. – such a state of affairs is a long way off.

Moreover, these characteristics do not only imply that there is a high likelihood that the region will continue to be marked by conflicts. The contradictions between the countries of the region also place serious limitations on the potential for IGAD to be an important actor for promoting peace and security. A prime illustration of this is Eritrea's current suspension of its participation in IGAD. On this background, a realistic assessment of IGAD seems to be that it can be successful in one-off cases where conditions are favourable, such as with the CPA negotiations, or in establishing effective mechanisms at a limited scale, as for instance CEWARN. On the other hand, in the short or intermediate term one should not expect IGAD to be able assume any strong role in resolving the fundamental conflicts of the region. In the longer term, though, if IGAD is successful in promoting regional integration and interconnectedness in infrastructure and economy, stronger common interests may emerge that could make IGAD a stronger actor.

Regional dimensions of international engagement in the Horn of Africa – a synthesis

The conflict-prone character of the region stems from the weaknesses and failures of its states in terms of integrating and providing tangible benefits to all the groups living within their borders. The continued existence of significant population groups alienated from and marginalised within the state means that the conditions that give rise to and foment conflicts will also continue. The report has sought to demonstrate that this is the most basic *root cause* of conflicts on the Horn of Africa. Only an inclusive and necessarily long-term development process, capable of drawing these groups into the mainstream of the states, will be able to significantly change this condition.

A number of related *factors contribute to exacerbate and prolong conflicts* in the region. The weakness of the states in the region and their limited presence in and control over their peripheries – the long, undemarcated and porous borders of the sparsely populated borderlands;

the limited amount of cooperation and interdependencies among the countries, and their habit of supporting insurgents of neighbouring countries and engage in proxy war – are all characteristics of the region that serve to prolong conflicts and link them together into complex patterns. Most, if not all, of these conditions can also only be resolved in the long term.

In sum then, neither the root causes nor the intermediate contributing factors to continued complex conflicts can be resolved, except in the long term, through painstaking and uncertain processes of economic as well as political development. The conclusion for international actors seeking to contribute must be twofold: on the one hand, there is a need for supporting the kind of long-term processes that eventually may transform the region and the logics that underpin continued regional conflict. And on the other hand, individual conflict lines should be continually monitored and sought defused and/or contained, to limit the entanglement in greater, regional or sub-regional webs. In general, the first type of involvement falls outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, it seems useful to emphasize the regional character to much of the long-term development that is required. In this sense, one relevant strategy would seem to be to support IGAD's efforts at promoting regional integration.

In the shorter-term attempts at addressing ongoing conflicts – from the local to the inter-state level – this report focuses on the international and cross-border dimensions. The examples examined do point to a number of specific lessons.

Fundamentally, it is difficult for international actors to act regionally. For a number of reasons, they are constricted by the state system, and tend to operate within the individual state. Due to issues of sovereignty, borders must be respected (even though they in practice are completely porous and virtually non-existent 'on the ground'). In particular when dealing with issues as politically sensitive as armed conflict, international actors necessarily must coordinate with and work in understanding with the government in question. Cross-border efforts consequently become complex affairs. Among other things, important requirements are:

- Having a presence on both sides of the border
- Understanding the conflict dynamics within their social contexts on both sides of the border
- Having communication channels across the border (since international organisations are usually set up with communication lines towards their international headquarters rather than to neighbouring countries, and since the border regions we are

talking about are generally with extremely limited infrastructure, this is a complicated requirement)
- Having the necessary goodwill and go-ahead from government institutions on both sides
- Having the required cross-border or regional perspective and the patience and willingness necessary to overcome the bureaucratic hindrances for working in such unorthodox ways
- Being flexible enough and not limited by mandate, capacity or resources to be able to deal with problems within the sectors that may prove to be relevant

Thus, it should not be surprising that there are not too many good examples to be found. Yet, both the PACT and the CEWARN experiences show that it is possible to deal constructively with localized cross-border conflicts when the proper institutional set-up is in place. At the same time, the examples point to the significant resource requirements involved and the structural difficulties of scaling up.

As for the inter-state conflict level, the experience of the Ethiopia–Eritrea conflict is that it has been difficult for international actors to go beyond the framework established by the Algiers agreements. Since this has proved to have limitations, and since the countries themselves have shown no willingness to compromise, the situation is still as bitter – and perhaps even more locked – than it was when the war ended nine years ago.

However, there may also be some truth to the Eritrean perception, that international actors are refraining from putting sufficient pressure on Ethiopia to fulfil its obligations according to the Peace Agreement and the EEBC, because of Ethiopia's strategic role as an ally in the US-led 'Global War on Terror'. The consequent isolation of Eritrea, and the regional spoiler role that the country has taken up – for instance with respect to Somalia – can be seen as a very clear negative effect of this type of involvement, which is based on own strategic interests rather than an analysis of how to contribute to stability in the region.

This points to another fundamental obstacle for good international involvement in seeking to address regional conflict patterns: the difficulty of coordination among actors. When different countries and institutions have diverging interests and understandings of the conflict dynamics, and when short-term strategic interests override more long-term engagement based on contextual analysis, the potential for constructive engagement becomes seriously limited.

Synthesis Report: Regional Dimensions of International Engagement in the Horn of Africa

Axel Borchgrevink and Jon Harald Sande Lie
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Introduction

In the Horn of Africa – as in other regions where states are weak – conflicts from one country tend to spill over into the neighbouring states and become entwined with conflicts there.[1] Among the contributory factors are insurgent movements that establish bases in neighbouring countries with or without that regime's support; regimes supporting insurgencies in neighbouring countries based on the logic of 'my enemy's enemy is my friend'; refugee flows; and ethnic groups – often with nomadic or semi-nomadic adaptations – that straddle the borders. Conflict dynamics within a country are heavily influenced by the regional context. Yet, except in the case of open interstate war (as with Ethiopia–Eritrea), the international community's approach to engaging with these conflicts often remains within the framework of the individual state.[2] That may serve to limit the potential for contributing constructively to peace and reconciliation.

This report identifies and analyses experiences where international engagement in the dynamics of conflict has managed to transcend the one-state-focus to include measures to address the regional context as well. It builds on the three empirical studies: of conflicts in Ethiopia's Gambella region and their linkages into Sudan; the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and IGAD as a regional instrument for promoting peace and security. Each of these case studies is presented in separate reports: the objective of this overarching paper is to draw general conclusions as to the conditions that may facilitate or prevent involved

1 This research has been funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Section for Peace and Reconciliation.

2 For example, even if security issues in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo are connected (as in the form of LRA, originating from Uganda but active in both of these neighbouring countries), there was at the time when this project was proposed no formalised system of coordination between UNMIS, the UN peacekeeping force in Sudan and MONUC, the UN operation in Congo. Since then some measures for coordination have been introduced (see de Coning 2008; 2009).

international actors from adopting a regional or cross-border framework.[3]

Analysing the 'good practices' we have identified[4] and then drawing more general conclusions require a systematic way of understanding and dealing with various forms of conflicts and of regional linkages. The next section discusses elements of such an analytical framework. Thereafter we give an overview of the conflict pattern in the Horn of Africa, characterising it according to the analytical categories developed. Subsequently we briefly present a selection of good (and not quite so good) examples from the three case studies.

It should be noted that a historical perspective to complement current analysis is required to understand the conflict patterns studied. It is only through an examination of their historical trajectories that we can make sense of the current conflict lines – the first step for any involvement seeking to deal constructively with the situation. However, in dealing with examples of good international engagement, we will limit ourselves here to presenting current or recent experiences. This is in line with the wishes expressed by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs when commissioning this study, but is also a necessity because of the time considerations involved. In the final part of the report, we draw some general conclusions from these examples: conclusions as to the factors that may facilitate international involvement with a regional perspective, as well as on the factors that work against this type of involvement.

Approaches to Interlinked Conflicts

Conflicts in the Horn of Africa range from interstate conflicts between Eritrea and Ethiopia (and between Eritrea and Djibouti), to the large-scale conflict formation of Somalia, where various clan, religious and ideological groups are pitted against each other and where both neighbouring population groups, countries and extra-regional actors are involved, to small-scale conflicts ostensibly about local groups competing over resources. Moreover, through various mechanisms – which may involve strategic alliances, population movements, competition for territorial control, and proxy war – these conflicts become entwined in complex patterns. Furthermore, it could be argued that, at a deeper level, all conflicts stem from the failure of the states in the region to include all groups into a national project, and that, in the ab-

3 The three case studies are described in separate papers, enclosed with this synthesis report. The case study papers contain further references and more material on the empirical background of each case.

4 While we originally envisioned conducting this analysis in terms of 'best practices', the specific cases examined and the empirical material collected are not really sufficient to enable conclusions in the superlative – 'best' – sense. Instead, we have opted for the more modest ambition of discussing *good* practices.

sence of such an inclusive project, the dynamics of the conflicts depend largely on the way the states seek to govern and maintain control over their territories.

An analytical grasp of these conflict patterns is necessary as a basis for the analysis of international engagement in the region. In the following, brief reference will be made to central theory contributions that can help to lay the foundation for such an analysis. Thereafter, an eclectic use will be made of these insights to build up a model for understanding the specific nature of the conflicts of Horn of Africa.

A central theoretical approach for understanding regional patterns of conflict is the Regional Security Complex Theory, as developed by Buzan and Wæver (Buzan 1991, Buzan and Wæver 2003). Buzan originally defined a 'regional security complex' as 'a group of states whose primary security concerns link together sufficiently closely that their national security concerns cannot reasonably be considered apart from each other' (Buzan 1983: 106, quoted in Buzan and Wæver 2003: 44). In order to 'shed the state-centric and military-political focus', Buzan and Wæver have reformulated the definition as follows:

> a set of units whose major processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, or both are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analysed or resolved apart from each other' (ibid.).

This definition retains the main idea of security concerns as being entwined in such a way that that they need to be understood in conjunction. By referring to processes of securitisation and de-securitisation, the new definition gives additional emphasis to the idea that security concerns are not objective and given, but rather consist of perceptions of threats that are socially constructed. Despite this 'constructivist flavour', there is a clear positivist bias in their theory, which seems to insist that Regional Security Complexes have an objective existence and can be clearly delimited on the map, without allowing for any overlap between complexes. In their discussion of whether there exist regional security complexes in sub-Saharan Africa, Buzan and Wæver tentatively conclude that a Southern African complex can be identified, whereas the West African and Horn of Africa regions are not fully developed and must be characterised as 'proto-complexes' (Buzan and Wæver 2003: Chapter 8).[5]

[5] During the Cold War, the Horn was even less regionally consolidated, they claim. Since at that time there was little interaction between the Ethiopia–Sudan and the Ethiopia–Somalia conflict dynamics, they characterise the Horn during this period as forming a pre-complex only.

However, Buzan and Wæver are cautious about applying their theory to Africa. Despite their reformulation of the definition which provides an opening for actors other than the state, they question whether the underlying focus on states and their territories is really adequate for understanding the African context. On the one hand, the weakness of African states in terms controlling their territories and peoples, the lack of meaningful borders, and the key role played by non-state actors would indicate that the real security story to be told from Africa is not one based on a Westphalian framework, but one that can bring 'into view networks of non-state actors and their systems of security interaction' (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 223). In analysing the African context, Buzan and Weaver put the emphasis on the sub-state level. However, it is by no means certain that their perspective is particularly suited to this focus; and, as pointed out by Rubin (2006: 5), many of the non-state actors may be better conceptualised as 'transnational' rather than 'sub-state'. Furthermore, the neat delimitation of a Southern African regional security complex and a Horn proto-complex has been challenged by events on the ground. As warfare in the 'insulator countries'[6] of Central Africa and the Great Lakes region has expanded into and links up with conflicts in the complexes to the north and to the south, it has become increasingly difficult to uphold the notion of independently existing regional complexes that can be unambiguously delimited without any overlap.

Thus, while the theory of Buzan and Wæver is the most developed among perspectives on regional conflict patterns, it may not be optimal for analysing African cases. Various alternative approaches exist: these include Lake and Morgan's regional orders approach (1997);[7] Wallensteen and Sollenberg's regional conflict complexes (1998);[8] Tavares' regional peace and security clusters (2008);[9] Rubin's regional conflict formations (2006);[10] and Duffield's concept of network wars (2001).[11] Moreover, much of the recent literature on regionalism, while ostensibly focusing on integration and cooperation rather than conflict, contains perspectives that may be useful for understanding regional conflicts – for instance, Bach's notion of trans-state regionalism (2003).[12]

6 In Buzan and Wæver's terminology, an 'insulator' is a state or unit that separates two security complexes without being part of either of them (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 41).
7 Less rigid, allowing for states' multiple membership and overlapping complexes, but even more state-centric than Buzan and Wæver's version.
8 Focusing on spill-over effects of civil wars.
9 With emphasis on developing a formal and comprehensive model encompassing types of actors as well as patterns of threats and security, peace and war.
10 Highlighting the importance of transnational non-state actors.
11 Referring to complex networks spanning local and global interests, closely linked to systems of liberal governance aimed at protecting the borders of the 'ordered world'.
12 Bringing together ideas of neo-patrimonialism and regionalism, the concept refers to the transnational or interstate use of public office for private gain.

A regional conflict formation is a set of transnational conflicts that form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other across state borders and throughout a region, making for more protracted conflicts (CIC 2001). The regional conflict formation model draws on four key observations. First, today's armed conflicts tend to be regional. Second, regional conflict formations are characterised by regional and global political, military, economic and social networks. Third, a regional conflict management strategy addresses the geographical and functional elements of such formations. Fourth, a regional approach engages regional and/ or sub-regional states, intergovernmental organisations and civil society networks (see CIC 2001: 5–6).

The regional conflict formations approach holds that conflicts are neither local, civil nor intrastate, and may cross national boundaries. Linkages among local, regional and global actors facilitate the transnational aspects of such formations, including international involvement in these. Global factors – like the policies of external states, development agencies and financial institutions – can aggravate regional conflict processes, for example by facilitating cross-border migration of refugees, civilians and armed groups. Conflict can be exacerbated by local actors' involvement in transnational activities that connect them to regional and global forces. This is particularly evident in situations of weak states, porous borders, persistent cross-border migration and contested citizenships. The regional conflict formation approach thus proposes that international involvement should be integrative and regionally aware, taking into account the linkages and networks of conflict within the region and sub-regions. In operational terms, it recommends that conflict management policies should address military, political, economic and humanitarian factors in conflicts – 'policymakers must be aware of the potential regional impact of any strategy focused primarily on a single country' (CIC 2001: 6).

This is not the place for a comprehensive review of these theories and approaches, nor do we believe that any one of them holds the final truth while the others are simply mistaken. In our view, all of these approaches contribute to understanding different aspects of regional conflicts. As we have no ambition of constructing a general theory to fit all regions, we will limit ourselves to selecting elements from them to help in characterising and understanding the conflict patterns of the Horn of Africa.

We do, however, propose a general amendment to the various approaches: that regional conflicts, the actors involved and the scope of conflict should be supplemented by an *inductive* and *bottom-up approach*. This is both to underline the basic finding of our case studies as well as to address the challenges evolving from them. A regional

conflict pattern is not *a priori* given and cannot solely be addressed top-down. Here we may note that the securitisation theory of Buzan and Wæver asserts that 'by definition, something is a security problem when the elites declare it to be so' (Wæver 1995: 54). Such an elitist approach disregards the way in which conflicts are understood and articulated in non-elite spheres. Like the other approaches to regional conflicts, it also undercuts how different temporal and spatial contexts make various conflict aspects relevant. This is illustrated by the case of Gambella, one conflict among many within the Horn of Africa: the protracted conflict trajectory shows that the conflict has produced and been produced by a whole range of factors, like ethnicity, interstate relations, the Sudan civil wars, the influx of refugees, and the introduction of federalism and its political system. Let us now proceed with a brief overview of conflict patterns on the Horn of Africa.

Conflict Patterns of the Horn of Africa

The Horn of Africa – Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan – has experienced both intra- and interstate conflicts. Since the demise of Barre in 1991, Somalia has been characterised by the lack of an overarching state, and fluctuating levels of conflicts (usually been clan-based) between various groups. Parallel to this, Somalia has experienced the growth (and dispersal) of a range of governance systems intended to resolve problems of order, security and predictability. Most successful in this respect were the Union of Islamic Courts, which did offer some vision of an overarching authority with some independence from the clan system. This, however, resulted in religious-ideological conflict lines that sparked the attention of outside actors. In late 2006, Ethiopian soldiers crossed the border in support of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) backed by the USA. This evoked echoes of the Ogaden War (1977–78), when Somalia invaded Ethiopia with the purpose of annexing the Somali-inhabited Ogaden region. The Ethiopian invasion was also directly linked to ongoing conflicts between insurgent groups in the Ethiopian Somali region and the Ethiopian government.

Ethiopia and Eritrea may be said to constitute the main belligerent states in the Horn. There is a long historical trajectory here. Starting in the 1960s and 70s, insurgent groups from northern Ethiopia and Eritrea (at the time annexed as an Ethiopian province) fought against the Ethiopian government, seeking to topple the dictatorial Derg regime in Addis Ababa (occasionally also fighting among themselves). In 1991 they were successful and the Tigrayan liberation movement assumed power at the national level, while Eritrea in 1993 received its independence under the peaceful auspices of a referendum, led by the Eritrean movement. However, cordial relations between the new Eritrean

and Ethiopian regimes soon deteriorated, cumulating in an all-out border war in 1998. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2000, political relations between the two have remained hostile.

In 2008, border conflict erupted between Eritrea and Djibouti. This was triggered by Eritrean forces penetrating the border in April and fortified positions on the Djiboutian side. Between June 10 and 13, armed forces of the two countries clashed in the border area.

These interstate conflicts produce and are produced by domestic factors that exacerbate established lines of conflict, but they also have global geopolitical ramifications. Whereas in the 1970s and 80s the Horn was an arena where Cold War rivalries were played out, it has today become one of the battlefields of the US-led 'Global War on Terror' and the accompanying struggle to contain radical Islam. Washington has been considering putting Eritrea on its list of terrorist-supporting states, while Ethiopia on the other hand enjoys considerable US support from committing itself to the war on terror. Eritrea is accused of supporting militant rebel groups and terrorists in Somalia, while Eritrea asserts it is being attacked by rebel groups operating from Somalia and Djibouti with financial and military support from Ethiopia. This has led many to characterise the Somalia conflict as an Ethiopia–Eritrea proxy war.

To the West, Sudan has been plagued by conflicts almost continuously since its creation as a state. The most durable and important line of conflict has gone between the North and the South, but the eruption of the Darfur conflict has added a further dimension. The conflict in East Sudan should not be forgotten, either. The overall picture seems to support the idea that the main conflict dimension is really between a powerful centre and its marginalised peripheries. The Khartoum strategy of managing insurgencies in its peripheries by arming local opponents of the insurgents has created a complex conflict pattern at the local levels. The Sudanese conflicts have also spilled over into neighbouring countries.

On the western frontier of the Horn of Africa, Ethiopia's Gambella region, bordering Sudan, has been affected by local and regional conflict for many decades, involving both state and non-state actors. Conflicts between indigenous groups along and within ethnic lines and the influx of Sudanese refugees following the two Sudanese civil wars point up the challenges that may emanate from conflicts not directly involving central state politics. Refugees and trans-border migration also destabilise the Eritrea–Sudan border. The tensions arising out of the state-building processes in South Sudan are now leading to a series of new local and national-scale conflicts.

Sudanese conflicts are also entangled in other directions. Darfur rebel groups are supported by diasporas in neighbouring countries. The Darfur *problematique*, which involves both rebel groups and refugees seeking shelter in neighbouring Chad, is addressed by MINURCAT, a UN mission meant to deal with challenges in both Chad and the Central African Republic. This border region is further destabilised by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) emanating from Uganda. Uganda, in turn, shares a long border with DR Congo and has been involved in and affected by the conflicts there. Northeast in Uganda, overlapping into Sudan, Kenya and Ethiopia, conflicts and killings are the result of clashes between the Karamoja and other nomadic or cattle-keeping tribes. Similar problems affect the border area between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia.

To complete the picture, there are various internally-generated conflicts within Ethiopia. These include the OLF and ONLF struggles against the government, as well as the Gambella conflict between the Anuaks and peoples of the Ethiopian highlands.

These diverse examples demonstrate the vast array and types of conflicts in the wider Horn of Africa. While it is difficult to isolate the historical and geographical ramifications of one conflict vis-à-vis others, that does not mean that the conflicts in the Horn of Africa are disentangled from conflicts outside the region. The overview illustrates the problem of delineating a conflict pattern to a specific geographical region, as there would inevitably be a range of internal and external factors affecting each other, rendering any delineation reductionist.

Furthermore, this array of conflicts and the variety of state and non-state actors involved direct attention to the problem of conceptualising such regional patters. The literature referred to above on security complexes and regional conflict complexes has tended to treat such complexes as somewhat pre-empirically given, reducing non-state, armed actors to 'rebels' in 'civil wars'. This is a simplification that blocks insight into the true complexity of the situations (Ulriksen 2009: 3), and undermines attempts to complement the elitist, state-centric and military-political focus with a bottom-up approach to conflict patters. Rather, in these approaches, such complexes appear to have an objective existence, clearly delimited on the map, and in some cases even without overlapping with other complexes. The point to be made here is that the actual complexity of conflicts and the ways in which they interrelate make any such positivistic delineation of complexes reductionist in terms of physical extension, the plethora of actors involved, and the variety of causes and conflict lines. A whole series of factors interplay in forming the regional conflict pattern on

the Horn of Africa. Although not an exhaustive list, some of these, and ways to understand them, are indicated below.

Key points on the Horn of Africa pattern of conflicts:

1. No single conflict can be understood in isolation.
2. On the other hand, the overall systematic-ness should not be exaggerated. The Horn of Africa pattern of conflicts cannot be understood as a bounded and closed system. Conflicts in the region are entangled with conflicts outside the region across most of its borders. Conversely, conflicts at one end of the region – e.g. Sudan – may have little direct entanglement with conflicts at the other end – Somalia.
3. Determining conflict interrelatedness and demarcating conflict patterns should be based on a bottom-up analysis that identifies the various ramifications of one conflict into others.
4. Almost all conflicts can be traced to a failure of the centre of a state to integrate its peripheries.
5. Weak control by the states over their borderlands provides important preconditions for the conflict dynamics, especially the cross-border entanglements.
6. A further complicating factor is found in the existence of various groups whose territories straddle a national border. All the region's borders have examples of this. The fact that many of these are nomadic groups who move from place to place adds to the complexity.
7. The Eritrea–Ethiopia conflict, being primarily a classic interstate war, is something of an anomaly in the region, although it has become entangled with and has sought to use other conflicts in proxy strategies.
8. Taking account of historical trajectories is fundamental for understanding conflict dynamics (and hence for devising strategies for dealing with them).
9. An important aspect of this is the way that security perceptions are socially constructed in historical processes of securitisation, such as the creation of enemy images.
10. Some conflicts may seem easily categorised as simply ethnic, clan-based, or a continuation of traditions of cattle-rustling; however, closer examination generally reveals a far more complicated set of reasons, with competition for land and/or political resources, sparked by the state's changing attempts at regulation and governance, among the most important.
11. The rationales underpinning protracted conflicts and conflict areas may vary over time. Conflict between the same groups can at different stages play out as a conflict over resources, livelihood, ethnicity and/or politics.

12. Compared to many other conflict regions, securing access to and control over the exploitation of extractive resources is less of a driving force in conflict in the Horn of Africa. Oil resources in Sudan have changed this picture somewhat.[13] Still, the need for physical installations and control over transport lines of the bulky product makes this more a game for governments than for the average non-state actor.
13. It is important to understand how local grievances and drivers of conflict intersect with global structures and interests. While the role of political Islam has long been important in internal Sudan conflicts, since 9/11 this has become perhaps *the* key factor structuring the overall conflict dynamics of the region.

Gambella

Gambella is one of the most conflict-ridden regions in Ethiopia. The regional conflict pattern in shaped by several interconnected issues, including transnational migration, the civil wars in neighbouring Sudan, the ethnic composition, identity politics and political representation, and quarrels over land rights and resources, as well as relations to the highlanders and the Ethiopian central state. Understanding the current conflict pattern in Gambella requires a diachronic approach that takes into account the trajectory of the various factors in order to clarify their interrelated bearing on current and recent conflicts.

It should also be borne in mind that there are significant elements of reciprocity and complementary socio-economic relations and exchanges among the various groups in Gambella, and that, for the most part, Gambella today is a fairly peaceful region. However, conflict erupts regularly and is a facet that underpins daily life: the ever-present potential makes conflict a dominant pattern of intergroup relations (Feyissa 2008). Conflict and violence find expression in various fields of social interaction – from villages to churches, from schools to political parties – in ways ranging 'from the complete destruction of villages to rioting in the schools; from targeting minors and the raiding of public transports to the crucifixion of individuals to humiliate the group to which they belong' (ibid.: 148). The underlying tension has become part of everyday life. In recent years, once conflicts have erupted, they have tended to take on a more violent form, with bombing and massacres. Main parties are the dominant ethnic groups of the Nuer and the Anuak, both endogenous to Gambella, and the more recently arrived highlanders.

