

Report from International Workshop on Intra and Inter-State Conflicts in the Horn of Africa, 25-26 May 2010, Uppsala

The international workshop on Intra and Inter-State Conflicts and Security in the Horn of Africa, took place at the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala, Sweden from 25-26, May 2010. It was convened by Dr. Redie Bereketeab of the Research Cluster on Conflict, Displacement and Transformation of the Nordic Africa Institute as part of the Research project on **Conflict and State Building in the Horn of Africa**. The workshop was flagged off with an opening address by the Institute's Research Director, Professor Fantu Cheru. It featured a Keynote address by Ambassador Marika Fahlen, Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and presentations by Professor Kidane Mengiteab of Penn State University, Dr. Kassahun Alemu of Addis Ababa University, Jacob Akol of the Gurtong Trust-Peace and Media Project, Sudan and Professor Peter Woodward of the University of Reading. Other presentations were made by Professor Hassan Mahadallah of the Southern University of New Orleans, Professor Abdi Samatar of University of Minnesota, Dr Seifudein Hussein of the State University of New York, Dr Björn Möller of the Danish Institute of International Affairs and Dr Ismail Wais of the Greater Horn Horizon Forum, Djibouti. Other participants included: Camilla Bengtsson and Per Karlsson of the Swedish International Development Agency, Sture Normark and Jody Henderson of Life and Peace Institute, Uppsala, Dr. Renu Modi of the University of Mumbai (Guest Researcher at the Nordic Africa Institute), Carin Norberg, Professor Fantu Cheru, Dr. Cyril Obi and Dr Anders Sjögren of the Nordic Africa Institute.

Highlights of the Workshop:

The issues discussed dwelled on the nature of the Horn of Africa: Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Djibouti; as the most conflict-ridden and insecure region in Africa. In this regard, participants identified the need to establish an adequate framework for understanding the concepts of 'war' and 'conflict', the nature of various actors, how intra and inter-state wars feed each other in the Horn, and the challenges posed by problems related to the durability and quality of peace agreements. Also noted was the problem of inherited and disputed (arbitrary) borders, which split ethnic communities between neighbouring countries and became a critical factor in intra and inter-state conflicts in the Horn. An issue that attracted vigorous debate was the contextualization of local politics and the struggle for democracy in the various countries, in the form of competing political tendencies, in what one of the presenters conceptualized as "the civics versus the sectarians".

Other issues discussed were the transnational nature of the wars in the Horn, and the roles of the political leadership, traditional authorities, the state and civil society in promoting sustainable democracy, peace and development in the region. It was also noted that although the informal sector was active, there was a lack of complementarities in the economic relations within the countries of the region, which were also vulnerable to the imperialism of trade from the world's established and emerging powers. Discussions also focused on inter-communal conflicts over land, water and livestock, exploring the possible linkages between climate change, conflict and peace in the Horn; international piracy off the coast of Somalia and the waging of the war on terror in the

Horn. In this regard, international intervention in the pursuit of geo-strategic, security and economic interests was identified as one of the drivers of conflict in the region.

Major Research and Policy Challenges Identified:

1. How to build durable Peace and Security in the Horn of Africa. What structural and Institutional changes are needed at the domestic and regional level to end wars?
2. The Implementation of Peace Agreements in the Horn has been problematic. In spite of many agreements signed, poor monitoring and implementation have led to many agreements unraveling.
3. How to address border demarcation issues, and facilitate successful nation and state building processes in the Horn in the context of 'ethnic fragmentation and mobilized identities' in a post-Cold War, post-9/11 world. How can fragmented ethnic identities, institutions be best addressed?
4. Generating accurate statistics on the magnitude, and costs of war in the region. Building a strong knowledge base on the evolution of the problems in the countries of the Horn.
5. Facilitating economic integration in ways that would have feed into intra-regional trade and peace.
6. How to integrate traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, institutions and knowledge in addressing local/community conflicts.
7. Elections when held have not led to democratic transformation. How to look for democrats and empower them to create a viable political alternative to the status quo that is immersed in conflict and address the crisis of citizenship in the region.
8. Interrogating the role of the international community, and the ways some of the short-term policies and strategic engagements in the Horn polarize societies and deepen intra and inter-state tensions and wars in the Horn
9. Understanding the complex dimensions of piracy in the region beyond the usual discourse on criminality and maritime security.
10. Devising ways of enabling IGAD to play a more effective and constructive role in facilitating peace, security and development in the Horn.

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