13 As may likewise be the effect of ongoing oil exploration in Ethiopia's Somali and Gambella regions.

> Gambella can be seen as an example for one of the most, if not utmost, complex regions in Ethiopia with regard to contemporary political conflicts. Its status as a border region, its multiethnic composition, its exposure to the Sudanese civil war and the inner-Ethiopian dynamics between centre and periphery, as well as the developments in oil drilling, contributed to the recent extension of the conflict in the area. Each of these causes and events is equally important for the understanding of the region and should never be seen as separate from each other (Meckelburg 2006: 7)

The conflict situation in Ethiopia's Gambella region shows an intricate web of interrelated and overlapping conflict factors, pivoting around ethnicity, federalism, resource conflicts and cross-border linkages. The latter is epitomised by the numerous refugees and camps established during the Sudanese civil war, which now – after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 – are in process of repatriation and closure. The Gambella pattern of conflicts should also be seen in the historical context of the past two decades of factional fighting and intercommunity violence, which exacerbate and are exacerbated by interstate dimensions. The complex conflict pattern unfolding in Gambella shows how various aspects originating in their particular setting form mutually reinforcing linkages with each other throughout a broader region, leading to more protracted and obdurate conflicts (Rubin 2006). Gambella's conflict patterns are not restricted to the clash of internal and external factors. Conflicts over political representation, land entitlement, resources, and different and conflicting modes of production do not necessarily emanate from particular localities, but follow various divisions, sometimes ethnic, integral to the society of Gambella itself. Moreover, with the exception of political representation, these intra-societal conflict lines are also found across the border in neighbouring Sudan. The historical and mutual transnational migration of ethnic groups, as well as the influx from Sudan to Gambella of refugees as a consequence of the Sudanese civil war, means that citizenship and political representation become important denominators and explanatory factors for the current regional conflict formation. The key point here is that not only does citizenship grant certain political privileges, but the status as refugee also conveys certain entitlements in terms of access to basic services provided by the international community. The regional conflict pattern articulated in Gambella should be understood against the backdrop of the possibilities and entitlements provided by ethnic belonging and citizenship. As this case study shows, these conflict lines transgress and interrelate, causing challenges for how the international society can address the regional dimensions of conflict. The weakness of state structures

on both sides contributes to the complex interplay across the borders, while also making it more complicated to deal with these conflicts.

Good International Engagement in Gambella

International presence in the Gambella region has been limited. Among the NGOs working in the region we find various examples of 'peace programmes' or projects. These range from seeking resolution to specific cases of resource competition between different groups, through arranging mediation and peace talks with the assistance of local elders, church leaders and other respected persons, to programmes that seek to establish connections and peaceful interaction between and among groups by arranging sports competitions and similar events. Although we are not in a position to judge the quality and results of these programmes, they undoubtedly respond to a need within this turbulent region.

The focus in this report, however, is on the international engagement that addresses the *cross-border aspects* of conflicts in the region. Many of the international organisations active here work with refugees, which in a sense is a cross-border issue in itself. Still, simply dealing with the needs of the refugees in their situation within Ethiopia cannot be counted as having a 'cross-border' perspective. Seen in this light, there are few examples of good international engagement from a regional perspective in Gambella. One main reason is that this is a peripheral region where the number of international actors is small, and their capacity for dealing with issues is over-extended simply through handling local matters. The two 'good cases' we have identified are the repatriation programme of refugees in the Gambella camps, organised by the UNHCR; and the PACT, which has operated a cross-border peace programme for some years.

The UNHCR repatriation programme involves organising refugees on the Ethiopian side for voluntary return, while in parallel work is ongoing on the Sudanese side, with various UN organisations mapping conditions for return as well as facilitating the arrival of returnees and supporting them during the re-establishment phase. Coordination meetings are held among the organisations working on both sides. To prepare refugees for return, and help them make the decision on whether to return, 'go-and-see' visits are arranged, where selected representatives of the refugees are sent to their home areas to see for themselves what conditions are like, before returning and informing their fellow camp residents. Reportedly, there have also been instances where already resettled returnees have been brought back to the camp to tell about their experiences. At least in theory, this would

sound like a solid way of working constructively in tandem on both sides of the border.

Reality may be somewhat different, however. Yearly meetings across the border between a few representatives of the various UN organisations are not really sufficient to ensure smooth coordination. Go-and-see visits appear to be more the exception than the rule, and we did not hear of any specific instances of resettled returnees actually having come back to the Fugnido camp (which was visited) to inform the refugees there. Refugees we interviewed generally appeared highly concerned about the security situation in South Sudan and the uncertainties of return, and not at all reassured by the mechanisms that had been established. Thus, while the programme has succeeded in organising the voluntary return of a large number of refugees in a situation with extremely weak institutions on the receiving side, practice is too far from that presented to be able to qualify it as 'best practice'.

PACT started working in Gambella because they already had an active programme in South Sudan with a significant peace-making component, focused *inter alia* on arranging peace conferences between elders and leaders of different ethnic groups or communities. Given the conflict situation in Gambella, and the many links to South Sudan, it was actually the SPLM that requested that PACT's peace programme be extended to the Ethiopian side. In addition to establishing a similar programme within Gambella, PACT has also sought to address cross-border linkages directly, by establishing a specific cross-border component. By focusing on specific 'corridors' linking clusters of conflicts on both sides, PACT has sought to implement its peace programme across the border. This includes 'conflict mapping and analysis'; dialogue involving elders, leaders and traditional reconciliation mechanisms; religious dialogue using the churches as well as traditional religious leaders; and establishing contacts and exchanges between the authorities on both sides.[14]

In many ways, this is a model programme in terms of the perspectives that underlie this study. For PACT, it has been possible to develop the programme because they have had a presence and been involved in similar activities on both sides. Still, in an area with extremely limited infrastructure on both sides, the cross-border component has been described as particularly challenging and exhausting to implement, with special requirements in terms of time and of dedicated staff with in-depth knowledge of local cultures and conditions. While some good

14 PACT's Peace II programme, implemented in the border areas between Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia, is something of a precursor and inspiration to the Gambella cross–border component. Peace II is a more advanced programme, with 10–15 years experience in its area, and linking together a host of different organisations and institutions in its activities. CEWARN's Somali cluster (see below) draws on this experience.

results have been obtained, PACT representatives have been modest in speaking about the results and whether they justify the resource inputs. For the present study, this is a quite sobering fact, indicating both certain preconditions for successfully addressing this type of cross-border conflict, as well as the inherent difficulties of such a task.

Ethiopia–Eritrea

For almost three decades, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fought against the Ethiopian military dictatorship known as the Derg (1974–1991). After jointly toppling the Derg regime, the two parties went on to pursue separate goals. The TPLF became the dominant party in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that assumed, and still maintains, government office in Addis Ababa. In agreement with the EPRDF government, the EPLF prepared Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia. In 1993, Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in a peaceful process involving a referendum. In 1998, however, a border war erupted between the two states, turning the 'brothers in arms' into 'brothers at war' and marking the start of a protracted conflict with major ramifications for security, regional cooperation and relations among the countries of the Horn of Africa. Resolving – or at least containing – the Eritrean–Ethiopian conflict is seen as crucial in order to prevent '…the dangerous escalation of regional conflicts' – as with regard to Somalia, the Sudan and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as well as the Darfur violence which continues to rage and even spill over into Chad (Lyons 2006:3).

The Eritrean–Ethiopian war between May 1998 and June 2000 has been characterised as a traditional border war over contested territories. The belligerents focused explicitly on the border issue as their main concern. The international involvement in this conflict perceived the conflict as solely one over a disputed international border, and responded to it as such. However, analysts have pointed out that the war was the inevitable culmination of accumulated factors in the Eritrean–Ethiopian relationship since Eritrean independence – factors like Ethiopia's access to Eritrean harbours, and Eritrea shifting from Ethiopian currency to its own currency and thereby affecting taxation, border trade and import/export relations. Others claim the war was over rival hegemonic claims in the Horn of Africa, national pride and territorial integrity. By 1998, relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia were in a poor state. 'The classic imperatives of state- and nation-building drove both regimes to set forth unconditional goals and refuse compromise on those questions and the vital issue of territoriality, legitimacy and identity' (Lyons 2006: 6). In fact, Eritrea, as Af-

rica's newest state, has had border disputes with all its neighbours: with Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan, as well as with Yemen, across the Red Sea.

In May 1998, war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in and over the disputed and symbolically important border town of Badme. Ethiopian authorities saw Eritrea's territorial annexation of Badme as illegal, and the skirmish soon escalated into outright warfare. After intermittent fighting and a period of stalemate and unproductive negotiations, Ethiopia launched a major offensive in May 2000, breaking through Eritrean defence lines and forcing the army back to pre-May 1998 positions, whereupon Ethiopia withdrew its army to its original position. As many as 100,000 people were killed in the intermittent fighting, and up to one million were driven into exile or internal displacement, diverting hundreds of millions from development activities into arms procurement.

Good International Engagement to the Eritrea–Ethiopia Conflict

International involvement in the Eritrean–Ethiopian conflict has centred on the United Mission to Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE). Hence, the story of UNMEE – from its inception, via the challenges it encountered in its wider lifespan, until its termination on 31 July 2008 – is basically the story of international engagement in this conflict. It is difficult to identify and separate the good from the not-so-good international engagements here. Instead, our case study analyses UNMEE and why it was terminated, to provide better insights into international engagement in the Ethio–Eritrean conflict.

On 18 June 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a ceasefire agreement. The agreement was brokered and ratified in Algiers, as Algeria at the time chaired the Organisation for African Unity (OAU). This June agreement not only produced a cessation of hostilities, it also paved the way for future international engagement in the conflict: the Algiers agreement called upon the United Nations to establish a peacekeeping mission – UNMEE – to establish and monitor a 25 km buffer zone separating the parties. The Algiers talks continued, with the aim of turning the cessation of hostilities agreement into a more final and comprehensive peace agreement. The United States played a prominent role in these talks, and Anthony Lake was appointed special envoy due to the Clinton administration's close relationship to the Eritrean and Ethiopian leadership. Under the auspices of an internationally brokered agreement, a second and more comprehensive Algiers agreement was signed in December 2000. To aid the prospects for lasting peace, this second Algiers agreement also established the Eritrea–Ethiopia Claims Commission (EECC) and the Eritrean–Ethiopian

Boundary Commission (EEBC) to determine the origin of conflict and demarcate the border, respectively. The two Algiers agreements stipulate the framework for international engagement to the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict. In-between the two Algiers agreements, the UN Security Council authorised UNMEE, before the second Algiers agreement established the EECC and EEBC.

The Algiers agreements, their witnesses (OAU, EU, UN, Algeria, and the USA) and the institutions they produced (UNMEE, EEBC, EECC) can be said to demonstrate good and rapid international engagement. The compartmentalisation of the two agreements, however, came to create complications, allowing the situation to deteriorate. When, in 2002, the EEBC ruling was made, UNMEE had no role in implementing or enforcing the decision. This opened the way for the long drawn-out stalemate since then. While Eritrea gradually imposed restrictions on UNMEE and advocated implementing the EEBC decision, Ethiopia refused to talk about the EEBC and the contested border issue, and focused on UNMEE instead. This raised problems for UNMEE – as the only permanent international presence – because it required the consent of both host governments to operate across the border. Although neither country ever formally withdrew their consent, the deteriorating circumstances UNMEE was faced with gradually impeded on the mission and its ability to deliver according to its mandate.

Armed conflict never erupted. Since both parties respected the cessation of hostilities agreement, interest in the underlying conflict faded. The international community paid too little attention to the challenges of implementing the Algiers agreements and its provisions to lay the foundation for a comprehensive peace process. The Algiers agreements never become converted into a political process to establish comprehensive peace: they maintained the political stalemate and protracted the tensions. As the situation unfolded, UNMEE – the only actor continuously engaged in the conflict – proved insufficiently equipped to cope, as it had not been mandated to implement the rulings of EECC or EEBC. UNMEE gradually lost momentum for engaging the parties. A critical factor was that it had never been equipped with a political mandate allowing it to mediate with the parties. The mission acted in accordance with its designated mandate as authorised by the Security Council. As mandates serve as straitjackets at the mission level, it was only the Security Council in New York that would have been in a position to change the ground rules and allow UNMEE to re-engage in the conflict.

Some initiatives outside UNMEE and UN bodies evolved as UNMEE found itself facing several challenges that serve to direct attention back to the conflict. The group Friends of UNMEE was established, as

an informal group of diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, Asmara and New York that met regularly to discuss and share information about UNMEE. This group had no role vis-à-vis the mission, however.

As a response to concerns about the lack of progress in implementing the Algiers agreement, the UN Secretary-General in 2004 appointed Lloyd Axworthy as special envoy for Eritrea and Ethiopia. This diplomatic initiative was unsuccessful. It attempted to merge UNMEE and EEBC, as their compartmentalisation (stemming from their separate Algiers agreements) was seen as problematic to the peace process. Eritrea, however, saw this as an attempt to use diplomatic dialogue as a pretext for amending, revising or reversing established agreements – particularly the EEBC decision, which was seen to favour Eritrea, even though both parties had agreed that its ruling was to be final and binding.

The few non-UN attempts to address the conflict have largely come from the USA. After Eritrea imposed restrictions on UNMEE and some troop-contributing countries were advocating that the mission be withdrawn, Washington in 2006 responded with an improvised unilateral initiative to break the impasse. The US ambassador to the UN, John Bolton, asked the Security Council to delay any action while Washington sent Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer and Marine General Carlton Fulford, to the region. While Frazer was welcomed to meet the Ethiopian political leadership and also visited the Ethiopian side of the border region, she was refused meetings with Eritrean leaders, who were unwilling to discuss the border issue which they saw as settled by the EEBC. Moreover, General Fulford, who had been invited by Frazer, was never seen as neutral to the conflict by the Eritreans, as he at the time was director of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, the US Defense Department regional centre located in Addis Ababa.

In early 2006, representatives of the witnesses to the December Algiers agreement convened in New York to discuss challenges in implementing the accord. In March and in May 2006, the EEBC met in London, together with the Algiers witnesses. It was regarded as significant progress that officials from Eritrea and Ethiopia attended both meetings. However, this failed to generate any substantial movement toward implementing the agreement or lifting the restrictions put on UNMEE. The stalemate situation was reproduced as both sides restated their earlier position and showed little inclination to reach an agreement.

After the Algiers agreements, international engagement in the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict has been scarce. UNMEE and other initiatives taken have centred on implementing the provisions of the Algiers agreements. The main challenge was the compartmentalisation of the two agreements. Today, UNMEE from the first agreement has been terminated, and EEBC and EECC dissolved themselves once they considered their mandate fulfilled. Although these institutions could be said to illustrate good international engagement when they were active, they shared the problem of being disconnected from each other, allowing the parties to selectively truncate the one and support the other. Perhaps the main problem of international engagement after 2000 has been the lack of any initiatives seeking to transcend the limits imposed by the Algiers agreement.

IGAD

Given the characterisation of the region as conflict-ridden and consisting of weak states, constructing an effective regional organisation is – to put it mildly – challenging. It should therefore not be surprising that IGAD has had the reputation of being a weak regional organisation – or REC (Regional Economic Community) in AU terms. Still, there have been considerable advances since the inception of the organisation in 1986. At that time, it was conceived as a collaborative effort among the countries of the Horn (including Sudan, Kenya and Uganda) to combat the drought, desertification and famine that had been plaguing the region, and was named IGADD (the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification). The organisation took a significant step forward in 1996, when its successor IGAD (Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) was established, with a far broader mandate. The new organisation was given four main working areas: food security and environmental protection; infrastructural development; conflict prevention, management and resolution; and humanitarian affairs. The process of consolidating the new organisation has been uneven, with considerable advances in limited areas, while overall regional integration has remained weak.

Within the field of peace and security, IGAD has been achieved certain successes in mediating the peace processes of South Sudan and Somalia – but has been notably absent with respect to other conflicts (as in Darfur, Ethiopia–Eritrea, Northern Uganda). There is thus a certain ad-hoc character to IGAD's engagement in peace processes. IGAD has also been quite successful in developing the Regional Conflict Early Warning and Early Response Mechanism CEWARN and the anti-terror capacity-building programme ICPAT. (Peace mediation, CEWARN and ICPAT are further discussed below.) Currently, IGAD is in the process of developing a new Peace and Security Strat-

egy. Since this is still in the making, we cannot know what its precise content will be. However, we have been informed that a major element will be to underscore the need for developing and strengthening cooperation and interdependence between the countries, with a specific focus on issues of joint infrastructure development, cooperative management of key cross-border resources such as water, and general economic integration. Thus, it is possible to see a continuous evolution of the organisation, both in terms of expanding its scope to cover new areas, and in terms of developing greater integration between elements and higher ambitions towards regional integration.

Notwithstanding these advances and the willingness to move forward that they indicate, conditions within and around the region pose considerable obstacles and challenges for IGAD's potential to consolidate itself into a strong regional organisation:

- In terms of internal conditions, the IGAD countries are plagued by insurgencies and violent conflict. Furthermore, they have relatively weak states that have managed to penetrate and control their peripheral areas only in partial and incomplete ways. In addition, IGAD member-states are constructed on radically different ideologies,[15] and in many cases stand on different sides of the conflict lines of the complex web of conflicts in which the region is suspended; thus they have opposing interests. The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, the conflict between Eritrea and Djibouti, the fact that the other IGAD countries have asked the UN to introduce sanctions against Eritrea for its support to Somali insurgents, and Eritrea's suspension of its participation in IGAD are merely the most visible dimensions of the underlying conflicts and opposing interests among IGAD members. While this situation may indicate the great need for a strong regional organisation that could add stability to the region, it also means that the chances of developing such an organisation are quite limited. Rather than criticising IGAD for not being sufficiently integrated and consolidated, a more realistic attitude could be to see every specific achievement as a positive success in its own right.
- Within the African context, the AU policy of building African integration around the RECs, and the intention of limiting the number of such regional organisations, perhaps ideally to correspond to the five African regions recognised by the AU, may also result in challenges to IGAD. The partially overlapping memberships of IGAD, the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

15 Such as Somalia: ethnic unity; Ethiopia: ethnic federalism; Eritrea: nationalism built on colonial history overriding ethnicity; Sudan: Islam.

(COMESA) indicate complications that may force member-countries to set priorities. For Kenya and Uganda, the EAC is undoubtedly the REC that is perceived as most important. Should there arise issues where Kenya and Uganda are forced to choose between the EAC and IGAD, there is little doubt that the choice would fall on the EAC. It also means that Kenya is not the strong driving force within IGAD that it might otherwise have been. Still, Kenya and Uganda are members of IGAD because they perceive benefits from this membership, and potential conflicts from the double membership should not be exaggerated.

– A weakness of IGAD is its high dependence on donor funding. According to some sources, donor preferences and opinions on priority areas mean that some areas receive better funding than others. Peace and security, and the environment and food security, were mentioned as better-funded areas than social development, health and economic integration. This leads to a certain donor shaping of the profile of IGAD. Uncoordinated donor initiatives may also be an important part of the explanation for the observed lack of integration between IGAD institutions and activities. If long-term regional stability depends on the strengthening of regional integration, as the new Peace and Security Strategy appears to be arguing, then the donor-led focus on specific, limited and uncoordinated security-oriented interventions like CEWARN and ICPAT may prove counterproductive in the long term.

Good IGAD engagement in the field of peace and security

Peace processes. IGAD hosted the negotiations that led to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Government of Sudan and the SPLM. While the CPA has not resolved all problems, it did represent a significant step forward in ending one of the longest and most intractable wars on the globe, and the agreement itself has been generally acknowledged as comprehensive, far-reaching and sound. Of course, there were other external actors involved in the process, but IGAD (with lead-country Kenya) deserves considerable credit for its role. IGAD has also played a relatively positive role in the Somali peace processes.

Still, it is fair to say that from the perspective of IGAD being a permanent organisation with its secretariat in Djibouti, its involvement in peace processes has had a certain ad-hoc character. There has been no systematisation of IGAD involvement; there are in the region many conflicts and peace processes where IGAD has not sought to take on any important role (Ethiopia–Eritrea, Northern Uganda, Darfur);

where there is IGAD engagement, new structures and venues are built up with only limited participation of the organisation's permanent secretariat; the roles assumed vary between peace processes and phases. While this indicates flexibility to adapt procedures to the task at hand, it also gives the impression that these engagements are sidelines to normal IGAD operations, more often dominated by individual countries than by IGAD as such. Furthermore, the processes have been heavily dependent on external resources, and extra-regional countries and partner groups have been heavily involved and played key roles in the actual negotiations. These points indicate that IGAD cannot really be counted as a consolidated organisation with proven capacity for peace mediation.

CEWARN has developed an impressive early warning system for monitoring pastoral conflicts. An early independent review (Adelman, Howard 2004, quoted in CEWARN 2006) characterised it as 'cutting edge' and as showing 'greater strength than virtually any other early warning system existent with respect to data collection'. Since that time, CEWARN has managed both to extend its geographical coverage and to expand into the field of early response. Thus, the mechanism appears to be on an upward trend of continuing to consolidate and strengthen itself. Still, there may be structural limits to how far it may develop.

Firstly, while pastoral conflicts are important in the region, they are only one among the many types and dimensions present in the Horn. Given the sensitivity of other conflict forms to the governments that form IGAD and own CEWARN, it is by no means certain that the CEWARN mechanism may be able to expand its scope of activity beyond the kind of localised conflicts exemplified by pastoralist conflicts.

Secondly, while the existing clusters cover important conflict areas, there are other areas – for instance along the borders between Eritrea/Djibouti, Eritrea/Ethiopia and Ethiopia/Somalia – that may be too sensitive for the states involved to allow even the monitoring of pastoral conflicts.

Thirdly, while it has been possible to develop a decentralised monitoring mechanism, it may prove far more difficult to apply the same principles to an early response mechanism, as not all of the regimes in question are known for practices of empowering the populations of their peripheries.
In sum, CEWARN may face great difficulties in expanding its role to a) other conflict types, b) cover all border areas, or c) maintain its bottom-up principles when moving into early response.

ICPAT also seems to be a successful undertaking when considered in isolation and on its own premises. It appears to have been successful at building the capacities of its member states within a specific area. The programme has been criticised both for being implemented with little coordination with other IGAD initiatives and for being donor-driven. Still, it may be understood as corresponding to the interests of the regimes of the IGAD countries in strengthening their security sectors – border controls in particular – and this may be a main reason for its relative success. On the other hand, it does not seem likely that the security-oriented ICPAT programme will be able to result in increased integration and inclusion of marginalised groups into the state. In other words, ICPAT does not have great potential for addressing the underlying drivers of conflict.

In sum, IGAD has been successful in individual interventions within the area of regional peace and security, but has so far not been able to show that it may have the potential for significantly altering the underlying factors behind the pervasive conflicts of the region. The fact that IGAD is an organisation of the *states* of the region is significant. Bringing together representatives of regimes and the state apparatus is not likely to lead directly to the inclusion of the groups who inhabit the peripheries and borderlands of these areas. Thus, while IGAD may be successful in developing mechanisms for surveillance of its nomadic populations of the borderlands (CEWARN) or strengthening forms of border control (ICPAT), this is far from integrating these groups into the state, in the sense of creating citizenship and national identity. In that light, IGAD may not be particularly well equipped to deal with the fundamental root causes of conflict on the Horn of Africa.

Moreover, the fact that IGAD states are often involved in various forms of alliances with insurgent groups of their neighbouring countries creates further obstacles to IGAD's role of promoting regional peace and stability. If IGAD countries are not impartial to the conflicts affecting the neighbouring countries, they cannot be expected to function as neutral mediators.

General Conclusions

The conflict-prone character of the region stems from the weaknesses and failures of its states in terms of integrating and providing tangible benefits to all the groups living within their borders. The continued existence of significant population groups alienated from and marginalised within the state means that the conditions that give rise to and foment conflicts will also continue. The report has sought to demon-

strate that this is the most basic *root cause* of conflicts on the Horn of Africa. Only an inclusive and necessarily long-term development process, capable of drawing these groups into the mainstream of the states, will be able to significantly change this condition.

A number of related *factors contribute to exacerbate and prolong conflicts* in the region. The weakness of the states in the region and their limited presence in and control over their peripheries; the long, undemarcated and porous borders of the sparsely populated borderlands; the limited amount of cooperation and interdependencies among the countries, and their habit of supporting insurgents of neighbouring countries and engage in proxy war – all of these are characteristics of the region that serve to prolong conflicts and link them together into complex patterns. Most, if not all, of these conditions can also only be resolved in the long term.[16]

In sum then, neither the root causes nor the intermediate contributing factors to continued complex conflicts can be resolved, except in the long term, through painstaking and uncertain processes of economic as well as political development. The conclusion for international actors seeking to contribute must be twofold: On the one hand, there is a need for supporting the kind of long-term processes that eventually may transform the region and the logics that underpin continued regional conflict. And on the other hand, individual conflict lines should be continually monitored and sought defused and/or contained, to limit the entanglement in greater, regional or sub-regional webs. In general, the first type of involvement falls outside the scope of this report. Nevertheless, it seems useful to emphasize the regional character to much of the long-term development that is required. In this sense, one relevant strategy would seem to be to support IGAD's efforts at promoting regional integration.

In the shorter-term attempts at addressing ongoing conflicts – from the local to the inter-state level – this report focuses on the international and cross-border dimensions. The examples examined do point to a number of specific lessons.

Fundamentally, it is difficult for international actors to act regionally. For a number of reasons, they are constricted by the state system, and tend to operate within the individual state. Due to issues of sovereignty, borders must be respected (even though they in practice are completely porous and virtually non-existent 'on the ground'). In particular when dealing with issues as politically sensitive as armed con-

16 Logically, the only one of these conditions that can be changed overnight is the practice of supporting insurgents in other countries, as this is really dependent on the decisions of a limited number of individuals. In practice, of course, there is no reason to suspect that this practice will change in the near future.

flict, international actors necessarily must coordinate with and work in understanding with the government in question.[17] Cross-border efforts consequently become complex affairs. Among other things, important requirements are:

- Having a presence on both sides of the border
- Understanding the conflict dynamics within their social contexts on both sides of the border
- Having communication channels across the border (since international organizations are usually set up with communication lines towards their international headquarters rather than to neighbouring countries, and since the border regions we are talking about are generally with extremely limited infrastructure, this is a complicated requirement)
- Having the necessary goodwill and go-ahead from government institutions on both sides
- Having the required cross-border or regional perspective and the patience and willingness necessary to overcome the bureaucratic hindrances for working in such unorthodox ways
- Being flexible enough and not limited by mandate, capacity or resources to be able to deal with problems within the sectors that may prove to be relevant

Thus, it should not be surprising that there are not too many good examples to be found. Yet, both the PACT and the CEWARN experiences show that it is possible to deal constructively with localized cross-border conflicts when the proper institutional set-up is in place. At the same time, the examples point to the significant resource requirements involved and the structural difficulties of scaling up.

As for the inter-state conflict level, the experience of the Ethiopia – Eritrea conflict is that it has been difficult for international actors to go beyond the framework established by the Algiers agreements. Since this has proved to have limitations, and since the countries themselves have shown no willingness to compromise, the situation is still as bitter – and perhaps even more locked – than it was when the war ended nine years ago.

However, there may also be some truth to the Eritrean perception, that international actors are refraining from putting sufficient pressure on Ethiopia to fulfil its obligations according to the Peace Agreement and

17 Exceptions to this rule have previously been quite frequent in this region. During their time as insurgent groups, the EPLF, TPLF and SPLA all controlled significant areas and received some recognition by international actors as being the de facto governments of these areas. Today, however, all three movements form part of the national governments of their states. Apart from the possible case of Somaliland, it is not easy to see similar situations of international recognition of non-state organizations on the Horn of Africa arising in the near future.

the EEBC, because of Ethiopia's strategic role as an ally in the US-led 'Global War on Terror'. The consequent isolation of Eritrea, and the regional spoiler role that the country has taken up – for instance with respect to Somalia – can be seen as a very clear negative effect of this type of involvement, which is based on own strategic interests rather than an analysis of how to contribute to stability in the region.

This points to another fundamental obstacle for good international involvement in seeking to address regional conflict patterns: The difficulty of coordination among actors. When different countries and institutions have diverging interests and understandings of the conflict dynamics, and when short-term strategic interests override more long-term engagement based on contextual analysis, the potential for constructive engagement becomes seriously limited.

Bibliography

Bach, Daniel C. 2003. New regionalism as an alias: regionalization through trans-state networks. In *The new regionalism in Africa*, edited by J. A. Grant and F. Söderbaum. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Buzan, Barry. 1983. *People, states and fear: the national security problem in International Relations*. 1st ed. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

———. 1991. *People, states and fear: an agenda for international security studies in the post-Cold War era*. 2nd ed. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Buzan, Barry, and Ole Wæver. 2003. *Regions and powers. The structure of international security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

CEWARN. 2006. *CEWARN Strategy 2007–2011*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

CIC. 2001. Regional conflict formation in the Great Lakes region of Africa: structure, dynamics and challenges for policy. edited by B. Rubin, A. Armstrong and G. Ntegeye. New York: Center on International Cooperation. Available at http://www.cic.nyu.edu/peacebuilding/oldpdfs/RCF_NAIROBI.pdf.

de Coning, Cedric. 2008. The coherence dilemma in peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction systems. *African Journal on Conflict Resolution* 8 (2):85–110.

———. 2009. Planning for success. In *Managing complexity: political and managerial challenges in United Nations Peace Operations*, edited by C. Clement and A. C. Smith. New York: International Peace Institute and the Geneva Centre for Security Policy. Available at www.reliefweb.int/rw/RWFiles2009.nsf/FilesByRWDocUnidFilename/MUMA–7TM7PU–full_report.pdf/$File/full_report.pdf.

Duffield, Mark. 2001. *Global governance and the new wars. The merging of development and security*. London and New York: Zed Books.

Feyissa, Dereje. 2008. Layers of conflict in the Gambella region. An interactive approach. In *Hot spot Horn of Africa revisited. Approaches to make sense of conflict*, edited by E.-M. Bruchhaus and M. M. Sommer. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Lake, David A., and Patrick M. Morgan. 1997. *Regional orders: building security in a new world*. University Park, PA.: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Lyons, Terrence. 2006. Avoiding conflict in the Horn of Africa. U.S. policy toward Ethiopia and Eritrea. Washington D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The Center for Preventive Action (CPA). Available at www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Ethiopia_EritreaCSR21.pdf

Meckelburg, Alexander. 2006. Changing ethnic relations. A preliminary investigation of Gambella, Southwest Ethiopia. In *Working paper*. Available at http://www.anyuakmedia.com/Changing%20Ethnic%20Relations%20in%20Gambella.pdf Hamburg: Asien-Afrika Institut der Universität Hamburg.

Rubin, Barnett. 2006. Central Asia and Central Africa: transnational wars and ethnic conflicts. *Journal of Human Development* 7:5–22.

Tavares, Rodrigo. 2008. Understanding regional peace and security: a framework for analysis. *Contemporary Politics* 14 (2):107–127.

Ulriksen, Ståle. 2009 [forthcoming]. Webs of war. The international community and the handling of regional conflict formations in West Africa and Central Africa.

Wallensteen, Peter, and Margareta Sollenberg. 1998. Armed conflict and regional conflict complexes, 1989–1996. *Journal of Peace Research* 35 (5):621–634.

Wæver, Ole. 1995. Securitization and desecuritization. In *On Security*, edited by R. Lipschutz. New York: Columbia University Press.

Case Study I: Understanding the Gambella Conflict Formation

By Jon Harald Sande Lie and Axel Borchgrevink
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

> Gambella can be seen as an example for one of the most, if not utmost, complex regions in Ethiopia with regard to contemporary political conflicts. Its status as a border region, its multi-ethnic composition, its exposure to the Sudanese civil war and the inner-Ethiopian dynamics between centre and periphery, as well as the developments in oil drilling, contributed to the recent extension of the conflict in the area. Each of these causes and events is equally important for the understanding of the region and should never be seen as separate from each other. (Meckelburg 2006: 7)

The conflict situation in the Ethiopian Gambella region involves an intricate web of interrelated and overlapping factors to conflict, pivoting around ethnicity, federalism, resource conflicts and cross-border linkages. The latter is epitomised by the numerous refugee camps established during the Sudanese civil war, which now – after the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of 2005 – are in the process of closure, while the refugees are being repatriated. The conflict pattern in Gambella illustrates how intra- and interstate dimensions are interrelated, and that these have their separate historical bearings that both exacerbate and are exacerbated by contemporary conflict. The complex conflict pattern unfolding in Gambella shows how various aspects originating in their particular setting form mutually reinforcing linkages throughout a broader region, leading to more protracted and obdurate conflicts (Rubin 2006). Gambella's conflict patterns are not restricted to the clash of internal and external factors. Conflicts over political representation, land entitlement and different and conflicting modes of production do not emanate from particular localities, but follow various divisions, sometimes ethnic, integral to the society of Gambella itself. Many of these intra-societal conflict lines are also found across the border in neighbouring Sudan. The historical and mutual transnational migration of ethnic groups, as well as the influx from Sudan to Gambella of refugees because of the Sudanese civil war, makes claims to citizenship and political representation important

denominators and explanatory factors in the current regional conflict formation. Not only does citizenship allow certain political privileges, but refugee status also conveys certain benefits in terms of access to basic services provided by the international community. The regional conflict formation articulating itself in Gambella should thus be understood against the backdrop of the possibilities and entitlements provided by ethnic belonging and citizenship. As this paper shows, these conflict lines criss-cross and interrelate, creating challenges for how the international society can address the regional dimensions of conflict.

This paper first gives a brief outline of the regional conflict patterns as these appear from a perspective foregrounding Gambella. The second and main part offers both contextual and potential explanatory factors to the Gambella conflict formation. This section focuses on endogenous factors like ethnicity, federalism, politics and settlement programmes, as well as on exogenous factors relating to central state politics, relationship with highlanders, the Sudanese civil wars and the subsequent massive influx of refugees. These factors should be seen as interrelated and as both producing and produced by conflict. The final part introduces various international actors present in the area and their involvement in the complex regional conflict formation, highlighting both challenges and good practices.

Gambella – Context

The Gambella People's National Regional State (GPNRS) is situated in the southwestern Ethiopian lowlands, some 780 km from Addis Ababa, and covers one of Ethiopia's longest international boundaries with neighbouring Sudan. Its border with Sudan's Upper Nile and Jonglei states (both part of the Southern Sudan) is demarcated by the Baro and Akobo rivers. To the east, Gambella borders the Ethiopian highland plateau of the Oromia region, and to the southeast it borders the conglomerate Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region. The Gambella region covers an area of 25,294 square km and has, according to the 2007 census, a population of approximately 307,000. It also has the highest annual growth rate (4.1 per cent) of all Ethiopian regions in relation to the 1994 census. The vast majority of its population (74.8 per cent) live in rural areas. Gambella's international border and proximity to previous Sudanese conflict zones make it subject to transnational migration and hosts of refugees. Moreover, the area's low population density, coupled with access to scrubland and water, makes it a desirable location for pastoral grazing as well as for agricultural activities. Consequently, the region has attracted settlers from both Sudan and the Highlands. Together with Gambella's

multiethnic composition, all these factors have contributed to the regional conflict pattern.

The Gambella Conflict Formation

Gambella is one of the most conflict-ridden regions in Ethiopia. The regional conflict formation of Gambella is shaped by several interconnected issues – among them, transnational migration, the civil wars in neighbouring Sudan, the ethnic composition, identity politics and political representation, quarrels over land rights and resources, as well as by relations to the highlanders and the Ethiopian central state. Understanding the conflict formation in Gambella requires a diachronic approach that can take into account the trajectory of the various factors in order to clarify their interrelated bearing on current and recent conflicts.

Here it should also be noted that there are significant elements of reciprocity and complementary socio-economic relations and exchanges between and among the conflicting groups in Gambella. To a large extent, this is a peaceful region today. However, conflict erupts regularly and is a facet that underpins daily life, making the potential for conflict an ever-present factor in intergroup relations (Feyissa 2008). Conflict and violence are regularly expressed in various fields of social interaction – from villages to churches, from schools to political parties – and the manifestations range 'from the complete destruction of villages to rioting in the schools; from targeting minors and the raiding of public transports to the crucifixion of individuals to humiliate the group to which they belong' (ibid.: 148). Underlying tension is part of everyday life. Recently, once conflicts have erupted they have tended to take on a more violent form, involving bombing and massacres. The main parties are the two dominant ethnic groups – the Nuer and the Anuak, both endogenous to Gambella – and the more recently arrived highlanders.

In the early 1990, in what is locally known as the *girgir* (1991–2), an Anuak military faction of the Gambella People's Liberation Movement (GPML) committed atrocities against the civilian Nuer populations in what appeared to be ethnic reprisals over political dominance. Ethiopian Nuer citizens and Sudanese Nuer refugees residing in Gambella fled across the border to Sudan, from which armed Nuer groups mounted counter-offensives that resulted in the destruction of Anuak villages. Tension remained, with regular minor disputes, until large-scale clashes again took place in 1998. Another major conflict occurred between the Nuer and the Anuak in 2002 over issues related to who should succeed as regional vice president. In 2001, there was conflict between the marginal Majangir ethnic group and the Anuak -

a conflict that the Anuak saw as instigated by either the Nuer or the highlanders as representatives of the central government. In December 2003, an ambush allegedly committed by Anuaks triggered a bloody three-day rampage in the regional capital in which federal soldiers joined highlander mobs in destroying Anuak neighbourhoods. The 424 reported killed were Anuak. Gambella has also been host to a large number of refugees from the civil wars of Sudan. The overall deterioration of security in Gambella also affected these camps: Anuak refugees were forced to evacuate and seek shelter in nearby Anuak communities, while Dinka refugees were compelled to run to local Nuer societies. Following this, the Fugnido refugee camp was divided into an Anuak and Nuer section, to prevent local conflict from settling in the camp (Feyissa 2008; HRW 2005; Meckelburg 2008).

One should not, however, be misled by the seemingly clear demarcation lines of interethnic strife – intra-ethnic clashes are just as much part of the conflict complex. Although Nuer-Anuak-highlander relations constitute a central dimension for grasping the Gambella conflict formation, the indigenous groups in the region are also characterised by internal struggle. The main Anuak divide goes between the Lull and Openo sub-clans, with opposing interests and conflicts between those living along the rivers in the central areas and those of the forest region. The more marginal Majangir ethic group is internally divided due to party politics. Political competition and resource competition constitute the main causes of conflict among Nuer groups, which at the time of writing is the most common type of violent conflict in Gambella. The relations between the three Nuer sub-clans – the Gaajak, the Gaajok and the Gaaguang – are highly competitive and at times hostile (Feyissa 2008: 150–152).

The Gambella conflict pattern is furthermore affected by incidents on the Sudanese side, such as conflicts between the Dinka and Luo Nuer tribes. Both these groups mainly originate and reside in Sudan, but there are cross-border activities in the form of refugees, settlers and migrating nomads. Sudanese Murle also regularly attack and raid the cattle of communities on the Ethiopian side. Lately, intercommunal violence has flared up in Sudan. In June 2009, a Jikany Nuer group ambushed and killed 40 south Sudanese soldiers and civilians transporting UN food aid on riverboats destined for displaced Luo Nuer in Akobo.[1] This incident, known as the 2009 Sobat River Ambush, was believed to be in retaliation for an incident the previous May, when people from Akobo, arguably Luo Nuer, attacked a settlement in Upper Nile and killed about 70 people.[2] In late September 2009, around 100 were killed in Bor of Jonglei state in what appears to be conflict

1 http://in.reuters.com/article/oilRpt/idINHEA62861920090616
2 http://www.webcitation.org/5j1UNmpWn

between the Dinka and Luo Nuer over cattle and pasture.[3] Speculation that the Khartoum regime is somehow behind this recent spate of violence is widespread in the area.

Such events, although occurring in Sudan, contribute to destabilise the whole region and spill over into Gambella. Intra- and interethnic rivalries over politics and resources shape the wider conflict formation, showing that what happens on one side of the geographical border cannot be disentangled from what happens on the other side. The Gambella conflict formation should not be understood as simply traditional forms of cattle-raiding and ethnic conflicts that are allowed to flourish due to the weak penetration of the state in these peripheral areas. In addition to the ethnic aspects, we need to take into account intra-ethnic dimensions, politics, centre-periphery relations, and their historical trajectories, in order to grasp the wider regional conflict formation of Gambella. With that perspective, it becomes clear that the conflicts are not due to the lack of state presence and control, but are just as much caused by political events at the national level of the two states, as well as by the regimes' attempts at extending their reach and exerting control over these areas. Even global events can be recognised as influencing the conflict dynamics. In sum, then, the conflict pattern of Gambella must be understood in relation to endogenous as well as exogenous factors.

Ethnicity and Conflict

Gambella is a multiethnic region. It comprises five distinct ethnolinguistic groups: the Anuak (27 per cent), the Nuer (40 per cent), the Majangir (six per cent), the Opo and the Komo (three per cent). The remaining 20 per cent are highlanders, i.e. settlers from the Amhara, Tigray and Oromo regions. It should be emphasised that these percentages – which have far-reaching consequences for political influence – are highly contested within the region and should not be taken as anything more than indications of relative size and the best figures available. The Ethiopian Constitution of 1995 considers all the non-highlanders as the region's endogenous peoples. This gives them particular rights with respect to political representation, rights that are not accorded to the highlanders. The various lowlander groups are linguistically related and engage in various forms of economic and social exchange, but they nevertheless form distinct ethnic communities. The distinctions are continuously reproduced, with social organisation, form of subsistence and mode of productivity as the key identity markers: 'Ethnic boundaries are marked, among other ways, by difference in subsistence system' (Feyissa 2006). The Anuak and the more

3 http://allafrica.com/stories/200909220711.html

marginal Opo are predominantly sedentary agriculturalists, while the Nuer are traditionally nomadic, transhumant pastoralists, who are gradually turning towards agro-pastoralism. The marginal Majangir combine hunting and gathering (ibid.). These distinctions are, however, only characteristics. In order to avoid primordial understandings of ethnicity and ethnic boundaries, we need a less formalistic notion of ethnicity and of what unities and divides. In this respect, Feyissa suggests seeing the ethnic formations not as ideal types but more as family resemblances (Feyissa 2005).

What distinguishes the two dominant groups, the Anuak and the Nuer – who together make up two-thirds of Gambella's population – forms a source of inevitable conflict rooted in their different discourses over land, with contrasting notions of belonging and concepts of property and land entitlement. Although in the distant past also the Anuak were pastoral nomads who migrated into Gambella, their current identity draws on a strong idea of being indigenous to the region with sedentary farming activities, and this has produced an identity discourse based on territory and livelihood. To the Anuak, the Nuer are the significant 'Other', exogenous to Gambella, with weaker territorial claims. The nomadic Nuer are perceived as new to the area, having come there to use the vast scrublands for pasture. Relevant to the notion of belonging, Feyissa thus claims that the Nuer and Anuak represent two different kinds of ethnicities: the Anuak as primordialist, principally concerned with a static and reified meaning of ethnicity, while the Nuer are instrumentalist or constructivist, chiefly concerned with the interest dimension of ethnicity (Fayissa 2005: 205). While the Anuak draw their identity from being a people that have always been in the region and cultivated the same soil, the formation of Nuer identity is based on a different type of land use and mode of production. The contestation over belonging and territorial heritage – and thus traditional ownership to land – is shown by the mutually constituted Anuak concepts of *obur* and *welo*. While *obur* designates people of the settlement, *welo* denotes guests or visitors, or recent arrivals in the area (ibid.: 207). As we shall see, *welo* has in recent years been applied to the highlanders as well.

The Nuer and Anuak differ in their concepts of property rights and land entitlement. Furthermore, their relations to and use of the land relate to the two diverging notions of ethnicity. Typically, Anuak settlements are scattered along the river banks. They also comprise adjacent territories which, although these might not be economically exploited or used for subsistence production, nevertheless constitute an integral part of the local community and Anuak village. Among the Anuak, the notion of land ownership need not entail effective occupation or use of land for income-generating activities. As Feyissa ex-

plains, it is enough to lay claim to a territory because it is seen as land of the ancestors (Feyissa 2002). Conversely, and paralleling their instrumentalist view of ethnicity, the Nuer connotation of land rights involves the active and accrued use of land. As a corollary, if no one uses the land, no one owns it – hence it is available for others to use. In effect, incompatible modes of production and diverging livelihoods are a key feature and rationale for the continued conflict between the Anuak and the Nuer, i.e. between groups relating to sedentary and pastoral resources respectively. The pastoralist and semi-pastoralist Nuer graze their cattle on the Gambella plains. During the wet season the Nuer herd their cattle to upland settlements to escape flooding, whereas during the dry season they move closer to the river banks, where the moisture provides important pasture. The Nuer pattern of movement thus involves migrating with their cattle to areas inhabited by Anuak during the dry season, which gives rise to competition and conflict over both land and water resources (Tadesse 2007). At the same time, there is a certain complementarity to these two forms of livelihood, which also has facilitated exchange and accommodation between the groups.

To some extent, the source of the conflict is migration, which itself is an integral feature of Nuer livelihood. Conflict is further exacerbated by two factors. First, increased population density and reduced access to land and water resources have forced the Nuer to expand their pasture area, thus putting pressure on sedentary settlements and established farming systems. Second, the Nuer's experience of conflict in the west has forced them to migrate eastwards. Historically, the Nuer in both Ethiopia and Sudan have had a conflicting relationship with the Dinka living to the west of them in Sudan, even though the Dinka and Nuer share many similarities in terms of livelihood and mode of production. Additionally, Young asserts that the Sudanese Nuer moved eastward to escape taxation of the British colonial rule (Young 1999). The eastward migration of the Sudanese Nuer was later exacerbated by the Sudanese civil war, which brought with it both insecurity and increased scarcity of land. In sum, the Nuer's historical and continuous eastward migration onto Anuak land has been driven by increased population density and low access to pastureland, as well as the wish to escape colonial taxation, to flee the Dinka conflict and to mitigate security concerns during the civil war in Sudan. Gambella's escarpment to the Ethiopian highland plateau in the east made a natural border for the migration of pastoral people. The result has been increased conflict in Gambella, mainly along ethnic lines: 'both groups seem to be accustomed to a tradition of ongoing conflict concerning power and access to natural resources' (Meckelburg 2006: 8).

The Nuer-Anuak relationship is, however, not only one of conflict. Cordial interaction and trade are more the daily features than is conflict. Moreover, the Nuer gave shelter to fleeing Anuaks when Oromos from the highland attacked Gambella, and the Anuak apparently introduced the Nuer to the ivory trade with the highlanders (ibid.). This later evolved into an 'ivory-for firearms' trade, which eventually resulted in the Nuer achieving a military balance with their competitors – which in turn brought stabilisation of relations, interethnic exchanges, and a balance of power leading the way to socio-economic cooperation (cf. James 2002). The introduction of Ethiopian federalism, however, not only refuelled tensions between the Nuer and Anuak, it also aggravated latent conflict lines between local, lowlander groups and the highlanders who were seen as external newcomers to region.

The ethnic division and demographic imbalance do not correlate with settlement patters. The Anuak live in eight of Gambella's nine districts, and constitute the majority in five of them. The total area settled and claimed by the Anuak makes up about 70 per cent of the region. By contrast, most Nuer are found in only two districts covering only one-fourth of the land mass. The great majority of the highlanders live in the regional capital and other urban centres.

While the Anuak distinguish between people of the settlement on the one hand, and those who have come more recently, there is also a dominant distinction line between locals and lowlanders, on the one side, and settlers and highlanders on the other. The highlanders, constituting roughly 27 per cent of the Gambella populace and living mainly in urban areas, are later arrivals to Gambella. Many of them came to the region under the forced resettlement programme of the Derg. Others have come individually, in search of employment, new business opportunities, or to acquire arable land. Many came because of employment opportunities in municipal offices, schools and other government offices and public services, as the highlanders – in contrast to the local people – had the required qualifications of literacy and basic schooling. Others found employment in the policy or the military, which during the 1980s were prominent in the region due to the border to civil-war Sudan. To the original population, the highlanders have come to connote power relations, being identified with the central state. In fact, to many locals, the term 'highlander' is as much a metaphor for power and the state as it is a description of geographical origin (Feyissa 2005). In the current ethnic federal system, this has been given a curious twist, because the highlanders – as 'non-native' to the region – are not entitled to political representation. At the same time, they are heavily overrepresented within state institutions, especially at leadership levels. That places them in the special

situation of being relatively powerless in terms of influence through the formal representative political system, and yet enjoying considerable informal power from manning central positions within the state apparatus.

Ethnic Federalism in Gambella

In 1991, the socialist Derg dictatorship was toppled by the TPLF-led insurgency after a decade and a half of civil war. Soon after assuming power, the coalition government of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) was created. The new government recognised that its own emphasis on national self-determination meant that local demands for self-determination could not convincingly be denied. It intended to decentralise power and resolve the 'nationalities question' by accommodating the various ethno-linguistic groups. In August 1995 the Federal Constitution was introduced in Ethiopia, accompanied by the establishment of ethnic federalism. Before 1996, Ethiopia had been divided into 13 provinces, but with ethnic federalism it became divided into nine ethnically-based regional states. The move to ethnic federalism and increased decentralised self-determination were seen as the only way to achieve countrywide peace, stability and development. Critics, however, asserted that ethnic federalism and the prominence given to the principle of ethnicity would inevitably reinforce ethnic tension and conflict (Fiseha 2006). Gambella, itself being a multiethnic state within the federal system, is a telling case, as the new context of institutionalised ethnicity situates the social struggle between the Anuak and the Nuer.

After the transition to federalism, the Anuak were supported by the new ruling party (EPRDF) because of their support to the regime change, while the Nuer were associated with the previous Derg dictatorship. The Anuak have used this support to renegotiate their political influence and role vis-à-vis the Nuer, although they are in minority. (This, however, only became apparent after the census published in 1995, and even after that, its figures have been highly contested by many Anuaks.) The Anuak saw an opportunity to contain the Nuer by the possibilities provided by the transition to ethnic federalism, notably by using what Feyissa calls the 'citizenship card' – excluding the Nuer from job opportunities in administrative posts, political roles, and goods and service delivery (Feyissa 2005). By controlling central political and administrative offices, the Anuak elites redefined all the Nuer as Sudanese, even though some Nuer have lived in Gambella since the 19th century. The Anuak elites and officials consolidate their own position by homogenising the Nuer not as 'people that have arrived late, but as nominal foreigners without Ethiopian citizenship'. The Anuak have justified this with reference to the practice of many

Nuers of altering and alternative citizenship, since switching to Sudanese citizenship brought refugee status, with access to services provided in the refugee camps in Gambella, such as relief, physical security and various basic services. This is a point we will return to below.

This application of the federal system and the central government's bias towards the Anuak have resulted in structural inequalities along ethnic lines regarding the allocation of political representation, managerial posts, and composition of civil servants in the Gambella region. Feyissa (2005) provides schematic overviews of these issues from 1992 to 2002. Although there have been improvements in terms of representation and distribution, considerable preference is still accorded to the Anuak. In 1992, the Anuak held 50 per cent of the seats in the regional council, while the Nuer held a mere 30 per cent. Although the total seats increased from 38 to 55 in 2000, the 29 Anuak seats represent 53 per cent compared to the Nuer's 34 per cent. The allocation of managerial posts is also considerably in favour of the Anuak, who held 11 out of 18 posts in 2002. Although the Anuak are overrepresented in the regional political council and in managerial posts, the ethnic profile of the civil servants in Gambella is very different: of 3,845 civil servants, the distribution among Anuak, Nuer and highlanders is 36, 6 and 56 per cent, respectively. One reason for the overrepresentation of highlanders, who do not hold any political or managerial positions, is, as noted above, their basic educational level, but, as Feyissa notes, 'access to government offices has been increasingly dictated by ethno-politics and the position of the various groups in the decision-making power' (ibid.: 213). To counter their underrepresentation, the Nuer have sought to establish two additional regional districts *(wereda)* to form new Nuer constituencies. Currently only two of the nine constituencies are recognised as Nuer, although the Nuer make up 40 per cent of the total population of Gambella. Both the regional and federal levels have until recently refused this request. On the other hand, the Nuer are no longer seen as foreign, but have now become recognised as the majority group in the multiethnic Gambella region.

It is this form of gerrymandering that has turned the apparent blessing of federalism into a curse in the region. The political underrepresentation of the Nuer and the highlander-dominated regional civil service illustrate that ethnic federalism has produced a new and insecure political minority. Numerically, the Nuer comprise the majority in Gambella, but the division of constituencies gives precedence to the Anuak. This furthermore point to a larger dilemma of ethnic federalism and divisions in a state's borderland. Taken as ethnic groups living in the Ethio-Sudan borderlands, the majority of Anuak live on the Ethiopian side, with only a small number living in southern Sudan.

For the Nuer, the cross-border division is different. Although they are in the majority in the Gambella region, the overwhelming majority of the Nuer live in southern Sudan. Anuak resistance to allowing increased Nuer influence stems largely from fears of becoming a marginalised minority in their own land. Thus Anuak-Nuer relations have been and will continue to be characterised by persistent conflicts over land entitlement and political representation.

The agro-pastoral livelihood of the Nuer, their opportunistic claims to grazing land, their innate nomadic character, as well as the Anuak reluctance to allow the Nuer increased political influence, have both domestic and transnational bearings. The regional pattern of conflicts and their transnational linkages are, however, not limited to nomadic movements, competition over land resources, interethnic unrest and political misrepresentation. Rather, these features that are being articulated in Gambella should be seen as interconnected with wider regional politics, conflict and state formation, and a small component of Cold War geopolitics, all of which have repercussion in the current context.

The Gambella Resettlement Programme

Governments will inevitably seek to increase control over their more peripheral areas, particularly when these constitute borderlands to neighbouring states. As the Ethiopian state evolved, it came to recognise that controlling space even in the most rural and peripheral areas would be a means for the central government to secure its power (Clapham 2002). In Ethiopia, one form that this has taken is through forced resettlement and sedentarisation schemes.[4] Such schemes were introduced in the 1960s when Haile Selassie intensified his modernisation efforts and adopted a policy of assimilating lowlanders into the culture of the ruling highlanders, aimed at Christianisation and the dissemination of Amhara culture and language (Lie 2004: 129-133). While this in itself created lowlander resentment to the highlanders, the resettlement politics that emerged with the Derg regime from 1974 were more radical, attempting to change the agricultural production system and transform the traditional power structures of rural societies (Viezzoli 1992). The land reform proclamation of 1975 abolished age-old feudal production relations and nationalised all land, without compensating former rights-holders. Land was now to be distributed by peasant associations appointed by the Derg at central level (Clapham 2002). State planners saw these associations and the resettlement programmes as means of propagating socialist ideas. The programmes

4 'Resettlement, land settlement, colonisation or transmigration all refer to the phenomenon of population redistribution, either planner or spontaneous' (Dessalgn 2003; quoted in Meckelburg 2006: 4).

were directed at the urban unemployed, at rural populations regularly affected by natural disasters and at nomads. Resettlement meant long-distance movement of people from high-density areas to planned modern villages, usually in the lowlands. 'Villagisation' and sedentarisation involved the concentration of scattered homesteads into designated villages (Clapham 2002: 19). By 1985, the Derg had resettled up to 600,000 while about 12 million people had been villagised (Human Right Watch 1991: 234, referred to in Meckelburg 2006). Gambella, which also had a significant pull factor in being seen as the potential 'bread basket in the West' (Pankhurst 1997), was subjected to both these schemes.

The aims of the central government schemes for Gambella were twofold. The resettlement programme focused on resettling northern highlanders to the fertile grounds of Gambella, whereas the villagisation programme aspired to strengthen and eventually transform the livelihood and modes of production among local people. While stated motives were framed altruistically, other factors could be discerned. As Gambella was inhabited mostly by the Nuer and Anuak, 'communication with the people and provisions of services for them have consequently been difficult. The government of socialist Ethiopia, through the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission is embarking on a settlement program for the local population…' (RRC 1981; quoted in Meckelburg 2006: 10). It should also be added that the vast infusion of highlanders had implications for government's ability to control the society, survey the border, collect taxes, and merge the centre and periphery (cf. Clapham 2002). The government schemes had devastating effects on the traditional subsistence economy, settlement patterns, modes of production, and not least on the ethnic composition of Gambella. The resettlement programmes produced joint local resistance to the highlanders and the central state, which became seen as largely synonymous. The highland settlers made a significant impact. While the Gambella population was estimated at 125,000 in the early 1980s (RRC 1981), the highlanders, which started to arrive from 1984, soon numbered about 60,000 (Kurimoto 2005), most of whom were settled on traditional Anuak territory.

Moreover, the rising influx of refugees as an effect of the Sudanese civil wars aggravated already tense relationships among locals, settlers, refugees and state power, increasing the conflict sources and making the regional conflict formation of Gambella even more complex.

Gambella and the Impact of the Sudanese Civil War

Gambella borders on turbulent Sudan, a physical setting which itself makes the Gambella conflict formation politically sensitive as well as prone to be affected by events in the neighbouring country. With the exception of the eleven years between the first (1955–72) and second (1983–2005) civil wars, Sudan has experienced internal conflict ever since independence from British colonial rule. During colonial rule, the British had administered North and South Sudan as separate regions, but then, as part of the British post-Second World War strategy in the Middle East these two regions were merged into a single administrative unit. When Sudan became independent in 1956, conflict erupted between the North and the South. The main cause and concern of the two civil wars have been the South's fear of being subsumed by the political power of the larger and more prosperous North. The conflicts have been epitomised as a struggle for independence by the Christian, culturally sub-Saharan Africans of the South against the Islamic North, whose people who see themselves as culturally Arabic. Control over water and oil resources located in Southern Sudan has also been an important impetus. The conflicts' main belligerents were the Government of Sudan and the secessionist Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and its political wing, SPLM – Sudan People's Liberation Movement. The SPLA/M was not established until 1983, when it was formed by South Sudanese soldiers defecting from the Sudanese Army. The SPLA included many of the veterans from the first civil war, but was a more structured and formalised resistance group than had been the case with the South Sudanese fighting the first civil war. More recently, the main parties to the conflict have transformed into the Government of National Unity (GoNU) and the Government of South Sudan (GoSS), through the processes leading to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 1995. The CPA not only brought an end to the civil war. It also meant formal representation of SPLM in the GoNU, with the development of democratic governance countrywide and the sharing of oil revenues, and not least – it gave the promise of a referendum to be held by 2011 on Southern independence. However, as yet this has not meant the end to all the fighting in Sudan, nor to violent spillovers into Ethiopia.

The Sudanese civil wars have had significant impact on the Gambella conflict formation, for numerous reasons. Large parts of the war were waged very close to Gambella, notably in the neighbouring states of Jonglei and Upper Nile. The Nuer residing in these areas have represented a main contributor to the SPLA forces. Gambella constituted a repository for SPLA fighters, as well as becoming to vast numbers of refugees. As a locus for the effects of the civil war, Gambella became increasingly entangled in processes and politics not only at the centre

of the Ethiopian state, but also in the articulation of Cold War geopolitics on the Horn of Africa more generally.

Soon after the second Sudanese civil war broke out in 1983, the Ethiopian Derg regime made plain its support to SPLM/A, which allowed 'the SPLA to set up military training and base-camp facilities inside Ethiopia' (James 2002: 267). The Derg's involvement in the Sudanese civil war made borders and security a major concern of the Ethiopian central state in all its western frontier regions. The ordinary people of these formerly 'marginal' areas now became increasingly aware of their relations with Addis Ababa and that they were in the orbit of the Ethiopian centre, both directly and indirectly affected by centralised policies. Not only were the SPLA allowed into Ethiopian territory, they also recruited from the rural population, while the Sudanese army began counter-insurgency operations against local Ethiopian civilians in the mid-1980s, notably in the Benishangul region just north of Gambella (James 2002).

From this, tension evolved between Addis Ababa and Khartoum, with geopolitical and domestic ramifications. The socialist Derg regime was backed by the Soviet Union, whereas Khartoum received US support. While the SPLA received armaments from Soviet Union via Addis Ababa, Khartoum stepped up its general support to forces aimed at overthrowing Mengistu's Derg regime and allowed international actors to assist the Tigrean-based uprising from Khartoum. While SPLA soldiers operated on Ethiopian side, anti-Mengistu forces were active on Sudanese soil. Finally, in 1991 and interrelated with the fall of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, the uprising led by the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) managed to topple the Derg regime, after 15 years of struggle (Hammond 1999).

The regime change in Addis seriously affected the situation in Gambella. The Derg had not only supported the Nuer of the SPLA, but had also strongly favoured the Ethiopian Nuer, who were incorporated into the local administration. The marginalised Anuak, by contrast, had joined the peasant militias formed into the Gambella People's Liberation Front (GPLF), from the 1980s under Sudanese patronage (Johnson 2003: 87–90). The GPLF, moreover, fought alongside that TPLF as the Gambella branch of the general uprising against the Derg, thus targeting both Ethiopian and Sudanese Nuer communities. After toppling the Derg junta, TPLF became the dominant part of the coalition EPRDF government. The GPLF and Anuak were thus duly rewarded when the ethno-federal system was installed. As seen in the section on federalism above, the Gambella configuration of the federal system and division of constituencies proved favourable to the Anuak community, while the Nuer majority were grossly under-represented.

Following the regime change in Ethiopia, the Gambella conflict formation became increasingly linked to events on the Sudan side of the border. When the Derg regime in Addis Ababa – which had supported the SPLA – was toppled in 1991, the SPLA were forced to leave their Ethiopia bases. The Itang camp was also evacuated – out of fear of what the victorious liberation armies OLF and TPLF (which had received support from Khartoum for their struggle) might do. It has also been alleged that control over the refugees was an important meal ticket for the local SPLA commanders, who were about to split off from the main, Garang-led part of the movement, and that for this reason they took the refugees with them (Johnson 1996). The massive but little-prepared evacuation was a humanitarian disaster, resulting in thousands of deaths. There were few facilities for providing relief to the returnees on the Sudanese side, as well as an intensifying of the civil war – this time with the added complexity of the two factions of the SPLA turning on each other. The break-away faction was Nuer-dominated, reacting against what was perceived as Dinka dominance within the SPLA under the Garang leadership. With the relatively good relations prevailing at that time between Addis Ababa and Khartoum, Sudanese forces were allowed to use, *inter alia*, Gambella as passage to attack southern SPLA groups behind the frontlines. Diplomatic relations were re-established, with a Sudanese consulate in Gambella trying to tempt refugees back across the border, as agricultural labour was needed. Later, this Gambella consulate was closed after diplomatic relations between Khartoum and Addis deteriorated from 1995 onwards. The SPLA were then able to reconstruct their strength morally and politically backed by both Ethiopia and newly independent Eritrea (James 2002: 269–270). Eventually, also the Nuer-dominated break-away factions with strong links to Gambella found their way back into the main SPLA movement, and even into its political leadership.

The second Sudan Civil War was one of the longest-lasting and deadliest wars of the 20th century, with perhaps as many as 1.9 million casualties. The signing of the CPA in 2005 not only meant an end to the atrocities of war, but also that the approx. 4 million civilian southerners who had been forced to flee their homes could return.

The Refugee Situation

The UNHCR Sub-office in Gambella was established in 1969 – that is, during the first Sudanese Civil War and following the arrival of the first Sudanese refugees in the region. These groups were admitted into Ethiopia under the provisions of the OAU Convention of 1969, which governs the specific aspects of refugee problems in Africa. Most of the Southern Sudanese refugees were granted *prima facie* refugee

status in Ethiopia. Additionally, a small number of refugees, including asylum-seekers from Uganda, Burundi, DRC and more recently Darfur, have been granted refugee status and accepted into the camps in Gambella, based on screening procedures and individual or group interviews.[5]

The refugee influx due to the Sudanese civil war has been an enduring and highly challenging situation for the Gambella community. Throughout the course of the Sudanese civil war, many Sudanese took refuge in neighbouring Gambella – in fact, the Itang camp was at one point reported to be the largest refugee camp in the world. During the 1991 regime change in Ethiopia, the camps were evacuated and refugees returned to Sudan under difficult conditions, while most humanitarian and refugee workers left the area. From 1993 camps started to reopen, followed by a new and increased influx of refugees. This period saw considerable cross-border movement.

In the early 1990s the number of refugees peaked, with the UNHCR and Government of Ethiopia hosting about 550,000 Sudanese refugees, who outnumbered the local community by a ratio of about 3:1. This became a critical challenge for the host society, particularly since the refugees altered the multiethnic composition of Gambella: the majority of arrivals were Nuer, along with a considerable portion of Anuak refugees, along with Dinka and Shiluk, amongst others. Dealing with the refugee situation and its various facets remains the main concern of international engagement in the Gambella region.

In 2006 there were about 70,000 refugees in Gambella. After the signing of the CPA, bringing peace between the warring North and South Sudan, repatriation programmes started. From March 2006 to May 2007, more than 35,000 returned home, and three of the original five refugee camps were closed. Gambella region had hosted three camps (Bonga, Dimma and Fugnido), while two (Sherkole and Yarenja) were located in the Benshangul-Gumuz region to the north. Today, only Fugnido and Sherkole remain operative. In late May 2007, the Gambella refugee camps hosted 32,623 refugees, mainly from Sudan's Blue Nile and Upper Nile states. After Dimma camp was closed, Gambella hosted 21,960 refugees in the Fugnido camp as of August 2008.[6] Due to interethnic rivalries, this camp has been split into an Anuak and a Nuer part, of roughly equal size.

There are at least two critical challenges to the ongoing voluntary repatriation programme: one relates to uncertainty regarding what to ex-

5 See http://www.unhcrrlo.org/BasicFacts/Docs/Gambella.pdf. Accessed 24 September 2009.

6 UNHCR Briefing Note: Refugees in Gambella, Western Ethiopia.

pect, the other to citizenship. Most of the refugees have lived the major parts of their lives in refugee camps, some even their whole lives. Leaving a life as refugees, they are now anxious as to what to expect upon return, and if the CPA of 2005 has brought lasting peace to Sudan. Moreover, having lived in Gambella camps for decades there is a concern over how the situation is in their home community – indeed, if the community even exists. Seeking to assuage these anxieties, the UNHCR has arranged information campaigns, lectures and so-called 'go-and-see' trips in which authoritative figures, notably elders and political leaders of refugee communities, travel to Sudan to observe the areas of reception and verify the peace process. Although perhaps comparatively minor in extent, the issue of citizenship provides a challenge for repatriation as there have been reports that some Ethiopian Nuer have 'enrolled' in the refugee camps by claiming Sudanese citizenship. By claiming refugee status, these persons try to gain access to the services and resources provided in the refugee camps, seen as better than what is available in the local communities. This practice interrelates with the regional conflict formation, as it mainly concerns the Ethiopian Nuer – who are, as we have noted, politically marginalised in Gambella – and not the Anuak. When many remaining refugees are reluctant to return to Sudan, one cause may in some cases be that they never were Sudanese in the first place. How this issue will be dealt with in the process of repatriation and camp closure remains to be seen. Both these challenges show that the camps are seen by refugees and locals alike as relatively peaceful havens that offer better services than do their home communities in Ethiopia or Sudan.

International Involvement in the Gambella Conflict Formation

We have seen that the pattern of conflicts in Gambella is highly complex, spanning ethnic, livelihood, historical, and political dimensions. However, international involvement in this conflict formation has focused largely on one issue – the refugee situation – although some attention has also been given to improving Nuer-Anuak relations and settling intra-Nuer conflicts.

The limited attention currently accorded to Gambella by international actors can be explained by numerous interlinked factors. First is the security situation. The December 2003 massacre in Gambella, in which over 400 people were killed by Ethiopian soldiers and highlander mobs, was sparked by an alleged Anuak ambush of an ARRA vehicle.[7] The ARRA vehicle had licence plates emblazoned with the UN logo, and although ARRA and the UN are by no means formally connected, the ambush led UN staff to fear that armed Anuak were

7 ARRA is the Administration for Refugees and Returnees Affairs, a Government of Ethiopia agency that is the principal counterpart to the UNHCR.

deliberately targeting UN personnel (see HRW 2005: footnote 193). This led the UN to temporarily to pull all its staff out of Gambella, on grounds of security. Almost all foreign government agencies and international NGOs followed suit. Although the 2003 massacre and UN withdrawal gave rise to a brief flurry of international attention to the region's conflicts, this attention soon waned considerably – due not least to the lack of international presence. This relates to the second factor – the lack of reliable information. With most international actors having left the scene, the Ethiopian authorities have gained control over the information flow from Gambella. According to a recent Human Rights Watch report, 'the Ethiopian government is manipulating those security issues to keep information from filtering out of the region for as long as possible' (HRW 2005: 37). As information about conflict and security concerns is being under-communicated and international actors are prone to take such information at face value, international engagement in Gambella remains limited. This is furthermore exacerbated by and interlinked with a third factor – Gambella's remoteness from central-level politics and (thus) international actors' knowledge formation. It is also physically remote, located on the peripheral margin of the Ethiopian state, and difficult to access. Finally, international actors tend to shape their activities more in line with their own mandates and core competencies, rather than adjusting them to the contextual situation. When it comes to recognising the complexity of the Gambella conflict formation, few actors are prepared to respond as comprehensively as the situation requires. Such an acknowledgement also implies the recognition that cross-border activities are crucial, and while Gambella might be in the remote periphery of a state demarcated by porous borders, international actors still recognise and respect these borders. This curtails attempts at addressing the cross-border dimensions of the regional conflict formation.

While all these factors contribute to limiting international engagement in Gambella, there are some actors still operating in the area, although they deal primarily with the post-Sudan civil war refugee situation. Below we present the most prominent actors and their activities, before turning to a brief discussion of the challenges they face and the good practices they represent.

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The UNHCR is the main international actor present in Gambella. It is mandated to protect and support refugees, and assist in their voluntary repatriation, local integration or resettlement to a third country. The UNHCR has had a sub-office in Gambella since the first arrival of refugees in 1969, and has since been responsible for coordinating, monitoring and funding the refugee assistance programme. Today, it spearheads the international engagement in the region, and carries the

main responsibility of guaranteeing for refugee protection and support. The UNHCR has two main projects for Sudanese refugees in Western Ethiopia – care and maintenance assistance for the camps, and repatriation. The main objective of the former is to continue the provision of international protection and material assistance to all refugees. It also work to mitigate environmental degradation in refugee-impacted areas, to promote the well-being of vulnerable groups and to prepare refugees for resettlement as a durable solution. The repatriation project supports the voluntary return of refugees to Sudan.[8] In Gambella, the UNHCR has no direct implementing role vis-à-vis the refugees or the camps, however. It coordinates and monitors programmes executed by and in collaboration with other agencies. The UNHCR serves as a funding agency that supervises the activities of other agencies and ensures that refugees receive the protection, services and support to which they are entitled by international refugee law.

ARRA – Administration for Refugees and Returnee Affairs

ARRA is an Ethiopian government agency and the principal counterpart of the UNHCR. It is responsible for managing the refugee camps and provides legal and physical protection of camp staff, organisation and refugees. It also facilitates primary and junior secondary education and health and nutrition clinics. It manages all logistics involved in the delivery of services, water supplies and sanitation, and the distribution of food and non-food items. ARRA provides for the camps' 'hardware', while the 'software' components are delivered by associated partners, NGOs and others that receive UNHCR funding.

ZoA Refugee Care

ZoA is a Dutch NGO that supports refugees, internally displaced persons, returnees and others affected by conflict or natural disaster. In the Gambella camps, ZoA provides community services, supports the UNHCR's environmental awareness work and introduces environmentally-friendly technologies. It also provides psycho-social service, pre-school activities, trains teachers, and is actively involved in HIV/AIDS awareness-raising.

ZoA has a peace-building and conflict resolution programme, focused on both intra-camp conflict resolution and mitigating the feuds and conflicts between camp refugees and the host community. The latter conflict line concerns livelihood and resource use, as refugees graze their cattle in surrounding areas and thus impinge on what the locals consider their territory.

8 See UNHCR Briefing Note: Refugees in Gambella, Western Ethiopia.

RaDO – Rehabilitation and Development Organisation
This organisation is rather limited in its dedicated scope of working with disabled persons. It provides disability prevention awareness, physical rehabilitation of disabled persons including the provision of auxiliary limbs, and physiotherapy services.

NRDP – Natural Resource Development
This organisation is engaged in rehabilitation of natural resources in affected areas and environment. Its activities include forestation, plantation and managing a nursery site.

DICAC – Development Inter Church Aid Commission
DICAC is responsible for providing higher education and vocational skill training. It is also involved in promoting various income-generating activities among refugees, to improve their livelihood as refugees and as returnees.

These organisations are involved in the daily management and activities of the Fugnido refugee camp in Gambella. Additionally there are a few organisations involved in refugee matters and the wider Gambella conflict formation, although not as an integral part of daily camp management. Most of these belong to the UN family co-located in the Gambella UN compound and work according to their designated mandate. These agencies include the *International Organisation for Migration (IOM),* which works with government and other UN agencies with regard to the repatriation and resettlement of refugees; *UNICEF*, which facilitates schooling systems; the *World Food Programme (WFP),* which works together with the UNHCR in assisting refugees with food; and *OCHA*, which coordinates the relief activities and programmes of various UN and non-UN agencies. Of the non-UN agencies, the *International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)* has been present on a needs basis, with no permanent office in Gambella. It has been involved in delivering relief aid to displaced persons in the region following both natural and man-made crises. In May 2005, the ICRC delivered food and non-food items like agricultural tools to displaced Anuak and Nuer communities, following clashes between them.[9] *Save the Children (UK)* had an office in Gambella, but lack of resources has recently forced it to close.

There are three international NGOs with permanent offices in Gambella that deal with the regional conflict formation:

HEKS
HEKS is the aid organisation of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland. It is not an implementing agency, but serves as a donor to local

9 http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/6chldn?opendocument

and international NGOs in Gambella, and focuses on food and water security and community empowerment. The latter aspect includes a peace component; moreover, it responds and provides relief to humanitarian emergencies. The peace component involves organising and funding interethnic workshops that emphasise dialogue between different groups – often centring around church activities. HEKS used to have an office in Sudan as well, but this was closed in 2005. Until then, however, no cross-border activities or cooperation had been undertaken aimed at addressing the regional dimension of conflict.

Acord – Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development
Acord is an Africa-led international alliance working to promote social justice. In Gambella it has had two programmes, one on food security and livelihood, and the other on peace advocacy. However, the latter has now been terminated due to lack of funding, after being operational from 2004 to 2008. The peace programme sought to address various interclan conflicts and conflicts between local population and highlanders by establishing peace committees and an elders' peace council to facilitate dialogue and cordial relations between groups internal to Gambella. It did not explicitly address refugees or activities on the Sudanese side. Today, Acord's work focuses on food security, livelihood and animal health.

PACT[10]
PACT is an American NGO, active in Ethiopia since 1996 under grants from USAID to strengthen the Ethiopian NGO sector. From its core competency in capacity-building, PACT has gradually expanded its focus to peace and conflict issues. PACT's involvement in Gambella region started in 2004. In fact, PACT began working in Gambella because the organisation already had an active programme in South Sudan with a significant peace-making component, focused *inter alia* on arranging peace conferences between elders and leaders of different ethnic groups or communities. With the conflict-filled situation in Gambella, and the many links to South Sudan, it was actually the SPLM that requested that USAID fund an extension of PACT's peace programme over into the Ethiopian side of the border.

In Gambella, PACT works with both local institutions and government bodies in facilitating participatory approaches to conflict mitigation and peace-building campaigns that use various social events (like sports, concerts, art) to create space for later dialogue on more sensitive issues between conflicting groups. Drawing on this, PACT attempts to address tough political issues concerning interethnic rivalry

10 PACT is the only organization that is actually involved in a trans-border peace program, and consequently more space is dedicated to this NGO.

and the conflicts involving indigenous people, highlanders and representatives of the central state.

PACT has also recognised the cross-border dimensions to the conflicts and sought to develop specific component of its peace programme to deal with the issue. In general, PACT's peace work is organised around clusters. For the cross-border component, four 'corridors' were identified between clusters on both sides, on the basis of the degree of connections (peaceful as well as conflictive) between the clusters. PACT's work has included conflict mapping and analysis, a 'people to people' programme making use of elders, leaders and traditional resolution mechanisms, dialogue between churches and traditional religious leaders and intergovernmental approaches.

Running a cross-border programme is extremely taxing and requires significant resource inputs. While all peace work is long-term and needs patience, doing this in coordination across a border with almost complete lack of infrastructure on either side is supremely challenging. 'If you want to be efficient, don't do it', was the self-deprecating statement of one programme coordinator. Still, some results of the programme were seen. In our view, the ongoing problems and occasional clashes across the border, between different Nuer sub-clans as well as between Sudanese Murle and Ethiopian Nuer and Anuaks, testify to the continuing need for such cross-border programmes.

Conclusions: Challenges for Good International Engagement in Gambella

The presentation above may give the impression of a vast international presence in Gambella. That is not the case. Although there are a number of actors present in Gambella, all have rather limited budgets, scopes and activities. The UN family – notably the UNHCR – constitutes the main international involvement in the region, but their level of activity is gradually being reduced parallel to the increased repatriation of refugees to Sudan. The involvement of other non-UN actors is also declining due to lack of funds. When back-donors de-prioritise Gambella, this may be due to a perceived reduction of conflict in the area as refugees return. This reflects the general sentiment of the various actors in their activities in Gambella: that they are there first and foremost to deal with the refugee situation, including conflict, and, secondly, to address the effects of refugees and trans-border migration – not the causes. However, as this report has sought to demonstrate, the pattern of conflicts in Gambella is highly complex, shaped by endogenous factors, including ethnicity, livelihood patterns, modes of production, resources, politics, as well as exogenous factors like high-

land politics and federalism, the Sudanese civil war and the subsequent influx of refugees.

There are obvious challenges for actors seeking to deal with the Gambella conflict situation. Complex problems demands complex solutions, and no single organisations has a mandate as comprehensive as this set of conflicts requires. The most appropriate would be the agencies of the UN family, but although they operate interlinked – not integrated – their main focus is still on the refugees. The Gambella conflict formation is, as we have seen, much more complex than just limited to the refugee situation.

There are two central challenges in dealing with such conflict formations that limit the actors seeking to deal with them. One concerns mandate, the other concerns border and state sovereignty. Organisations, both UN and non-UN actors, have their separate mandates and core competencies which direct their scope and focus of attention. This scope tends to be just as much determined by organisational history and the policies and organisational culture of their respective headquarters as by the actual needs present in the local context. Within the aid community there is an inevitable antagonism between bottom -up and top -down approaches, where the former relate to concepts like local participation and ownership to enhance context sensitivity and the latter relate to the concept of conditionality and how international actors pursue their own objectives and strategies. Any increase in organisational complexity tends to be paralleled by a decrease in context sensitivity. Moreover, although Gambella conflicts occur in the far periphery of the Ethiopian state and the international border is perceived as highly porous with significant transnational movement of people and goods, and this international dimension is recognised by the organisations, they must nevertheless respect the border. From the 1980s and particularly since the introduction of federalism in the early 1990s, Gambella has become increasingly economically, culturally and administratively integrated with the central Ethiopian state, but the border with Sudan has never been effectively controlled. While cross-border communities, migrants, refugees and pasture-seeking nomads remain an important part of the regional conflict formation, international actors seem to focus on and operate in one state at a time. These remain critical challenges in dealing with the regional conflict formation of Gambella.

There have been, however, some practical attempts at recognising the cross-border dimension that can be said to constitute good lessons of international involvement in regional conflict. Prior to commencing its activities in Ethiopia, PACT was deeply involved in Southern Sudan – including in regions bordering Gambella – with a peace programme.

Its establishment in Gambella was partly due to recognition of the relevance of cross-border movement for conflict formation, and some activities were initiated seeking to deal with the issue. However, the complexity of working in these remote areas with very little infrastructure, and great challenges in terms of communication, transport, contact with authorities, etc., has meant that the results have not been overwhelming. Still, we can see some positive results from this approach. Worthy of mention is the willingness of border authorities and other state representatives on both sides to take part in and support the initiatives, and the positive effect of relatively simple inputs, such as communication equipment that enables telephone contact between the authorities on both sides of the border.[11]

We should also point out the specific resources that PACT could bring to the cross-border project: an ongoing programme on both sides of the border, solid knowledge of the area and its peoples, experience with successful local-level peace interventions in Southern Sudan, the support of the authorities on both sides, financial backing from USAID, etc. In short, they were in a position for implementing a cross-border programme that few other international actors may hope to match. When PACT representatives themselves conclude that the results of these interventions have been limited, that is an indication of the tremendous difficulties facing such work. It leads to sobering conclusions about what can be expected from international actors seeking to deal with complex transnational conflict situations.

The overall lesson of the experiences in Gambella points to the inherent structural challenges to the international society. International actors are not only state-centric by themselves. The need to work through and with the consent of host government, as well as its administrative and bureaucratic structures, reinforces the state-centric approach of international actors to transnational and regional conflict formation. Any organisations working on both sides of a border need to relate to the host governments' structures and strategies, so transborder operations will inevitably add administrative and transaction costs. Although the areas on both the Sudanese and the Ethiopian side are seen as lying on the very margins of two states separated by a porous border that allows for continuous cross-border migrations and relations, this actually adds to the problem: Weak institutions with limited resources, communication equipment, transport facilities and human resources make coordination slow and burdensome.

11 In general, the international actors involved in peace issues within Gambella (mostly NGOs) all reported relatively good relations with state institutions, although with some concerns as to what the implementation of the new NGO Law would mean for activities of this type.

Bibliography

Clapham, Christopher. 2002. Controlling Space in Ethiopia. In *Remapping Ethiopia. Socialism & After*, edited by W. James, D. L. Donham, E. Kurimoto and A. Triulzi. Oxford; Athens, OH; Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: James Curry, Ohio University Press, Addis Ababa University Press.

Feyissa, Dereje. 2002. Contesting autochtony: strategies of land entitlement among the Nuer of the Gambella region. *Draft paper. Presented at conference on The landed and the landless: strategies on territorial integration and dissociation in Africa. Max Planck Institute, May 27–29, 2002.*

———. 2005. Land and the politics of identity. The case of Anywaa-Nuer relations in the Gambella Region. In *Competing jurisdiction. Settling land claims in Africa*, edited by S. Evers, M. Spierenburg and H. Wels. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill Academic Publishers.

———. 2006. The experience of Gambella regional state. In *Ethnic federalism. The Ethiopian experience in comparative perspective*, edited by D. Turton. Oxford: James Currey.

———. 2008. Layers of conflict in the Gambella region. An interactive approach. In *Hot spot Horn of Africa revisited. Approaches to make sense of conflict*, edited by E.-M. Bruchhaus and M. M. Sommer. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Fiseha, Assefa. 2006. Theory versus practice in the implementation of Ethiopia's ethnic federalism. In *Ethnic federalism. The Ethiopian experience in comparative perspective*, edited by D. Turton. Oxford: James Currey.

Hammond, Jenny. 1999. *Fire from the ashes. A chronicle of the revolution in Tigray, Ethiopia, 1975–1991*. Asmara, Eritrea: The Red Sea Press, Inc.

HRW. 2005. Targeting the Anuak. Human rights violations and crimes against humanity in Ethiopia's Gambella Region. March 23, 2005. Available at www.hrw.org/en/node/11812/section/1: Human Rights Watch.

James, Wendy. 2002. No place to hide. Flag waving on the western frontier. In *Remapping Ethiopia: Socialism and after*, edited by W. James, D. Donham, E. Kurimoto and A. Triulzi. Oxford: James Currey.

Johnson, Douglas H. 1996. 'Increasing the Trauma of Return: An Assessment of the UN's Emergency Response to the Evacuation of the Sudanese Refugee Camps in Ethiopia 1991'. In Allen (ed.) *In Search of Cool Ground: War, Flight and Homecoming in Northeast Africa*. Geneva: UNRISD.

Johnson, Douglas H. 2003. *The root causes of Sudan's civil wars*. Oxford: James Currey.

Kurimoto, Eisei. 2005. Multidimensional impact of refugees and settlers in the Gambella Region, Western Ethiopia. In *Displacement risks in Africa*, edited by O. Ituru and G. Yintso. Kyoto: Kyoto University Press.

Lie, Jon Harald Sande. 2004. Discursive development order and local informal practices: a development project in Northern Ethiopia. Cand. Polit., Department of Social Anthropology, University of Oslo, Oslo.

Meckelburg, Alexander. 2006. Changing ethnic relations. A preliminary investigation of Gambella, Southwest Ethiopia. In *Working paper. Available at http://www.anyuakmedia.com/Changing%20Ethnic%20Relations%20in%20Gambella.pdf*. Hamburg: Asien-Afrika Institut der Universität Hamburg.

———. 2008. Some preliminary considerations on collective violence, identity and conflict and their coherence: The case of Gambella, Western Ethiopia. In *Hot spot Horn of Africa revisited. Approaches to make sense of conflict*, edited by E.-M. Bruchhaus and M. M. Sommer. Berlin: LIT Verlag.

Pankhurst, Alula. 1997. When the centre relocates the periphery. Resettlement during the Derg. In *Ethiopia in a broader perspective. Papers of the 13th International Conference of Ethiopian Studies*. Kyoto: University of Kyoto Press.

RRC. 1981. Settlement Policy of the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia. Addis Ababa.

Rubin, Barnett. 2006. Central Asia and Central Africa: transnational wars and ethnic conflicts. *Journal of Human Development* 7:5–22.

Tadesse, Medhane. 2007. Gambella. The impact of local conflict on regional security. Pretoria, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies.

Ulriksen, Ståle. 2009. Webs of war. The international community and the handling of regional conflict formations in West Africa and Central Africa. *FORTHCOMING*.

Viezzoli, Claudio. 1992. Scenarios of economic development in the Beles Valley. In *Resettlement and rural development in Ethiopia : social and economic research, training, and technical assistance in the Beles Valley*, edited by P. Dieci and C. Viezzoli. Milano, Italy: Angeli.

Young, John. 1999. Along Ethiopia's western frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in transition. *Journal of Modern African Studies* 37:312–346.

Case Study II: International Engagement to the Ethiopia–Eritrea Conflict

By Jon Harald Sande Lie
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Introduction

For almost three decades, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigrean People's Liberation Front (TPLF) fought against the Ethiopian military dictatorship known as the Derg (1974–1991). After jointly toppling the Derg regime, the two parties went on to pursue separate goals. The TPLF became the dominant party in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) that assumed, and still maintains, government office in Addis Ababa. In agreement with the EPRDF government, the EPLF prepared Eritrea's secession from Ethiopia. In 1993, Eritrea became independent from Ethiopia in a peaceful process involving a referendum. In 1998, however, a border war erupted between the two states, turning the 'brothers in arms' into 'brothers at war' and marking the start of a protracted conflict with major ramifications for security, regional cooperation and relations among the countries of the Horn of Africa. Resolving – or at least containing – the Eritrean–Ethiopian conflict is seen as crucial in order to prevent '…the dangerous escalation of regional conflicts' – as with regard to Somalia, the Sudan and the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, as well as the Darfur violence which continues to rage and even spill over into Chad.[1]

The Eritrean–Ethiopian war between May 1998 and June 2000 has been characterised as a traditional border war over contested territories. The belligerents focused explicitly on the border issue as their main concern. The international involvement in this conflict perceived the conflict as solely one over a disputed international border, and re-

[1] Lyons, Terrence. 2006. Avoiding conflict in the Horn of Africa. U.S. policy toward Ethiopia and Eritrea. Washington D.C.: Council on Foreign Relations (CFR). The Center for Preventive Action (CPA). Available at www.cfr.org/content/publications/attachments/Ethiopia_EritreaCSR21.pdf

sponded to it as such. However, analysts have pointed out that the war was the inevitable culmination of accumulated factors in the Eritrean–Ethiopian relationship since Eritrean independence – factors like Ethiopia's access to Eritrean harbours, and Eritrea shifting from Ethiopian currency to its own currency and thereby affecting taxation, border trade and import/export relations. Others claim the war was over rival hegemonic claims in the Horn of Africa, national pride and territorial integrity. By 1998, relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia were in a poor state. 'The classic imperatives of state- and nation-building drove both regimes to set forth unconditional goals and refuse compromise on those questions and the vital issue of territoriality, legitimacy and identity'.[2] In fact, Eritrea, as Africa's newest state, has had border disputes with all its neighbours: with Djibouti, Ethiopia and Sudan, as well as with Yemen, across the Red Sea.

In May 1998, war broke out between Eritrea and Ethiopia in and over the disputed and symbolically important border town of Badme. Ethiopian authorities saw Eritrea's territorial annexation of Badme as illegal, and the skirmish soon escalated into outright warfare. After intermittent fighting and a period of stalemate and unproductive negotiations, Ethiopia launched a major offensive in May 2000, breaking through Eritrean defence lines and forcing the army back to pre-May 1998 positions, whereupon Ethiopia withdrew its army to its original position. As many as 100,000 people were killed in the intermittent fighting, and up to one million were driven into exile or internal displacement, diverting hundreds of millions from development activities into arms procurement.

International Engagement to the Eritrea–Ethiopia Conflict

On 18 June 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed a ceasefire agreement. The agreement was brokered and ratified in Algiers, as Algeria at the time chaired the Organisation for African Unity (OAU). This June agreement not only produced a cessation of hostilities, it also paved the way for future international engagement in the conflict: the Algiers agreement called upon the United Nations to establish a peacekeeping mission – UNMEE – to establish and monitor a 25 km buffer zone separating the parties. The Algiers talks continued, with the aim of turning the cessation of hostilities agreement into a more final and comprehensive peace agreement. The United States played a prominent role in these talks, and Anthony Lake was appointed special envoy due to the Clinton administration's close relationship to the Eritrean and Ethiopian leadership. Under the auspices of an internationally brokered agreement, a second and more comprehensive Algiers

2 Ibid.: 6.

agreement was signed in December 2000. To aid the prospects for lasting peace, this second Algiers agreement also established the Eritrea–Ethiopia Claims Commission (EECC) and the Eritrean–Ethiopian Boundary Commission (EEBC) to determine the origin of conflict and demarcate the border, respectively. The two Algiers agreements stipulate the framework for international engagement to the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict. In-between the two Algiers agreements, the UN Security Council authorised UNMEE, before the second Algiers agreement established the EECC and EEBC.

International involvement in the Eritrean–Ethiopian conflict has centred on the United Mission to Eritrea and Ethiopia (UNMEE). Hence, the story of UNMEE – from its inception, via the challenges it encountered in its wider lifespan, until its termination on 31 July 2008 – is basically the story of international engagement in this conflict. This case study analyses UNMEE and why it was terminated, to provide better insights into international engagement in the Ethio–Eritrean conflict. Before proceeding to the UNMEE-story, a brief account is given of other minor and unsuccessful attempts of international involvement.

Some initiatives outside UNMEE and UN bodies evolved as UNMEE found itself facing several challenges that serve to direct attention back to the conflict. The group Friends of UNMEE was established, as an informal group of diplomatic missions in Addis Ababa, Asmara and New York that met regularly to discuss and share information about UNMEE. This group had no role vis-à-vis the mission, however.

As a response to concerns about the lack of progress in implementing the Algiers agreement, the UN Secretary-General in 2004 appointed Lloyd Axworthy as special envoy for Eritrea and Ethiopia. This diplomatic initiative was unsuccessful. It attempted to merge UNMEE and EEBC, as their compartmentalisation (stemming from their separate Algiers agreements) was seen as problematic to the peace process. Eritrea, however, saw this as an attempt to use diplomatic dialogue as a pretext for amending, revising or reversing established agreements – particularly the EEBC decision, which was seen to favour Eritrea, even though both parties had agreed that its ruling was to be final and binding.

The few non-UN attempts to address the conflict have largely come from the USA. After Eritrea imposed restrictions on UNMEE and some troop-contributing countries were advocating that the mission be withdrawn, Washington in 2006 responded with an improvised unilateral initiative to break the impasse. The US ambassador to the UN,

John Bolton, asked the Security Council to delay any action while Washington sent Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Jendayi Frazer and Marine General Carlton Fulford, to the region. While Frazer was welcomed to meet the Ethiopian political leadership and also visited the Ethiopian side of the border region, she was refused meetings with Eritrean leaders, who were unwilling to discuss the border issue which they saw as settled by the EEBC. Moreover, General Fulford, who had been invited by Frazer, was never seen as neutral to the conflict by the Eritreans, as he at the time was director of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, the US Defense Department regional centre located in Addis Ababa.

In early 2006, representatives of the witnesses (OAU, EU, UN, Algeria, and the USA) to the December Algiers agreement convened in New York to discuss challenges in implementing the accord. In March and in May 2006, the EEBC met in London, together with the Algiers witnesses. It was regarded as significant progress that officials from Eritrea and Ethiopia attended both meetings. However, this failed to generate any substantial movement toward implementing the agreement or lifting the restrictions put on UNMEE. The stalemate situation was reproduced as both sides restated their earlier position and showed little inclination to reach an agreement.

After the Algiers agreements, international engagement in the Ethiopian–Eritrean conflict has been scarce. UNMEE and other initiatives taken have centred on implementing the provisions of the Algiers agreements. The main challenge was the compartmentalisation of the two agreements. Today, UNMEE from the first agreement has been terminated, and EEBC and EECC dissolved themselves once they considered their mandate fulfilled. Although these institutions could be said to illustrate good international engagement when they were active, they shared the problem of being disconnected from each other, allowing the parties to selectively truncate the one and support the other. Perhaps the main problem of international engagement after 2000 has been the lack of any initiatives seeking to transcend the limits imposed by the Algiers agreement. The UNMEE-story is as such a telling case.

Establishing UNMEE

UNMEE was established to monitor the cessation of hostilities agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia following their mutual ceasefire agreement. The border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea lasted for about two years, from May 1998 to June 2000. On 18 June 2000, both parties signed an agreement on the cessation of hostilities; this was in

Algiers,[3] which chaired the OAU at the time.[4] In the agreement the parties committed themselves to the immediate cessation of hostilities and to allow a peacekeeping mission to be deployed by the UN. In the parties' request to the UN to assist in implementing the cessation of hostilities agreement, the Security Council in July 2000 established UNMEE.[5] UNMEE was to be deployed in three phases: first a liaison officer to each capital; then, up to one hundred military observers and necessary civilian support staff would be deployed.[6] Finally, a full peacekeeping operation would be deployed, pending authorisation from the Security Council. In September, the Security Council authorised the deployment of up to 4,200 troops including up to 220 military observers.[7] UNMEE was established under Chapter 6 of the UN Charter as an observer mission that would monitor the ceasefire agreement between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the temporary security zone (TSZ) separating the parties.

While the UN dispatched and implemented UNMEE, Eritrea and Ethiopia continued negotiations in Algiers with the aim of a final and comprehensive peace agreement. This agreement, signed 12 December 2000, commits the parties to terminate military hostilities permanently, to refrain from the threat or use of force against each other, and to respect and implement the provisions of the cessation of hostilities agreement.[8] In addition, the December agreement produced two important outputs that would later become highly contentious, and thus affect UNMEE in managing the dialogue between the parties and facilitating UNMEE.

Article 3 states that 'in order to determine the origins of the conflict, an investigation will be carried out on the incidents of 6 May 1998 and on any other incident prior to that date which could have contributed to a misunderstanding between the parties regarding their common border, including the incidents of July and August 1997.' Article 5 states that a neutral Claims Commission shall be established with the mandate '…to decide through binding arbitration all claims for loss, damage or injury by one Government against the other…'. The Eritrea–Ethiopia Claims Commission (EECC) was convened in 2001, consisting of five members – Eritrea appointed two non-Eritreans and Ethiopia appointed two non-Ethiopians, who together agreed upon a

3 Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea, available at http://untreaty.un.org/unts/144078_158780/17/8/8238.pdf. Accessed 15 May 2000.
4 Organisation for African Unity, the predecessor to the African Union.
5 S/RES/1312, adopted by the Security Council on 31 July 2000.
6 Both as a result of S/RES/1312 (2000).
7 S/RES/1320, adopted by the Security Council on 15 September 2000.
8 The Algiers Peace Agreement between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea, signed 12 December 2000, is available at http://unmee.unmissions.org/Default.aspx?tabid=57. Accessed 17 May 2009.

fifth member, who also chaired the commission. With reference to *jus ad bellum* – a set of criteria for determining whether entering into war is justifiable – the EECC ruled that Eritrea had broken international law and triggered the war by invading Ethiopia. It asserted that since there had been no armed attack against Eritrea, its attack on Ethiopia and the settling of border disputes by the use of force could not be considered lawful self-defence under the UN Charter. The Claims Commission ruled Eritrea as the perpetrator to the armed border conflict. In public opinion, Ethiopia became celebrated as the moral victor: after having repelled Eritrean forces back into Eritrea, it arguably withdrew to its original position along the border which it had held before the war broke out. Although Eritrea disputed the EECC decision for a long time, it finally, on 18 August 2009 and over one year after the closure of UNMEE, accepted the verdict 'without any equivocation due to its final and binding nature under the Algiers Agreement'.[9] Although the EECC held Eritrea to be the instigator of the war, this thorny issue was overshadowed by another commission – the EEBC – which became the central issue to the two parties.

According to Article 4 of the December 2000 agreement, 'the parties agree that a neutral Boundary Commission composed of five members shall be established with a mandate to delimit and demarcate the colonial treaty border… The Commission shall not have the power to make decisions *ex aequo et bono.*'[10] On 13 April 2002, the Eritrean–Ethiopian Boundary Commission (EEBC)[11] published its decision regarding delimitation of the border between Eritrea and Ethiopia,[12] under reference to the Algiers agreement that 'the parties agree that the delimitation and demarcation determinations of the Commission shall be final and binding'. Initially, both parties welcomed the EEBC decision. Ethiopia was happy to be granted Zalambessa, but Ethiopia started to refute the EEBC's ruling when it later realised that the EEBC established the city of Badme as Eritrean. On 13 May the Ethiopian government filed a request for interpretation, correction and consultation, challenging EEBC's decision by requesting new consideration before or during the physical demarcation phase. The EEBC, in response to the Ethiopian request, did not find anything to indicate an uncertainty in the decision that needed to be resolved by a reinter-

9 See http://www.shabait.com/staging/publish/article_0010314.html. This statement came the day after the EECC had delivered its final verdict. See EECC press release where it rendered final awards on damages. http://www.pca–cpa.org/upload/files/EECC%20Final%20Awards%20Press%20Release.pdf Both these sites were accessed 8 October 2009.

10 *Ex aequo et bono:* the arbitrator decides on a case on the basis of what is just and fair under the circumstances. The Algiers December agreement explicitly forbids Boundary Commission to decide on the border dispute *ex aequo et bono*, and stipulates that the border be delimited on the basis of relevant colonial treaties (from 1900, 1902, and 1908) and applicable international law.

11 For EEBC, see http://www.pca–cpa.org/showpage.asp?pag_id=1150

12 The final document is available at http://www.un.org/NewLinks/eebcarbitration/EEBC–Decision.pdf.

pretation of the factual matters, 'nor is any case made out for revision', and thus concluded that the Ethiopian request was 'inadmissible and no further action will be taken upon it'.[13] Ethiopia has maintained its claim over the Badme area, the disputed territory where the first fighting occurred in May 1998 and now established as the metonym of the Ethio–Eritrean conflict. As of 2009, Ethiopia has continued to claim this territory, while Eritrea insists that the border issue is no longer negotiable, since the EEBC dissolved itself after providing demarcation by coordinates.

International involvement in the Eritrean–Ethiopian boundary conflict has emanated from the Algiers agreements. While the June 2000 Algiers agreement – often referred to as the first Algiers agreement, or AA1 – produced a ceasefire agreement between the parties, it also requested the UN to establish a peacekeeping mission, hence UNMEE. The second Algiers agreement – or AA2, often referred to as the main and comprehensive peace agreement – permanently terminated military hostilities between the parties, as well as establishing the EECC and the EEBC. Apart from AA2 including language re-committing the parties to respect and implement the provisions of AA1, there is no formal interlinkage between the two agreements. Thus initially and formally, UNMEE was largely decoupled from the comprehensive peace process, from settling the border dispute and from facilitating the EECC and EEBC decisions – all of which were to have significant bearing for UNMEE's role and ability to fulfil its mandate.

Reconfiguring UNMEE

UNMEE was regularly adjusted and reconfigured, usually in response to factors external to itself. This section outlines the formation and reconfiguration of UNMEE. In response to the Secretary-General's report on Ethiopia and Eritrea,[14] which summed up the June Algiers agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Security Council first established and then authorised UNMEE.[15] In accordance with AA1, UNMEE was authorised by the Security Council as follows:

- to monitor the cessation of hostilities;
- to assist, as appropriate, in ensuring the observance of the security commitments agreed by the parties;

13 See EEBC 'Decision Regarding the "request for interpretation, correction and consultation" submitted by the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on 13 May 2002', available at http://www.pca–cpa.org/upload/files/Decision24June2002.pdf

14 S/2000/643 Report of the Secretary–General on Ethiopia and Eritrea, 30 June 2000. Available at http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/508/70/PDF/N0050870.pdf?OpenElement

15 S/RES/1312 and S/RES/1320 respectively.

- to monitor and verify the redeployment of Ethiopian troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998;
- to monitor the positions of Ethiopian forces once redeployed;
- to monitor the positions of Eritrean forces that were to redeploy in order to remain at a distance of 25 kilometres from positions to which Ethiopian forces were to redeploy;
- to monitor the temporary security zone (TSZ) to assist in ensuring compliance with the Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities;
- to chair the Military Coordination Commission (MCC) to be established by UN and AU in agreement with AA1;
- to coordinate and provide technical assistance for humanitarian de-mining action activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it; and
- to coordinate the Mission's activities in the TSZ and areas adjacent to it with humanitarian and human rights activities of the UN and other organisations in those areas.[16]

According to the security commitments of AA1 referred to in the authorisation of the UNMEE mandate:

> Ethiopia shall submit to the peacekeeping mission redeployment plans for its troops from positions taken after 6 February 1999 which were not under Ethiopian administration before 6 May 1998. This redeployment is to take place within two weeks after the deployment of the peacekeeping mission and is to be verified by it. For its part, Eritrea is to maintain its forces at a distance of 25 kilometres (artillery range) from positions to which the Ethiopian forces are to redeploy.[17]

Subsequently, when UNMEE was put before the Security Council for mandate renewal, it 'would take into account whether the parties had made adequate progress in the process of delimitation and demarcation'.[18] In his report, the Secretary-General asserted that the timely deployment of troops had allowed the mission to proceed in a satisfactory manner, although some difficulties pertaining to the parties were noted, especially in establishing the TSZ. Consequently, following the recommendation of the Secretary-General, the Security Council 15 March 2001 renewed UNMEE's mandate, with a call to the parties to 'continue working towards the full and prompt implementation of their Agreements … in particular the rearrangement of forces neces-

16 S/RES/1320 point 2 a-i.
17 S/2000/643. See also Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities Between the Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Government of the State of Eritrea, points 9 and 12.
18 S/2001/202 Report of the Secretary-General on Ethiopia and Eritrea, 7 March 2001. Available at http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/275/36/PDF/N0127536.pdf?OpenElement

sary for the establishment of the Temporary Security Zone'.[19] For the next mission renewal, the Security Council's wording changed, from calls on the parties to 'continue working',[20] to 'cooperate fully and expeditiously with UNMEE in the implementation of its mandate and to abide scrupulously by the letter and spirit of their agreements'.[21] The next time UNMEE renewal was brought before the Security Council, the tone was more optimistic, expressing 'satisfaction and anticipation that a final legal settlement of the border issues is about to be reached' and welcoming 'recent statements by both parties reaffirming that the upcoming border delimitation determination … by the Boundary Commission is final and binding'.[22] The same resolution, however, also called on Eritrea to 'provide UNMEE with full freedom of movement' and disclose the size and position of its militia and police inside the TSZ, and to conclude the status-of-force agreement (SOFA) with the Secretary-General.[23] Although indicating challenges to UNMEE's operational capabilities in the TSZ, the Security Council nevertheless renewed the mandate for a further six months, pending the EEBC decision of 13 April 2002 and the parties' promise to abide by its decision.

When renewing the mission mandate on 14 August 2002, the Security Council adjusted UNMEE's mandate to assist the EEBC 'in the expeditious and orderly implementation of its Delimitation Decision',[24] including de-mining activities in the demarcation areas and administrative and logistical support to EEBC field offices.[25] The Security Council strongly emphasised the importance of implementing the demarcation process as the key to further peace and to normalising relations. While the following Security Council resolution merely extended UNMEE for another six months,[26] the subsequent resolution urged the parties to assume their responsibilities, fulfil their commitments under the Algiers agreements and to cooperate fully with the EEBC.[27]

Although the Security Council in all resolutions stated that it had decided 'to remain actively seized of the matter',[28] UNMEE was regularly reproduced without any significant alterations, apart from at-

19 S/RES/1344 Resolution 1344 Adopted by the Security Council at its 4284th meeting, on 15 March 2001.
20 Ibid.: Article 2.
21 S/RES/1369 Resolution 1369 Adopted by the Security Council at its 4372nd meeting, on 14 September 2001, Article 2.
22 S/RES/1398, Resolution 1398 Adopted by the Security Council at its 4494th meeting, on 15 March 2002, Article 2.
23 Ibid.: Article 10.
24 The adjustments were made in accordance with the Secretary-General's recommendations in his report of 10 July 2002 (S/2002/744).
25 S/RES1430, Resolution 1430 Adopted by the Security Council at its 4600th meeting, on 14 August 2002, Article 1.
26 S/RES/1434.
27 S/RES/1466.
28 This phrase is added as the last article in all resolutions concerning UNMEE.

tempts to link UNMEE closer to the EEBC. This proved difficult because of the independent constitution of the EEBC, and materialised only in establishing mine action activities for UNMEE to assist the EEBC in implementing its decision. From September 2003, however, the Security Council started to include language about following closely the progress made by the parties in subscribing to their commitments under the Algiers agreements, and 'to review any implications for UNMEE'.[29] Although many – largely in retrospect – saw serious implications for UNMEE's operational capabilities, the Security Council over the next two years renewed the mandate four times without making any significant changes to the mandate, apart from repeated calls on the parties to 'cooperate fully and promptly' and 'refrain from any threat of use of force against each other'.[30] The minor changes made included an adjustment of UNMEE's presence and operations,[31] and an increase of ten military observers.[32]

The next time UNMEE was brought before the Security Council – on 23 November 2005, only two months after last time the Security Council had deliberated UNMEE and extended its mandate by another six months – the tone had become harsher. Whereas all previous Security Council resolutions had concerned mission extension and were preceded by a special report, this resolution, S/RES/1640, focused explicitly on the situation in expressing 'its grave concern' that Eritrea since 4 October had restricted all helicopter flights within its airspace and that the restrictions put on UNMEE's freedom of movement have 'serious implications for UNMEE's ability to carry out its mandate…'.[33] While the Security Council declared that it 'deeply deplores Eritrea's continued imposition of restrictions' on UNMEE's freedom of movement, it also expressed 'grave concern' that Ethiopia was not abiding by the final and binding EEBC decision. Although the Security Council had previously stated it would 'review any implications for UNMEE',[34] it still did not alter the mission following these restrictions. Based on the reports of the Secretary-General (SG) dated 3 January and 6 March 2006,[35] in which the former reported 'a serious deterioration of the security and political situation in the UNMEE Mission area' resulting from 'an accumulation of unresolved issues', the Security Council on 14 March extended UNMEE's mandate by a period of one month[36] 'in order to allow for the diplomatic process to

29 S/RES/1507. See Article 7.
30 S/RES/1531; S/RES/1560; S/RES/1586; S/RES/1622.
31 In S/RES/1560 of 14 September 2004, in accordance with the Secretary-General's report S/2004/708.
32 S/RES/1622.
33 S/RES/1640, adopted by the Security Council on 23 November 2005.
34 First included in S/RES/1507 of 12 September 2003.
35 S/2006/1 and S/2006/140, respectively. The former mentions a possible adjustment of UNMEE.
36 S/RES/1661, in which the Council reaffirmed its strong commitment to ensure that the two parties permit UNMEE to perform its duties without restrictions.

proceed and the forthcoming meeting of the EEBC to bear fruit'.[37] In fact that meeting failed to bear more fruit, so the Security Council yet again extended the mandate for a period of one month until 15 May,[38] while noting that the restrictions put on UNMEE had drastically reduced UNMEE operational capacity, which could entail serious implications for the mission's future.[39] On 15 May the mandate was extended for the bare minimum of two weeks until 31 May, pending the outcome of the EEBC meeting on 17 May, on which a possible mission adjustment was contingent. In conjunction with renewing the mandate with four months, the military component was reconfigured, reducing the maximum troop limit to 2300.[40] In late September that year, the mandate was extended by another four months,[41] with provisions to transform or reconfigure the mission further if the parties should fail to demonstrate progress in the border demarcation.[42] In January 2007, the mission is extended by six months, but reduced to a maximum of 1700 military personnel.[43] This resolution, it should be noted, acknowledged the EEBC letter of 27 November 2006, which stated that if the parties had not reached an agreement on the border issues by the end of November 2007, 'the Commission hereby determines that the boundary will automatically stand as demarcated by the boundary points … and that the mandate of the Commission can then be regarded as fulfilled'.[44] This reference and the troop level were maintained in the two subsequent mandate renewals,[45] each of which prolonged the mission by six months, until 31 July 2008.

On 30 July 2008, the Security Council adopted resolution 1827, which terminated UNMEE with effect from 31 July.[46] The decision evolved after long deliberations following the Secretary-General's special re-

37 S/2006/140, paragraph 32.
38 S/RES1670, adopted 13 April 2006.
39 There were some unsuccessful diplomatic initiatives to mitigate the conflict at this stage, for example by Special Envoy Lloyd Axworthy, and a US campaign in 2006 involving General Fulford. The Ethio–Eritrean conflict got wider ramifications. In 2007 Eritrea suspended its membership in IGAD, and later recalled its AU ambassador because of the organisation's perceived failure to condemn Ethiopia's 'gross violations' of the existing peace agreement. See Afrol News: Eritrea Breaks With African Union. http://www.afrol.com/articles/10577
40 S/RES/1681, adopted 31 May 2006.
41 In S/2006/749 the Secretary-General proposed a six–month extension.
42 S/RES/1710, adopted 29 September 2006.
43 S/RES/1741, adopted 30 January 2007. The reconfiguration is in accordance with option 1 as described in paragraph 24 and 25 of the Secretary–General's special report (S/2006/992). Option 2 suggested relocating all personnel outside of TSZ to the south of TSZ, which would entail increased cross–border activity being contingent on full cooperation of the parties. Option 3 involved transforming UNMEE into an observer mission supported by a smaller military protection force, thus reducing personnel from 2300 to 800. Option 4 suggested converting UNMEE into a small liaison mission with office in Addis Ababa and Asmara.
44 Eritrea–Ethiopia Boundary Commission. Statement by the Commission, dated 27 November 2006, paragraph 22. Available at www.pca–cpa.org/upload/files/Statement%20271106.pdf.
45 S/RES/1767, adopted 30 July 2007, and S/RES/1798, adopted 30 January 2008.
46 S/RES/1827.

port on UNMEE, dated 7 April.[47] Recognising the detrimental situation facing UNMEE and its challenges in fulfilling its mandate, the SG outlined four options: a) to maintain and pursue implementing UNMEE as originally intended and envisaged; b) terminate UNMEE; c) recalibrate and reduce UNMEE to a small observer mission in the border area; and d) exchange the mission with liaison offices in Addis Ababa and Asmara to maintain UN readiness and assistance.[48] These options, the SG added, 'are not ideal; they bear considerable risks and would not resolve the serious dilemma created by the restrictions that have prevented the Mission from performing its mandate…'.[49] While the first option was made contingent on the full cooperation of the parties and lifting of all restrictions put on the mission, the second alternative could result in an escalation of tension between parties and a resumption of open hostilities. Establishing an observer mission would require the consent of both parties, and the fourth option could work only if the parties resumed implementing the final and binding EEBC decision. In advising against termination, the SG's report recommended further explorations of the alternatives with the two parties.

On 30 April 2008 a Security Council presidential statement noted that, in light of consultation with the parties, it would decide on the terms of a future UN engagement and on the future of UNMEE.[50] On 14 May the Security Council members met in closed consultation to consider the future of UNMEE, notably the possibility of termination. On 17 June, the Ethiopian Prime Minister wrote in a letter said he was open to a UN presence as long as that did not imply a 'continuation whatsoever of UNMEE under a new arrangement'. The next day, the Eritrean President issued a letter saying his government's sole concern was Ethiopian withdrawal from its territories, adding that the UN could not have legal authority to legitimise occupation.[51] On 29 July the Secretary-General informed the Security Council he had consulted the parties about the three possible options, indicating that both parties had responded that they would not accept any of these. The day after, the Security Council terminated UNMEE with effect as of 31 July, even though this was against the action desired by the Secretary-General and the action expected by Security Council observers.[52]

Why then was UNMEE terminated? The various reports and resolutions indicate structural problems in the UNMEE–Eritrea/Ethiopia interface, but, as shown above, the official mission trajectory does not

47 S/2008/226, 7 April 2008, Special Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia an Eritrea.
48 Ibid.: paragraph 46 a-d.
49 Ibid.: paragraph 47.
50 S/PRST/2008/12.
51 See Security Council Report. 2008. Update Report Ethiopia/ Eritrea, 26 June 2008. No. 8.
52 Ibid.

provide any clear answer to why the Security Council decided to end the mission. The following section searches behind this formal representation and considers various stakeholders' narratives of the processes of curtailing UNMEE. As will become evident, none of these events can provide any clear rationale or answer, but they serve as an important backdrop and context that illustrate the gradually deteriorating situation that UNMEE faced and to which the Security Council eventually responded.

Restricting UNMEE

Interviewees never referred to any one specific incident or gave one clear answer as to why UNMEE was terminated. They held that it was due to a number of events that cumulatively made the situation unbearable for the UN. As UNMEE lacked a political mandate, it was cut off from mitigating and responding to the deteriorating consent. This challenge derives from the Security Council's design and authorisation of mandate, which at mission level serves as a straitjacket for what the operations can and cannot do. It also relates to UNMEE's status vis-à-vis the compartmentalised Algiers agreements, which set border settlement as crucial, without cross-cutting this with other relevant processes and actors. The disconnect between contextual challenges and operational needs and opportunities became more evident as UNMEE found itself faced with a growing number of restrictions that prevented it from delivering according to its mandate. These restrictions evolved gradually, with increasing disregard for the first Algiers agreement and resolution 1312 which established UNMEE with a call for the parties 'to provide the Mission with the access, assistance, support and protection required for the performance of its duties'.[53] The restrictions became stronger, in line with the logic of 'once you pass one hurdle, you naturally increase the height next time', as a UN staff-member phrased it. The gradual undermining of UNMEE started after the EEBC issued its border delineation decision in April 2002. Here it should be noted that while Eritrea was largely responsible for the restrictions imposed on UNMEE, Ethiopia – which for a long time welcomed the mission's presence – had never accepted the EEBC. A comprehensive peace process was contingent on both parties and framework, but the mission design facilitated and related only to AA1. The framework's structural setup to address and solve the conflict allowed both parties to challenge the process. In brief, while Ethiopia was in favour of UNMEE but disdained the EEBC, Eritrea held the opposite view. Further, whereas Eritrea was responsible for the majority of restrictions imposed on UNMEE, Ethiopia never ac-

53 S/RES/1312, paragraph 3.

cepted the EEBC ruling that was deemed central to a sustainable peace process.

The first restriction imposed on UNMEE came in early 2004. In March 2004 Eritrea closed off the mission's main supply route between Asmara and its Sector West headquarters in Barentu. The Eritrean authorities refused to let UNMEE use the rather new, paved Asmara-Keren-Barentu road, on the grounds that there were spies and armed rebels along the road and that the Eritrean host government could not guarantee the safety of the mission's personnel. Eritrea instructed UNMEE to use the old dirt road between the two cities. As a result, travel time increased from three to over ten hours, in effect cutting off transportation and physical communication between Asmara and Barentu. As with other restrictions to come, Eritrean authorities never stated that this was meant to undermine UNMEE, and, as one interviewee stated, the mission itself did not see this as a means to limit its movement and curtail the mission. It was only later, in the context of other restrictions imposed on the mission, that this was deemed a growing and structural problem.

In late 2005, restrictions were put on UNMEE freedom of movement in certain parts of the TSZ and adjacent areas. UNMEE night patrols were prohibited and restrictions were put on the patrolling of main supply routes, whereupon the UN vacated 18 of its 40 posts. The 5 October ban invoked by Eritrean authorities restricting all kinds of helicopter flights by UNMEE within Eritrean airspace was highly detrimental to the mission. This not only severely inhibited the mission's capacity to implement its monitoring mandate, but also affected the security of UN peacekeeping personnel and their operations. Several small mission outposts became inaccessible, forcing the mission to relocate to more central and accessible areas. As a result of the helicopter ban and restrictions put on UNMEE ground patrols inside and outside the TSZ, the mission was able only to monitor only 40 per cent of the TSZ, it was estimated.[54] In a letter to the president of the Security Council, the Secretary-General 'once again calls on the Security Council to exert its maximum influence to avert further deterioration of the situation and to ensure that the restrictions imposed on UNMEE are lifted'.[55] The Security Council responded by merely deploring the restrictions of movement imposed by Eritrea.[56]

54 SC/8944. 30 January 2007. Security Council Extends Ethiopia and Eritrea Mission Until 31 July 2007, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 1741 (2007). Department of Public Information. Available at http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2007/sc8944.doc.htm. Accessed October 8, 2009.

55 S/2005/668. Letter dated 24 October 2005 from the Secretary–General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

56 S/RES/1640, adopted 23 November 2005.

Restrictions also affected humanitarian relief and food delivery. International relief agencies were restricted from working in the mission area. Reportedly 113,000 internally displaced persons staying in the border area in makeshift settlement camps or with host communities lacked sufficient access to food, water, health care services, education, shelter and other basic services. Overall, some 2 million people were facing varying degrees of food shortages, and 1.3 million were estimated to be in need of food assistance.[57] The general food insecurity was exacerbated by lack of water and rainfall, by the fact that the presence of conflict created an environment non-conducive to crop production, and because the Eritrean government had suspended most general food distribution from September 2005. While the latter was explained by reference to the government's need to establish a clearer picture of the actual need, some assert it was due to the government's budget reallocations to accommodate increased military spending.

In early December 2005, Eritrea expelled 180 members of UNMEE. In a letter to the UN mission, dated 6 December, the Eritrean government requested that Canadian, Russian Federation, European and US peacekeepers leave the country within ten days. No reason was provided. UNMEE staff was surprised at this unexpected turn, having no idea as to why they were being ordered out. The expulsion affected staff from 18 of the 44 troop-contributing countries. Although those expelled made up just a small share of the 3,300-strong peacekeeping force, they included important military observers, key logistical personnel and those responsible for the management of air operations between Asmara and Addis Ababa. As such the expulsion had detrimental ramifications throughout the mission, affecting supplies, transport, finance and communication. Eritrea's expulsion of certain nationalities was seen as a major crisis to the mission and to the UN in general at the headquarters level in New York, but again the Security Council failed to react adequately. In condemning the expulsion, the Secretary-General stated that the UN 'cannot accede to Eritrea's request and demands that the government immediately and unequivocally rescind its decision without prejudice'.[58] Although all within the UN system saw the expulsions as unacceptable, the mission continued, only relocating 'in order to save face', as an interviewee stated. With the benefit of hindsight, several interviewees asserted that the expulsion of certain UN troops should have sparked a discussion between the choice of full withdrawal or the insistent and steadfast pursuance of the UNMEE mandate. Instead, however, in temporarily relocating military and civilian staff from Eritrea to Ethiopia 'solely in the interests

57 Cf. S/2006/1; notably paragraphs 39 and 43.
58 SG/SM/10250. Secretary-General Condemns Eritrea's Decision to Expel Peacekeepers. 7 December 2005.

of the safety and security of UNMEE staff',[59] the Security Council opted for an either/or solution that demonstrated its unwillingness or lack of commitment to push for a harder tone – which to many showed that the UNMEE trajectory had become captured between the wishes of the UN Secretariat and the Security Council's lack of commitment and forethought.

The Security Council's subsequent deliberations of UNMEE show indecisiveness on behalf of the mission and its future. The ensuing two mandate renewals prolonged the mandate by one month each, while the third extended it by only two weeks, until the end of May 2006.[60] This indecisiveness on what to do about the mission continued as the Security Council on 31 May started to downsize the mission with the dual rationale of responding to the challenging situation while still trying to keep UNMEE operational for conducting its designated tasks. This gradual downscaling benefited neither UNMEE nor the situation. On 28 November 2006, the EEBC issued its statement, giving Ethiopia and Eritrea one year to reach agreement on the border demarcation. As consensus had not been attained by 30 November 2007, the EEBC then dissolved itself, stating that it considered the boundary between the countries as settled – although marked only by coordinates and not by emplacing pillars in the ground. The Security Council's deliberations over UNMEE would never be as decisive as the firm stance taken by the EEBC.

Although UNMEE faced critical challenges in its operational environment, limited access to fuel was to prove a critical element for the Security Council's deliberation of the mission. Since September 2006, Eritrean authorities had imposed restrictions on fuel delivery, cutting it to only 50 per cent of the mission's monthly requirements. This forced UNMEE to scale down and relocate mission components to Ethiopia.[61] Then, on 1 December 2007, Eritrea decided to cut off fuel supplies completely – devastating for all operational activity within Eritrea. Not only did this further limit the mission's access to already restricted areas, it also undermined the safety and security of UN personnel, as all equipment – from evacuation vehicles to clinics, storages and communication systems – depended on diesel generators.

UNMEE's insistent requests to the Eritrean authorities to import fuel directly or from the UNMIS operation in neighbouring Sudan were either refused or ignored. Indeed, the Eritrean authorities informed UNMEE that the non-delivery of fuel merely was 'a technical matter'

59 See S/PRST/2005/62. Statement by the President of the Security Council, 14 December 2005.
60 See S/RES/1661, S/RES/1670 and S/RES/1678.
61 Cf. S/2008/226, paragraph 33.

that would be resolved shortly.[62] The 'technical' problem was never solved, despite the Secretary-General's warning that 'if the fuel supplies were not resumed immediately, the Mission would be forced to halt its operations and relocate from Eritrea.'[63] Soon after, other UN agencies in Eritrea began facing 'technical matters' regarding fuel delivery. For UNMEE this involved a cross-border movement of 1375 military personnel and their equipment to five designated places in Ethiopia. Although the increasing restrictions emplaced on UNMEE indicate that Eritrea wanted to see the mission off its territory, this withdrawal was not unproblematic. The ground relocation was severely delayed due to lack of cooperation from the Eritrean authorities: numerous vehicles were delayed or prevented from crossing the border by Eritrean soldiers,[64] and some UN staff were refused withdrawal by being threatened at gunpoint.[65]

In addition to obstructing UNMEE withdrawal, Eritrea on 15 February 2008 cut off food supplies to UN troops. The company responsible for catering the mission explained that it was not able to distribute rations as its Eritrean subcontractor had stated it had no vehicles 'to do the business for UNMEE',[66] leaving the relocating contingents with only two days of emergency rations. Apparently, the Eritrean subcontractor feared losing its government license if it continued to serve UN personnel. This problem was resolved after UN's Department of Field Support raised the issue with the Eritrean permanent UN representative.

In preparation to the Security Council's 30 January 2008 deliberations on the mission's mandate and possible extension, the Secretary-General recommended 'a one month technical roll-over of the mandate'.[67] This brief extension was proposed because the restrictions imposed by Eritrea, notably the stoppage of fuel supplies to run the mission, handicapped UNMEE's capacity to fulfil its mandate, and in the meantime the SG wished to review the developments and challenges on the ground to prepare specific future recommendations, including possible withdrawal. The Security Council, however, extended the mandate for a period of six months, until 31 July 2008. Although this discrepancy might be indicative of dissonance between the Security Council and the Secretariat, 'diplomats said the Council felt a short extension would mean submitting to "blackmail" by Eritrea.'[68] And

62 S/2008/145, paragraph 3.
63 S/2008/145, paragraph 5.
64 S/2008/145, paragraph 13.
65 BBC. 'UN Troops 'trapped' in Eritrea'. 16 February 2008. Accessed 8 October 2009. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7248085.stm
66 S/2008/145, paragraph 14.
67 S/200840, paragraph 45.
68 Reuters, 15 February 2008. 'UN says Eritrea cut off food to peacekeepers', available at http://www.globalpolicy.org/component/content/article/184/34015.html

then, on 30 July, the Security Council terminated UNMEE – although this had not been the Secretary-General's preferred option.[69]

The problem thus far and perhaps most important lesson learned is that Security Council allowed UNMEE to be gradually undermined by not providing a firmer response at an earlier stage. Several of my respondents saw the EEBC's one-year deadline for the parties to commit themselves to the process as something to replicate – although others assert that the Security Council would never accept such an ultimatum. Instead, the two parties – Eritrea and Ethiopia – were allowed to undermine UNMEE. Whereas Eritrea was responsible for most of the restrictions that were imposed, Ethiopia opposed the EEBC. It thus appears Eritrea was the only part to challenge the UN as such. This might be so, but only because Eritrea alone managed to curtail UNMEE. When UNMEE relocated to Ethiopia and the UN Secretary-General was contemplating various future options, one suggestion was that UNMEE could continue working from the Ethiopian side. Although Ethiopia had appeared largely cordial to the UN and had welcomed UNMEE, it also stated that if it were to host a new mission, the mandate should include no reference to the EEBC – which undermined a sustainable peace process and UN presence in the conflict.

Perceptions and Interpretations

As to why UNMEE was terminated, the interviewees all made extensive reference to the restrictions imposed. No one could say precisely why the mission was ended – but, together, the respondents provided an elaboration of contextual factors which had eventually made the situation impossible for UNMEE. With hindsight, informants felt that the Security Council had allowed the UN, through UNMEE, to be 'spit on', 'humiliated' and 'kept hostage' by the restrictions and the way Security Council dealt with the situation. Against this backdrop, most informants agreed that it was, in the end, correct of the Security Council to decide to 'to pull the plug on UNMEE' – not least because that sent a signal as to what could and could not be tolerated. In retrospect, however, most informants also hold that the Security Council should have acted earlier 'to prevent UNMEE being trapped in the quagmire'. Who inspired whom is uncertain, but the hybrid AU-UN mission to Darfur (UNAMID) has also experienced challenges and personnel restrictions similar to UNMEE.[70]

69 S/2008/226.

70 The S/RES/1769 (31 July 2007), establishing UNAMID, stated the mission should have 'a predominantly African character and the troops should, as far as possible, be sourced from African countries'. This phrase was arguably included to emphasis that African problems need African solutions, and has later been used by the Sudanese government to limit troop contributions to UNAMID.

From the very outset, UNMEE's structural design became a challenge that affected the mission's trajectory, its operational capacity and mediatory role. UNMEE's architecture was produced by the difficult context, and to some extent it reflected the conflict's underpinnings. UNMEE was a rare example of a classic peacekeeping mission – mandated to prevent interstate dispute, and focused on enforcing a ceasefire agreement and patrolling the buffer zone separating the warring states. Since the end of the Cold War, however, security threats have been commonly seen as emanating from civil wars within states rather than from interstate wars – a point to which the UN has accommodated itself to at the expense of losing institutional expertise in dealing with traditional conflicts like the border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Whereas UN capacity had become attuned to intrastate conflicts, UNMEE had to deal with a highly politicised interstate conflict that necessitated an institutional setup where the consent of both host governments was required. Some respondents asserted that the Security Council did not have its mindset tuned into this type of conflict, and that the Secretariat was not adequately equipped to master the 'type of conflict placed on the list of endangered species', as one interviewee phrased it. This backdrop impinged on the mission design and structure, with later repercussions that would become central challenges to the UNMEE.

First of all, although UNMEE had been welcomed by the parties, it had not been allowed a political mandate. It was set up as a purely technical monitoring mission, and, in the words of one interviewee, 'since the UN was called upon by the parties through the Algiers agreement to establish a peacekeeping mission, we simply took the parties' will to cooperate for granted and so did not make any significant push to include a political role for UNMEE.' Many respondents felt that the parties' hospitability at the very outset of UNMEE confused the design process, leading those involved to expect it would be a straightforward mission,[71] and that what appeared as the parties' cooperation and apparent willingness to solve the dispute would make a political mandate redundant.

Second, UNMEE was detached from what constituted the actual problem – that of solving the border issue. While the first Algiers agreement (of July 2000) involved the cessation of hostilities and established UNMEE, the border issue remained to be solved in the second Algiers agreement (December 2000), which established EEBC. As such, UNMEE was hindered in making any significant contribution

71 Indeed, in the start UNMEE was perhaps 'a holiday, not a mission', as a member of the Danish contingent put it. Cited in Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'UN Peace Operations in Africa Today and Tomorrow', in *International Peacekeeping. The Yearbook of International Peace Operations*, edited by Michael Bothe and Boris Kondoch, 153–80. Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2002.

towards solving the conflict, and instead concentrated on verifying the ceasefire agreement and monitoring the buffer zone. If the ceasefire agreement were breached, and when the TSZ was violated, UNMEE had no means of enforcement at its disposal. To many of the respondents, this 'irrelevance by conception' as one called it, illustrates that UN did not sufficiently take into account the political context. In merely separating the parties, but prevented from fostering political dialogue or addressing the tense border issue, UNMEE eventually became locked in stalemate.

There were, however, attempts to mitigate these structural shortcomings that stemmed from the combination of the lack of clear political analysis of the conflict formation when setting up the mission and the host governments' reluctance to endow UNMEE with a political mediation role. For instance, the Military Coordination Commission (MCC), deriving from the first Algiers agreement and mandated to coordinate and resolve issues relating to implementing UNMEE's mandate, reportedly took on an increasingly political role, although it had been intended only to be technical. The MCC was composed of representatives of the two parties; it was supposed to be chaired by the head of UNMEE, but as the SRSG is a political appointment, the choice fell on the mission's force commander. Reportedly, as the parties were reluctant to meet on a political platform, the MCC became the only forum where the parties met bilaterally. This was a technical forum, but political matters were occasionally discussed. True, this was only on the informal level, but nevertheless vital for maintaining the parties' commitment and avoiding misinterpretations. As the politicians refused dialogue, several informants assert that the MCC gained increased importance as the only venue for facilitating political dialogue and information-sharing, thereby in practice taking on a more political role than originally foreseen. The MCC stopped convening in July 2006, and its absence was sorely felt in the ensuing border incidents and escalating tensions.

The Algiers Agreements specified that the EEBC was to be an independent body. In order to assist in dealing with the border dispute and demarcation, there were attempts – notably through numerous references to the border commission's decision and AA2 in Security Council resolutions pertaining to UNMEE – to attach UNMEE (from AA1) to EEBC and the framework from the second Algiers agreement. UNMEE later included a de-mining component to assist in the EEBC's work, but never came close to formally linking the two instruments and agreements (UNMEE/AA1 and EEBC/ AA2). Repeated attempts by the UN to align these two realms were undermined by both parties: Ethiopia refused to accept the EEBC and its 2002 decision, and Eritrea refused to accept UNMEE – and conversely, Ethiopia

was largely supportive of UNMEE and Eritrea of the EEBC. It is due to the separation of UNMEE and EEBC that informants assert that 'UNMEE was being kept hostage in the situation' and not able to contribute to an amicable or lasting solution.

The interviewees were unanimous in their views on these points, and most agreed that the mission's initial design proved less than optimal as the situation developed. First of all, the UN and the OAU (later AU) should have pressed for integrating the frameworks of both Algiers agreements and thus those of UNMEE and the EEBC. Had these two been interrelated, the Security Council could have made a stronger push to use UNMEE in implementing the EEBC decision. Second, the Security Council should never have authorised a mission without an integral political component – and particularly not in an interstate border conflict with deeply entrenched political ramifications. A more comprehensive political analysis to underpin setting up the mission might have helped; moreover, the Council should have been more willing to discuss the political ramifications. When a ceasefire agreement was brokered, the Security Council was too eager to dispatch a mission without contemplating future scenarios or political consequences. This nevertheless gives rise to the question of who is best suited to step into the political vacuum. Can the UN be political and still be perceived as a neutral, objective party to the conflict? Would the AU, the EU or friends of the respective countries be better suited to deal with the political side of the conflict? Or was a political solution made impossible by the technical and apolitical provisions emanating from the Algiers agreements – UNMEE, EECC, EEBC?

Had UNMEE/ AA1 and EEBC/ AA2 been integrated frameworks, as well as if UNMEE had included a political component, the Security Council might have opted for a firmer response and political line to prevent the parties from selectively subverting the international engagement. It could also have allowed UNMEE to play a stronger mediatory role in the political contentious situation, and in practice 'remain actively seized of the matter' – to use the phrase reiterated in all Security Council UNMEE resolutions.

Because UNMEE lacked the means to be *practically* 'seized of the matter', it became a piece in the conflict game, used by the parties to maintain the status quo and subvert external mediation efforts. As one interviewee described the situation, 'once the parties realised we were just Xeroxing and then understood that statements are just words and resolutions just pieces of paper, UNMEE was *de facto* dead'. The Security Council's numerous calls on the parties, stressing again and again, regretting, confirming, reaffirming, considering, deciding, requesting and even demanding, never materialised in practical action

on the part of UNMEE nor the parties. The mission design largely prevented words from being transformed into deeds, and UNMEE ended up being tossed between the Security Council and the Secretariat.

Several interviewees working in the UN Secretariat have asserted the Security Council was not sufficiently committed to UNMEE. For instance, at one point when the Security Council visited Sudan it was invited to Eritrea and Ethiopia as well, but did not go as the governments signalled reluctance to discuss the border conflict. While Ethiopia was hospitable to the UNMEE presence, Eritrea made repeated calls on the Security Council to shoulder its responsibility in not pressuring Ethiopia to respect the EEBC. At another time, the Security Council went only to Ethiopia, and refrained from visiting Eritrea, as it was not granted access to the desired political players there. Both UNMEE and the Secretariat interpreted this as the Security Council showing lack of commitment and reluctance to involve itself in a difficult political situation. Whereas the Security Council was actively engaged to other missions in the area,[72] UNMEE received little attention and was largely left to the Secretariat. The Security Council had numerous opportunities for deciding upon the mission's fate and future, but never applied sufficient leverage to aid the mission or put pressure to bear on the parties. On several occasions the Security Council failed to follow the recommendations of the Secretariat, as with the final two UNMEE resolutions that went counter to the action proposed by the Secretary-General. My respondents generally agree that the Security Council should have opted for a much firmer line at an earlier stage, particularly when operational capacity deteriorated due to the restrictions imposed on UNMEE. Instead, the mission was gradually dismantled, leaving the Secretariat with a decapitated operation in terms of mandate and size. Some respondents have sought to explain the Security Council's lack of commitment to UNMEE as due to weak situation assessment and conflict analysis – meaning that the Security Council did not have or receive sufficient information to act upon. Others hold that the Security Council failed to absorb the inputs provided by the Secretariat and the mission. Such staff perceptions indicate lack of coherence between the Secretariat and Security Council in dealing with UNMEE. This in turn can be explained by the mission design and the lack of a political component and mandate: these circumstances not only prevented the Security Council from including a political assessment of the situation and gaining access to political players among the parties, but also undermined UN's ability to play a role in the political conflict. Other respondents have asserted that the Security Council was well aware of the situation – Eritrea frequently complained of the 'unfair treatment' it received given even when the

72 As, for example, UNMIS and UNAMID in Sudan, and MONUC in DR Congo.

EEBC granted it the contested Badme area. Precisely because of the political character of the conflict, the Security Council sought to maintain some distance, in order to forestall a major political debate – knowing this might alienate certain of its Permanent Members and thus force it to take a firmer stance on the conflict, in effect jeopardising either the parties' or the Security Council's consent to the mission. In this balancing act, the Security Council seems to have opted to keep the curtailed mission at arm's length and leave it to the Secretariat, instead of pushing through a political debate that would further degrade the mission while also bringing the Security Council's lack of commitment to the fore.

Responding to Deteriorating Consent

The answer to the overarching research question of why UNMEE was terminated remains unclear and complex. No interviewees could provide one single, definitive reason, neither can an unambiguous answer be derived from the presentation above. Instead, it appears that numerous cumulative factors led to a situation that proved untenable for the UN, eventually forcing the Security Council to terminate UNMEE. From this process there are important lessons to be learned regarding the political role of peacekeeping operations and the UN's ability to detect and deal with deteriorating political consent from host governments.

These assumptions imply that there was a withdrawal of consent, which reflects the conventional interpretation of the mission trajectory. Not all interviewees hold this view: one stated, 'the regular approach is that if there is no peace there is no peacekeeping. But as the Brahimi Report suggests, if there is no consent, there is no peacekeeping. Peacekeeping missions are formally dependent on governments' consent and withdrawal of consent means pulling out the mission'. This respondent asserts there was consent by the governments, as warranted by three factors. First, the seminal Algiers agreement devised by the parties prior to UNMEE called upon the UN to establish a mission. Second, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General – the head of mission – was approved by both governments. Third, both governments welcomed the mission and hosted it. At no point did either of the parties state they did not approve the mission, and never did they withdraw consent. As pointed out by several respondents, attempts by the parties to find grounds for their respective cases, which in effect undermined the mission, are not the same as withdrawing consent.

The gradual imposition of restrictions nevertheless had the practical effect of consent withdrawal, although circumventing the either/or di-

chotomy of how the UN relates to consent. An explicit withdrawal by either of the parties would have effectively terminated the operation; moreover, the withdrawing party would lose international respect and diplomatic esteem. Neither of the parties saw this as conducive to their cause. In terms of detecting the gradual deterioration of consent it became clear quite early for UN staff – at least with hindsight – that both parties were undermining the mission and the comprehensive peace process. As one interviewee stated: 'While Eritrea devoted 90 per cent of its attention to the border issue in public, Ethiopia was similarly biased in talking about Eritrea disrespecting UNMEE and spent maximum 10 per cent of its time talking about the border. The parties refused to talk about the same issue and see them as interlinked. Consequently, there was no dialogue supportive to the process after Ethiopia challenged the border commission's ruling.' While this scenario, evolving from mid-2002, was read as a challenging political context, it was not until Eritrea started to impose restrictions on UNMEE's freedom of movement from 2005 that the deteriorating consent and explicit attempts to challenge UNMEE were recognised.

The restrictions were reported in official UN documents but were never presented as 'deterioration'. This might be due to the apolitical UN jargon, or that the deteriorating consent was in fact not detected. Whether read as consent withdrawal or not, the Security Council did not react sufficiently to these warnings. In was only when the number of restrictions had accumulated that the situation was found to be unacceptable. The impact and implications were that UNMEE became increasingly detached from fulfilling its mandate as more and stricter restrictions were imposed.

Should the mission have been terminated earlier? No formal criteria were used to determine the point where the mission could no longer operate. Nor were there any defined thresholds as to what the mission could tolerate in non-cooperation by the parties before ending the mission. The lack of fuel eventually forced UNMEE to withdraw from Eritrea, as that affected the whole operation, staff safety not least. UNMEE itself was, however, not terminated until the proposed options for reconfiguring the mission were declined by the involved actors. With hindsight, however, some respondents assert the Security Council should have opted for a stronger reaction, including mission closure, already in late 2005 when UNMEE's freedom of movement was restricted, as this is regarded as the start of the end of the mission. In fact, however, it would have been difficult for the Security Council to react to these restrictions, as Eritrea justified them on grounds of not being able to guarantee the safety of UN personnel, which the host nation is meant to facilitate.

Instead, most interviewees opine that the Security Council should have 'pulled the plug' when Eritrea became selective as to which nationalities it allowed as part of UNMEE. In late 2005 Eritrea expelled UNMEE 180 staff of European and North American nationalities, all of whom held important positions. It is, however, not the decrease of capacity and skilled labour that have led most to see this as the main and critical turning point – it was more a matter of principle, as Eritrea now dictated the terms for UNMEE. The original mandate had not excluded any nationalities from participating in the mission. When Eritrea later decided to restrict troop contributors, the Security Council allowed UNMEE to become 'a puppet and a hostage to the conflict', as one informant phrased it. This event was a critical turning point, causing wrath and humiliation among UNMEE staff. Although UNMEE entered a minor crisis regarding its future when the Security Council began reviewing its mandate for one month at a time, the Council should have opted for a stronger and firmer tone rather than clinging to the conflict for another three years. One point raised by interviewees is the ensuing lack of trust and respect for UNMEE; another aspect of more general concern relates to the precedent created: other governments could see that it is possible to play with, undermine and direct UN – as later witnessed with regard to UNAMID and the selective drafting of troops.

Official UN documents, like the Secretary-General's special reports and the Security Council resolutions pertaining to UNMEE, illustrate that the UN was aware of the gradual imposition of restrictions. However, it is important to distinguish between the official and formal rhetoric, and the informal practices and effects of these restrictions. The host government kept UNMEE informed of the various restrictions, which always were explained with reference to safety and technical matters. Initially these were perceived as challenges and hurdles to be overcome, through reconfiguring the mission and insisting on dialogue between the involved actors. It was only when the restrictions began to mount up and attempts at dialogue failed that UNMEE started to recognise the restrictions as deliberate attempts to undermine the mission. Eventually, they were read as expressions of deteriorating political consent. However, once the restrictions were interpreted as withdrawal of consent, UNMEE lacked the structure and means for responding and dealing adequately with the situation. The problem for UNMEE in terms of detecting, responding to and mitigating the impact of deteriorating political consent relates to the mission's political role and relevance, which in turn derive from the original institutional setup of the operation.

Coda

The Algiers agreements, their witnesses (OAU, EU, UN, Algeria, and the USA) and the institutions they produced (UNMEE, EEBC, EECC) can be said to demonstrate good and rapid international engagement. The compartmentalisation of the two agreements, however, came to create complications, allowing the situation to deteriorate. When, in 2002, the EEBC ruling was made, UNMEE had no role in implementing or enforcing the decision. This opened the way for the long drawn-out stalemate since then. While Eritrea gradually imposed restrictions on UNMEE and advocated implementing the EEBC decision, Ethiopia refused to talk about the EEBC and the contested border issue, and focused on UNMEE instead. This raised problems for UNMEE – as the only permanent international presence – because it required the consent of both host governments to operate across the border. Although neither country ever formally withdrew their consent, the deteriorating circumstances UNMEE was faced with gradually impeded on the mission and its ability to deliver according to its mandate.

Armed conflict never erupted. Since both parties respected the cessation of hostilities agreement, interest in the underlying conflict faded. The international community paid too little attention to the challenges of implementing the Algiers agreements and its provisions to lay the foundation for a comprehensive peace process. The Algiers agreements never become converted into a political process to establish comprehensive peace: they maintained the political stalemate and protracted the tensions. As the situation unfolded, UNMEE – the only actor continuously engaged in the conflict – proved insufficiently equipped to cope, as it had not been mandated to implement the rulings of EECC or EEBC. UNMEE gradually lost momentum for engaging the parties. A critical factor was that it had never been equipped with a political mandate allowing it to mediate with the parties. The mission acted in accordance with its designated mandate as authorised by the Security Council. As mandates serve as straitjackets at the mission level, it was only the Security Council in New York that would have been in a position to change the ground rules and allow UNMEE to re-engage in the conflict.

Case Study III:
IGAD and Regional Peace and Security

By Axel Borchgrevink
Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI)

Introduction

This paper examines IGAD (the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development) in terms of its role and potential in dealing with conflicts. The focus is on conflicts with a regional or cross-border dimension, and the question asked is the extent to which IGAD is capable of addressing such conflicts. Attention is also paid to the role of donors and other international actors in enabling IGAD's capacity in this respect. The final discussion analyses the factors that promote or impede IGAD's potential for playing a constructive role in promoting regional peace.

IGAD

The forerunner to IGAD, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Desertification (IGADD), was established in 1986. Its mandate was to deal with issues of drought, famine and desertification in the region comprising the countries of the wider Horn of Africa: Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya and Uganda. In line with the resurgence of regionalism in the 1990s, IGADD decided in 1995 to expand its scope of regional integration into the fields of economic integration and cooperation and of peace and security issues. The agreement establishing the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) was adopted by the IGADD countries in 1996, thereby replacing the older organisation. Its highest political authority is the Council of Ministers, composed of the foreign ministers of the member-countries; the secretariat of IGAD is located in Djibouti. The four primary areas of the organisation are food security and environmental protection; infrastructural development; regional conflict prevention, management and resolution; and humanitarian affairs. Within the field of peace and security, the IGAD mandate, spanning preven-

tive diplomacy as well as conflict management and resolution, is quite a wide one.

In fact, IGAD participation in peace diplomacy predates this 1996 'revitalisation' of the organisation. In 1994, IGADD served as mediator in the negotiations between the Government of Sudan and SPLA. Even though a Declaration of Principles was signed in 1995, disagreements broke out over its interpretation, and the talks collapsed. Mediation under IGAD was taken up again in 1997, with Kenya playing the key role. While a slow and tortuous process, it eventually led to the signing of the Machakos Protocol in 2002, of the Naivasha Declaration in 2003, and of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in early 2005. Since 1997, IGAD has also been involved in the series of Somali peace processes. The talks leading to the creation of the Transitional National Government in 2000, the 2002 establishment of the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and the 2009 merger of a faction of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia into the TFG were all backed or hosted by IGAD. In all these peace processes, it should be noted, the role of IGAD has been complemented by the strong involvement of extra-regional actors.

In 2000, IGAD decided to establish an early warning and response mechanism. The Protocol on the Establishment of a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism was approved in 2002, and CEWARN was established in Addis Ababa in 2003. It focuses on pastoral conflicts in selected areas and has built up an advanced system for collecting information on local conflicts. In terms of early response, mechanisms are still in the process of being developed. In 2006, another satellite institution, the ICPAT programme for combating terrorism, was also established in Addis Ababa. The institution aims to build capacity among its member-states, including common efforts at improving border controls and fighting cross-border terrorism and criminality.

While IGAD has always had a reputation as a weak regional organisation, and there are considerable structural factors that hamper its development into an effective organisation, IGAD has nevertheless been significantly strengthened since its revitalisation in 1996. Alongside the developments within the field of peace and security, there have, for instance, been advances in the field of environmental management (like the creation of the Climate Centre in Nairobi); in developing joint or connecting infrastructure; in common livestock management undertakings; and in cooperation on migration. In 2008, IGAD also decided to intensify efforts for increased economic integration, with the objective of developing an IGAD Free Trade Area.

This consolidation process has not been unproblematic. The war between Ethiopia and Eritrea hampered much of the revitalisation effort; arrears in payments of membership fees have halted programmes and deepened donor dependency; and Eritrea's 2007 decision to suspend its participation in IGAD has been both a blow to the organisation and an indication of the tensions and contradictions existing within it. Prospects of the imminent reintegration of Eritrea into IGAD do not seem very high, given the stalemate situations in the Eritrea–Ethiopia and the Eritrea–Djibouti conflicts, as well as the fact that the remaining IGAD countries have requested the UN to introduce sanctions against Eritrea because of its involvement in Somalia.

Observers and representatives of diplomatic missions remain sceptical to the seriousness and feasibility of many of IGAD's expressed ambitions for stronger integration. Yet, they also acknowledge the advances that have been made, the current efforts at further strengthening the organisation, and look positively upon the dynamism of the new IGAD Executive Secretary, Mahboub M. Maalim.

The AU and the progress of its overall integration process have formed an important framework for the development of IGAD. In this process, the sub-regional organisations – or Regional Economic Communities (RECs), as AU terms them – are important building blocks. The AU has grouped its member-states into five regions – North, East, West, Central and South – and has recognised eight RECs, including IGAD, the East African Community (EAC) and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). It has, however, also expressed the intention of reducing the number of RECs.

The partially overlapping memberships of IGAD, EAC and COMESA do pose challenges for IGAD. For Kenya and Uganda, the EAC is undoubtedly the REC that is perceived as most important. Should there arise issues where Kenya and Uganda were forced to choose between EAC and IGAD, there is little doubt that the former would be chosen. It also means that Kenya is not the strong driving force within IGAD that it might otherwise have been. Still, Kenya and Uganda are members of IGAD because they perceive benefits from this membership, and the potential conflicts from the double membership should not be exaggerated.

Regarding peace and security issues, the RECs assumed greater importance after the 2004 launching of the AU Common African Defence and Security Policy (CADSP). In order to carry out its wide mandate, three bodies were created to assist the AU Peace and Security Council: the Council of the Wise, a Continental Early Warning

System (CEWS), and an African Standby Force. The two latter institutions were to build directly on the regional mechanisms, or RECs. For the case of IGAD, CEWARN should be well suited to feed into a CEWS (although there may be compatibility issues related to the pastoralist focus and the specific indicator set of CEWARN that might not necessarily correspond to a system developed for the whole continent). As to the standby force, the policy foresees the creation of an East African Standby Brigade. That proposal (EASBRIG) will not be discussed in this report.

IGAD's Peace and Security Activities

Peace processes

CPA

The hosting of the peace process that led to the signing of the agreement between the Government of Sudan and the SPLA is among IGAD's significant achievements. Clearly, there were also external factors – like the pressure on Sudan due to the US-led war on terror – that were crucial in getting the parties to reach an agreement. Furthermore, there were other important players in the negotiation process – like the Friends of IGAD, chaired by Norway. Nevertheless, IGAD did play an important role, not only because its hosting the negotiations was a condition set by the Government of Sudan, but also because of the active role of the Kenyan leadership in keeping the negotiations going. To facilitate the agreements, a secretariat was established in Kenya. On the other hand, tensions have been reported between the IGAD secretariat in Djibouti and its satellite in Kenya, indicating that perhaps not all of IGAD felt equally involved in the negotiation process.

The resultant agreement was comprehensive in scope, and its provisions on power- and wealth-sharing are generally acknowledged as being both far-reaching and sound. Even if implementation of the agreement has been plagued by delays and difficulties, the CPA has led to a stop in the war and still serves as the map for the process towards elections and the referendum on independence for the South in 2011. These are no small achievements. While the limitation of the agreement to only two parties – the Government of Sudan and the SPLA – has been criticised, it remains an open question whether any agreement among a broader set of parties could ever have been reached, or if so, if it could have held up to now, nearly five years after the signing of the CPA.

After the CPA had been signed, implementation was up to the two parties. In view of the subsequent delays in implementation, it has been indicated that a stronger role for IGAD in overseeing the process ought to have been written into the agreement. As it is, IGAD has remained largely on the sidelines, even though there is now an IGAD envoy to the peace process in Khartoum.

Somalia

In IGAD's engagement in the Somali peace efforts, key roles have been played by the neighbouring states of Ethiopia, Djibouti and Kenya. In 1997, IGAD in cooperation with the OAU, mandated Ethiopia to be the facilitator of the process, and several peace conferences were organised – without notable results. A Djibouti peace proposal, backed by IGAD, led to the creation of the power-sharing Transitional National Government (TNG) in 2000. The Kenya-led Eldoret Conference organised in 2002, meant to deepen the base of the TNG, eventually resulted in the creation of a new Transitional Federal Government (TFG) in 2004, which has remained the internationally recognised authority since. Djibouti hosted the process that led to the integration of one faction of the Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia into the TFG in early 2009.

Other actors have been involved in these processes, and the degree to which IGAD and its delegated member-states have served as the true driving forces behind these negotiations has varied. In the processes leading to the TNG and the TFG, IGAD seems to have played a significant role. On the other hand, the negotiations with the ARS appear to have been driven largely by external actors, even if they took place in Djibouti.

Hampering IGAD in its mediating efforts have been perceptions among some Somali actors that the organisation has not been an impartial and honest broker. According Ethiopia, with its active interference in Somali affairs, the initial role as facilitator obviously gave rise to such concerns. Also at later stages, as when Abdullahi Yusuf was elected the first president of the TFG, there were rumours and complaints that Ethiopia had managed to influence (even bribe) the process to ensure the election of 'their' man. While there may be no truth in this claim,[1] its very existence as a rumour is damaging to the peace process, and is directly linked to the potential of IGAD as a regional broker in the peace process. The AU decision that no frontline states should contribute troops to the AMISOM force reflects similar concerns, and this may also be one reason for why IGAD has no coordinating role in the deployment of the peacekeeping force.

1 Sally Healy: 'Lost Opportunities in the Horn of Africa'. London: Chatham House, 2008.

General points

From the perspective of IGAD as a permanent organisation with its secretariat in Djibouti, the engagement in peace processes shows a certain *ad hoc* character. There has been no systematisation of IGAD involvement. Further, there are many conflicts and peace processes of the region where IGAD has not sought any major role (Ethiopia–Eritrea, Northern Uganda, Darfur); where there is involvement, new structures and venues are built up with only limited participation of the permanent IGAD secretariat; and the roles assumed in the processes vary between peace processes and phases. While this indicates flexibility to adapt procedures to the task at hand, it also gives the impression that these engagements are sidelines to the normal IGAD operations, more often dominated by individual countries than by IGAD as such.

It should further be noted that the processes have been heavily depended on external resources, and that extra-regional countries and partner groups have been closely involved, playing key roles in the actual negotiations. Both these points indicate that IGAD cannot really be counted as having a consolidated and proven capacity for peace mediation.

CEWARN

The Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) of IGAD were established in 2003, with its secretariat in Addis Ababa. Its mandate is to 'receive and share information concerning potentially violent conflicts as well as their outbreak and escalation in the IGAD region', based on the recognition that timely interventions are more effective and less costly than waiting for potential conflicts to develop into full-scale crises. Developing regional early warning systems to feed into a continental system (CEWS) is also part of the AU security architecture. The model is a decentralised and bottom-up one, where the CEWARN secretariat is matched by parallel institutions in the member-countries – Conflict Early Warning Early Response Units (CEWERUs), which again work with lower level institutions down to the district level. In each country, a national research institute is also involved, overseeing the information collection and as employers of the local level field monitors. CEWERU steering committees at various levels include civil society as well as government representation.

While the mandate of CEWARN is wider, a strategic decision was made to focus initially on pastoralist conflicts. According to one informant, other forms of conflict, including territorial conflict, were seen as too sensitive to address initially, whereas a focus on pastoral conflicts was considered to be of interest to all the IGAD states. Still,

this is seen as a first stepping-stone, and there is the explicit intention of eventually expanding the scope[2]. Since the Horn of Africa is the region in the world with the largest pastoralist population, and these groups dominate in the peripheral borderlands of the region, there may be good grounds for CEWARN's focus on cross-border pastoralist conflicts. The bottom-up type character of CEWARN's information collection system is also well suited to this type of conflict.

CEWARN covers selected areas, or clusters. The first one, the Karamoja cluster – covering Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Sudan – started up in 2003 (although within Sudan it did not become operational until 2009). Subsequently, in 2005, CEWARN opened a Somali cluster, spanning the borderlands of Kenya, Ethiopia and Somalia (although as yet it has not been possible to start working within Somalia). In 2009, a third cluster was opened, spanning Djibouti and Ethiopia: this is the Afar-Issa cluster (thus far apparently operational solely in Djibouti's Dikhil region). Thus, while the clusters still cover only a limited part of the immense border areas of the Horn of Africa, there has been a steady growth in the scope of the programme, and in the inclusion of further member-states. However, the two members that still do not take part in the mechanism – Eritrea and Somalia – seem unlikely to do so in the short term. In the case of Somalia, this is due to a lack of a functioning state apparatus, especially in its Southern regions, which the Somali cluster is intended to cover. In the Eritrean case, prospects of the country returning to IGAD in the near future do not seem good, thus blocking any possibility of participation in the CEWARN programme.

CEWARN has an indicator-based early warning system, at the core of which is a set of 52 indicators especially developed for IGAD by local and regional experts on early warning and on pastoral conflicts. The indicator set includes a wide range of factors: such as communal relations, civil society activity, economic activities, governance and media dimensions, environmental, climatic and resource-related factors, safety and security issues and social services. Reports on these indicators and variables are submitted by field monitors, entered into a sophisticated database, and used for analysis and for generating regular reports on developments within the various clusters. As the information is generally not made available to the public, we cannot testify directly to the quality of the system. It is, however, reported to be a world-class early warning system.

One impact of the programme is that it has served to document and raise awareness of the importance of the issue of pastoral conflicts.

2 The CEWARN 2007–2011 strategy contemplates an evaluation within the period to assess the feasibility of expanding the scope.

During the first three years of operation, the early warning system reported more than 1,500 violent incidents, resulting in the loss of almost 2,200 lives, as well as the loss of around 138,000 animals. Throughout most of this period, it should be noted, CEWARN covered only the Kenyan, Ugandan and Ethiopian sides of the Karamoja cluster. Thus, total figures on pastoralist conflicts in the regions must be considerably higher. Many of the incidents reported had cross-border dimensions – among them, the Turbi massacre in July 2005, in which 70 people, 25 of them children, were killed by Kenyan and Ethiopian armed parties.

CEWARN representatives readily admit that while the organisation has established an advanced early warning system, it has been weaker in terms of developing early response capacities. CEWARN's 2007–2011 strategy identifies this as a key challenge, and since its adoption, some advances have been made. In line with the bottom-up character of the early warning system, CEWARN also seeks to facilitate rapid response through empowering local-level actions without necessarily waiting for higher authorisation. Of particular interest for the present study is the proposal for cross-border CEWERUs, or regular meetings between the local peace committees from both sides of the border. Although this may so far not have been instituted as a regular and permanent institution, several dialogue meetings of this kind have been arranged in response to specific incidents, or threats of incidents. CEWARN has reported various recent cases where these measures have succeeded in redressing grievances or averting the outbreak of violence. To facilitate early response, CEWARN has recently established a Rapid Response Fund. The main objectives of the fund are to finance direct measures to prevent, limit or resolve conflicts, and to build the capacity of the peace committees at various levels. To ensure flexibility and avoid bureaucratic delays, funds are directly handled by the national CEWERUs, and decisions on the funding of smaller activities or projects may be taken at the local level. CEWARN has also been involved in IGAD's livestock activities, in particular the proposal for establishing a regional livestock system for branding, identification and tracking.

USAID and GTZ have been the main funders of CEWARN. For the Rapid Response Fund, a multi-donor basket fund has been set up, with contributions from Austria, Denmark, the German GTZ, Italy, Sweden and the UK. For the establishment of the Somali cluster, the activities and networks established by PACT's PEACE II programme in the area appear to have been an important support base.

In conclusion, CEWARN has developed an impressive early warning system for monitoring pastoral conflicts. An early independent review

(Adelman, Howard 2004, quoted in CEWARN's 2007–2011 Strategy) characterised it as 'cutting edge' and as showing 'greater strength than virtually any other early warning system existent with respect to data collection'. Since that time, CEWARN has managed both to extend its geographical coverage and to expand into the field of early response. Thus, the mechanism appears to be on an upward trend of continuing to consolidate and strengthen itself. Still, there may be structural limits to how far it may develop:

- Firstly, while pastoral conflicts are important in the region, they are only one among the many types and dimensions present in the Horn. Given the sensitivity of other conflict forms to the governments that form IGAD and own CEWARN, it is not certain that the mechanism will be able to expand its scope of activity beyond localised conflicts of the kind exemplified by pastoralist conflicts.
- Secondly, while the existing clusters cover important conflict areas, there are other areas – for instance covering the borders between Eritrea/Djibouti, Eritrea/Ethiopia and Ethiopia/Somalia – that may be too sensitive for the states involved to allow even the monitoring of pastoral conflicts.
- Thirdly, while it has been possible to develop a decentralised monitoring mechanism, it may prove far more difficult to apply the same principles to an early response mechanism, as not all of the regimes in question are known for practices of empowering the populations of their peripheries.

In sum, CEWARN may face major difficulties in expanding its role to a) other conflict types, b) cover all border areas, or c) maintain its bottom-up principles when moving into early response.

ICPAT

The IGAD Capacity Building Programme against Terrorism (ICPAT) was launched in 2006, as a follow-up to a decision of the Heads of State of IGAD Member States meeting in 2002. The aims are to build national capacities for combating terrorism and to promote regional security cooperation. ICPAT is located in Addis Ababa, and the programme is supported by the Ethiopia office of the Institute of Security Studies (ISS). There are five main areas of activities:

a) *Enhancing legal capacity:* to support the member-states in developing their legal frameworks for combating terrorism, and in ratifying relevant international conventions.
b) *Optimising interdepartmental cooperation:* to promote cooperation and information-sharing among the various departments and

institutions involved in counter-terrorism measures within each country.

c) *Enhancing border control:* to assess and promote ways of improving border controls and cooperation and harmonisation among IGAD member-countries.
d) *Training, information sharing and best practices:* to provide training for the key security and anti-terrorism institutions of the member-countries.
e) *Promoting strategic cooperation:* to facilitate coordination with international bodies and avoid duplication of efforts within the overall field of counter-terrorism.

ICPAT's role is to serve as an institution for training and building the capacity of the IGAD member-states. It does not seek to build itself up as an additional and supranational intelligence-gathering body.

In various interviews, respondents characterised ICPAT as largely donor-driven, with an objective that might correspond more to donor interests than to those of the IGAD countries. Dissatisfaction with the name was also expressed. On the other hand, it also seems clear that IGAD has embraced the opportunity that ICPAT represents for strengthening the security apparatus of the member-countries. Moreover, ICPAT is based on a wide definition of counter-terrorism, which in practice allows it to deal with most types of cross-border criminality. Within the new IGAD Peace and Security Strategy that is being developed, it has been proposed to follow this up by revamping ICPAT into a wider security sector programme which, in addition to working against all forms of terrorism (still understood in a wide sense), will also be dedicated to capacity-building to fight piracy, combat organised crime, and promote security-sector reform within the member-countries.

ICPAT has received financial support from Canada, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain and Sweden, as well as technical support to activities from the UK. Among its activities, IGAD has also sought to map the overall support received by its individual member-states for the security sector. While this has not been a simple task, the results so far seem to indicate that actual support received has been far less than what is commonly perceived to be the case. With the exception of US support, what takes place is focused more on intelligence-sharing than actual capacity-building. The mapping also reveals a discrepancy between Northern perceptions of needs and the countries' own views: While donors give priority to 'soft' support in terms of training and seminars, the IGAD countries place hardware highest on the list. It was also mentioned that the country with the greatest need for building counter-terrorism capacity – Somalia – receives the least.

Again, we have had no direct means of assessing the quality of ICPAT's work, apart from the fact that several donor representatives spoke of the programme in positive terms.

To some extent, ICPAT can be seen in contrast to CEWARN, as a more top-down mechanism, working on strengthening the main security institutions of the states. Its focus on borders is also much more on establishing effective control over the borderlines themselves. However, these are not absolute contrasts. To address the issues of the long and unsupervised border stretches of the region, ICPAT is also investigating possibilities for community border policing. The approach can therefore not be characterised as uniformly top-down. It is not easy to assess the extent to which the different strategies of CEWARN and ICPAT complement each other, or whether there are also contradictions. However, it does seem evident is that there is an unfulfilled potential for coordination between these two IGAD efforts.

Moreover, the general work of the IGAD secretariat on issues of migration (see below) ought also to be linked to ICPAT's efforts at strengthening border control. The fact that the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is involved as a partner in both processes would seem to be of potential assistance for this. In practice, however, there has been little cooperation. In the IGAD secretariat, it was expressed that ICPAT dealt more with border issues from a security perspective, as if this were something totally de-linked from the secretariat's work in formalising cross-border migration within the region.

IGAD's new Peace and Security Strategy

IGAD is currently in the process of developing a new Peace and Security Strategy. This is a comprehensive process that started with inputs from commissioned experts, and was integrated into a proposed strategy that has been undergoing successive rounds of discussion and revision. While it was hoped that the strategy would be approved in 2009, that now appears highly uncertain. Since the strategy is still being debated, it is of course premature to state with any certainty what will be its contents. Nevertheless, the information we have received gives some indications as to the overall orientation of the strategy. As far as we have understood, the following two points are likely to be included in the strategy:

1. Pre-studies for the strategy have documented the very limited and rudimentary interconnections existing among the IGAD countries, and the significant potential for expanding cooperation and integration in areas like trade, joint infrastructure and collaborative management of transborder resources (e.g. water,

energy, ports, telecommunications). The limited interconnections are pointed out as one reason why the region has not managed to reduce the level of conflicts. Using IGAD as a platform for strategically developing cooperation in the areas signalled forms the basis of and fundamental orientation of the strategy. It thus lifts the peace and security focus into a broader programme for regional integration.

2. Within the more specific and traditional security focus, the strategy likewise aims at revamping ICPAT into a broader security sector programme. In addition to its focus on anti-terror measures, the new programme would also work on anti-piracy activities, fighting organised crime, and aiding its member-countries in general security sector reform. As before, the focus will be on capacity-building among member-countries, rather than seeking to build up a regional operational institution.

If the new strategy does indeed follow these lines, that will mean that IGAD broadens its peace and security work, from specific interventions to a more comprehensive attempt at addressing some of the underlying causes of the pervasive conflicts in the region.

Other IGAD programmes of relevance

Gender and conflict

IGAD has its own gender desk, which focuses primarily on issues of gender and conflict. The most important programmes carried out have been the training of women in peace processes in Sudan 2004–2006 and in Somalia. The desk has also given gender mainstreaming trainings with CEWARN with country-level CEWERU structures. However, since the position remained unfilled for 18 months, up to March 2009, programmes and funding have been interrupted and momentum not yet regained. An IGAD Women Parliamentarians Conference will be held in late 2009 with funding from Denmark.

While the current level of activity is not overwhelming, the existence of the desk and the willingness of the Gender Affairs coordinator to engage in the field do imply opportunities for donors interested in promoting activities within the field of gender and conflict.

Migration

Within its social affairs section, IGAD works to implement the overall AU policies with respect to migration. In cooperation with IOM and the individual IGAD countries, the secretariat has worked develop a common framework and a protocol for free movement for promoting economic integration. Human trafficking, forced migration (including

refugees as well as IDPs) and border issues are among the issues that have been in focus. However, the process is currently stalled, due to a funding gap.

As mentioned above, this activity has been carried out without any coordination with ICPAT, apparently without any awareness that such coordination might be useful.

Health
IGAD's health programme focuses on health in border areas and on cross-border and mobile populations. Aims include the development of joint research, common strategies for these areas, a regional health information system, optimising health services in these areas, coordinating international services such as vaccination campaigns, and promoting peace-building health activities ('health as a bridge to peace'). Under these headings, IGAD is implementing a major programme funded by the World Bank's Africa Catalytic Growth Fund, targeting HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria and reproductive health. The programme is being carried out in cooperation with the ministries of health in the respective countries.

Economic and infrastructural integration
There have been various activities under these headings. Recently, in connection with the 2008 IGAD decision to intensify efforts for economic integration and develop a 'minimum integration plan' aimed at establishing an IGAD Free Trade Area, such efforts have gained new momentum. (The position with responsibility for economic integration within the IGAD secretariat had remained vacant for two and a half years – indicating that, until the 2008 decision to revitalise economic integration, this had not been a priority area.) Beyond the many forms of cooperation, harmonisation and integration implied in the FTA ambition, there have also been several other efforts aimed at developing closer contacts among the IGAD countries: joint infrastructural programmes (in transport and energy) where IGAD has assumed a key role as broker vis-à-vis donors; efforts at promoting private-sector contacts and cooperation among member-states; attempts at stimulating joint promotion of regional tourism; and work to harmonise and liberalise ICT regulations.

The point here is not to indicate that IGAD has come very far along these dimensions, but that, to the extent that such efforts are successful, they may generate interdependencies among the countries involved. Creating and deepening such interdependencies are proposed to be the key elements of the new Peace and Security strategy. Thus, these efforts are relevant for the field of Peace and Security, even if

economic integration in IGAD can at best be characterised as emergent.

Other initiatives
Also other IGAD initiatives may serve to further promote integration and defuse potential conflicts. These include programmes and proposals for environmental cooperation (for instance, on managing transborder water resources) and the IGAD Livestock Initiative, which aims at developing improved knowledge-based policies for pro-poor livestock policies for the region. Because of time constraints, however, we have not been able to gauge what advances have been made in these fields.

The role of donors

This section does not seek to give any overview of all donors and their roles. The aim is much more modest: To highlight a few central points about the relations between IGAD and its donors.

IGAD is extremely dependent on donor funding. While the IGAD countries (or some of them) have recently been showing greater commitment to paying their IGAD contributions, these payments still account for only a small portion of the overall budgets.

The largest donor by far is the European Commission, and continued increases are foreseen in the scope of its cooperation with IGAD. Its support for IGAD is framed within its Horn of Africa Initiative, launched by Commissioner Louis Michel in 2006. Observers have pointed out that the EC as a donor has been generally known for taking a regional perspective, and this is very much the foundation of the Horn of Africa Initiative. It seeks to address instability in the region by working together with IGAD in three main areas: peace, security and governance; pastoralism and food security; and institutional development. The strategy also contemplates support for AU capacity in conflict prevention, mediation and peacekeeping; regional economic integration in coordination with EAC and COMESA; and supporting African efforts to monitor and improve governance. The initiative is important for funding IGAD's Peace and Security initiatives as well as for regional economic integration and the development of joint infrastructural projects.

An important venue for interaction between donors and IGAD has been the International Partners Forum (IPF). However, it has now lost some of its value, as meetings at the political level are no longer arranged, although there are still meetings at technical and ambassadorial levels. Several observers attributed this state of affairs to Italy's

refusal to cede its chairmanship of the Forum, a post originally intended to be rotated among countries.

Several IGAD representatives noted that donors had clear preferences as to the kind of IGAD activities they wished to support. They claimed that it was much easier to get funding for security-oriented programmes such as CEWARN and ICPAT. (Environmental and food security issues were also mentioned as corresponding to donor perceptions of suitable IGAD activities, and were consequently more likely to be funded.) Conversely, it was seen as more difficult to get funding for programmes for social protection, health, and economic integration. Indirectly, this contributed to a donor-steered shaping of IGAD's profile, respondents claimed.

Conclusion: IGAD potentials and limitations

Several characteristics of the IGAD region have contributed to the difficulties of establishing a well-functioning regional security system.

Despite the significant variations among them, all IGAD members must be counted as *weak states*. Weakness may be measured among various dimensions, but in the present connection a key issue is the fact that armed insurgencies and/or violent political oppositional activities are found in all countries (with the partial exception of Djibouti today, although it is not so long since also this country experienced armed insurgency). These states are all unable to maintain a central monopoly of violence, and are thus 'failing states' to a certain extent (at least according to some definitions of the term).

Another – and related – dimension is the failure of IGAD's members to fully integrate all groups into the nation and the state. Large groups of the population remain marginalised and alienated. Depending on the country, such exclusion may be perceived as due to matters of ethnicity, religion, clan, race, geography or pastoralist/sedentary oppositions – but the underlying issue in all cases is the fact that the state and the benefits it is able to bring have been captured or dominated by certain groups or elites. In particular, it is the groups living in the peripheral borderlands that have been excluded in this way.

The *borders* of the region form an issue in their own right. They are long, generally not demarcated, sometimes contested, and the states' capacity to monitor and control flows across them are extremely limited. (For example, the 860 km border between Ethiopia and Kenya reportedly has only one border post.) Furthermore, these areas are largely inhabited by ethnic groups which are divided by the borders, are nomadic and have traditionally moved back and forth across the

borders (and continue to do so), and are not strongly integrated into the states or concerned with issues of citizenship.

A corollary to the types of state weaknesses described above is the proliferation of armed non-state actors that are a key feature of the *complex regional conflict pattern*. These may be insurgencies fighting their state, but they may just as likely be in conflict with other local groups (or both). Local resource-based violent conflicts are a pervasive feature throughout much of Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and are far from unknown in the other IGAD countries. And while these may often appear to be simply local conflicts between small groups, closer examination of the conflict dynamics will usually reveal that the state and its policies have played an important part in the trajectory leading to the outbreak of conflict. Furthermore, the non-state actors engage in complex patterns of alliances and oppositions with states of the region – the 'home' state as well as the neighbouring one(s). Proxy wars and support to insurgents fighting against the neighbouring regime has been a staple of the region, practised by the most of these states. The result is that conflicts become entangled into complex regional conflict patterns with a large set of actors and often surprising and shifting alliances, with the IGAD states often as parties and on opposing sides.

This means that in many cases of conflict, the IGAD countries may have *opposing interests*. Such conflicting interests may arise out of the actual alliances that states have established with non-state actors of the region, but they may also stem from the states' different ideological foundations and principles for integrating groups and creating a nation. Somalia's ethnic-based nationalism; the Eritrean emphasis on national unity based on colonial history and anti-colonial struggle, to the exclusion of all forms of ethnic or religious mobilisation; Sudanese attempts at making Islam the foundation of the state; and Ethiopia's ethnic federalism – are all highly contrasting ways of building the nation and integrating the different population groups that make up the state. Such fundamental differences easily lead to different views of particular conflicts, with correspondingly different views on how they should be settled.

The contradictory principles upon which these states are founded may also entail obstacles to IGAD's attempts to promote economic integration, facilitate migration and population movement, or harmonise legislation within the regional organisation. Obviously, the war between Eritrea and Ethiopia, with the current suspended status of Eritrea's IGAD membership, can stand as the extreme example of opposing interests among IGAD member-states, with a potential for disrupting the integrative functions of this regional organisation.

As documented in the preparatory work to the IGAD Peace and Security strategy, *interdependencies* among the IGAD countries are weak, although there may exist considerable potentials for developing them. Given these difficulties of weak states with sometimes opposing interests in the complex regional web of regional conflicts, it might perhaps be concluded that the Eritrean exit strategy could seem an attractive strategy also for other countries. In fact, however, with the emphasis on regionalism and integration within AU and beyond, this does not seem likely. Rather, the complexities may mean that integration is challenging, that the pace must necessarily be slow, and that there are limits to how far we should expect it to be developed.

In the specific field of greater regional security, there are likewise limits to what should be expected of IGAD. While the organisation can count the CPA as a significant achievement in the difficult field of *peace mediation*, it does not seem likely that IGAD will be able to repeat this success in many other conflicts. Given the entanglement of its member-states in the conflicts of neighbouring countries, IGAD will generally be unsuited to act as broker. As seen in the case of Somalia, peace deals become tainted due to suspicions of undue influence – in this instance, by Ethiopia, which was perceived as seeking primarily to protect its own security interests. As a reflection of this difficulty in sustaining a neutral position acceptable to all parties, the failure of IGAD to assume any leading role with respect to the conflicts in Northern Uganda, Darfur or the Ethio–Eritrean war is notable indeed.

CEWARN is a success story as far as it goes – dealing with pastoralist conflicts in defined areas. It has been able to achieve this success because it has concentrated on issues and areas that do not threaten the states as such. Indeed, the opposite is more the case: the mapping and monitoring of conflicts between local groups is very much in the interest of the states, which have been struggling to establish instruments of governance and control in these areas. Efforts to expand the scope of CEWARN to cover conflict types where the IGAD states are parties – whether directly or as sponsors of non-state actors – will probably be resisted, and have limited chances of succeeding. Given the pervasiveness of state entanglements in the region's web of conflicts, CEWARN will then be useful in connection with only a limited part of the regional conflict formation.

ICPAT can be similarly understood as functioning since it serves the interests of the member-states or regimes. They are all interested in strengthening their security sectors. ICPAT may even succeed in strengthening border control – even though the character of the region's borders will ensure that any control established will have lim-

ited scope. However, it does not seem likely that the security-oriented ICPAT programme will be able to lead to increased integration and inclusion of marginalised groups into the state. In other words, ICPAT would not appear to have great potential for addressing the underlying drivers of conflict.

Thus, the conclusion seems to be that while the directly peace- and security-oriented activities of IGAD are positive in themselves, they lack the potential to significantly alter the underlying causes of conflict or lead to general stabilisation of the region. This seems to corroborate the conclusions of the *Peace and Security Strategy:* any durable peace will have to be built on the creation of strong interdependencies among the states, and on development efforts that reach out to the marginalised populations of the Horn of Africa.

On this background, and if the observation is correct that *donors* have primarily preferred to support IGAD's security-oriented programmes, then this appears to be a mistaken and short-sighted strategy. Support for cross-border infrastructure and the common utilisation of resources among countries would seem at least equally important, as would support for the overall economic integration process. However, the doubts raised by some respondents as to how serious the countries really are about economic integration (and the necessary liberalisation that this will entail), and to the overall feasibility of the integration plan, indicate that there may be serious limitations to this strategy as well.

A final observation is that a weakness of IGAD is the *lack of integration among its institutions*. CEWARN and ICPAT work in complementary ways, but with expending much energy on coordination. ICPAT and the IGAD secretariat both work on developing regional policies on migration and border control, but from different perspectives and without cooperation. Satellite and liaison offices and envoys are established, but how their work is integrated with that of the organisation as a whole is unclear. Peace process secretariats are established and develop identities separate from and in contrast to IGAD headquarters.

There may be many reasons why IGAD has developed in such a decentralised and seemingly uncoordinated way. One important explanation is undoubtedly the central role of donor funding in all IGAD activities. Such a situation, with such a wide range of donors to boot, readily leads to a situation where activities are initiated not on the basis of an overall strategic plan, but reflect more the interests and priorities of the various donors. This may create a lack of coherence in itself. Furthermore, donor wishes as to funding specific programmes or targeted activities may lead to a lack of funding for precisely the

overarching processes that could have ensured better coordination among the many different programmes under the IGAD umbrella.