Technical Report for the Karamoja Development Partners Group

CONFLICT IN KARAMOJA: A SYNTHESIS OF HISTORICAL AND CURRENT PERSPECTIVES, 1920–2022

October 2022

Elizabeth Stites

Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU), Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University

FRIEDMAN SCHOOL OF NUTRITION SCIENCE AND POLICY

Feinstein International Center

USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Ambasáid na hÉireann
Embassy of Ireland

KARAMOJA RESILIENCE SUPPORT UNIT

Conflict in Karamoja: A synthesis of historical and current perspectives, 1920–2022

Elizabeth Stites

October 2022

This report was funded by the United States Agency for International Development and Irish Aid, under subcontract to Agricultural Cooperative Development International/Volunteers in Overseas Cooperative Assistance (ACDI/VOCA). ACDI/VOCA Work Order Number J2035-01, USAID Prime Award Number 72061720LA00002.

www.karamojaresilience.org

Implemented by: Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy, Tufts University, P.O. Box 6934, Kampala, Uganda. Tel: +256 (0)41 4 691251.

Recommended citation: Stites. E. 2022. Conflict in Karamoja: A synthesis of historical and current perspectives, 1920-2022. Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU), Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy Tufts University, Kampala.

Cover photo: courtesy of Andy Catley

Disclaimer: The views expressed in the report do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION 5

CATTLE RAIDING IN HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE 6

THE COLONIAL PERIOD: REGULATION AND CONTAINMENT OF CONFLICT 8

1970S AND 1980S: A PERIOD OF UPHEAVAL 10

1990S AND 2000S: CONFLICT CONTINUES, DISARMAMENTS RESUME 12

2010–2019: RELATIVE PEACE 13

2019 TO THE PRESENT: INVESTIGATING THEORIES ON THE CURRENT VIOLENCE 14

- Commercialized raiding 14
- Natural resource scarcity and conflict 15
- Conflict over mineral access, rights, and wealth 16
- Climate change-related conflict 17

CONCLUSION 19

SOURCES CITED 20

INTRODUCTION

This knowledge synthesis focuses on violent conflict in the Karamoja sub-region of northeastern Uganda. While violence and conflict both can and do take many forms, this synthesis takes as its focus the phenomenon of cattle raiding and associated violence. This knowledge synthesis briefly describes the concept and role of cattle raiding within pastoral societies in East Africa and the Karamoja Cluster and then examines different historical periods and experiences of violent conflict associated with cattle raiding within the Karamoja sub-region. Violence in the form of cattle raiding resumed in 2019 in Karamoja after approximately a decade of relative peace; the second half of this synthesis presents different theories on this insecurity based on both ongoing debates and more recent additions to the literature. This synthesis is meant to be read in conjunction with a recent study examining community perceptions of the renewal of raiding,[1] also produced by Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU). Taken together, these two outputs are meant to inform policy making and programming based on the current realities in Karamoja.

This synthesis does not cover conflict-related or peacebuilding programs as implemented by international or non-governmental agencies. These programs have been active in Karamoja since at least the mid-1990s. An analysis of these programs, their approaches, and their potential impacts is outside the scope of this synthesis. Further work is needed in this regard.

This knowledge synthesis is written with an eye to readability by policy makers and practitioners. As such, the author avoids excessively academic language and has opted to cite sources in footnote style in order to minimize disruptions to the text.

[1] R. L. Arasio and E. Stites, "The Return of Conflict in Karamoja, Uganda: Community Perspectives" (Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU), Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Kampala, 2022).

CATTLE RAIDING IN HISTORICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVE

Within many pastoral societies and livelihood systems, cattle raiding has served as a long-standing practice to redistribute wealth, particularly after droughts, animal epidemics, or raids.[2] Raiding is deeply embedded in the culture of many parts of the broader region and can be seen as part of a political and social identity.[3] Engaging in cattle raids served important social, political, and economic functions within the pastoral system, including specific functions for young men, as explained by a Karimojong elder:

> Raiding was not just a means of restocking, but it was also an ancient form of wealth redistribution among the Karimojong. It is a traditional and central form of restocking. Young warriors were compelled to accumulate cows in order to gain status. Their respect depended on the number of successful raids.[4]

Some authors posit that cattle raiding can also be viewed as an adaptive response to sociopolitical uncertainty imposed on peripheral populations by repressive governments.[5] However, raiding within Eastern Africa in general and the Karamoja Cluster in particular has had extremely negative impacts. Insecurity and instability resulting from raiding has led to the collapse of markets, the absence of economic investment, decades of underdevelopment, a breakdown in local governance, and limited access to social services, including health care and education.[6] Violence associated with cattle raiding affects a broad swathe of the population through asset stripping, but has the greatest impact on the male youth who are the main perpetrators of cattle raiding and also bear the greatest risk as the traditional protectors of animal and human populations.[7] Women and children were historically impacted by spillover insecurity when travelling outside of their homes or villages.[8]

This knowledge synthesis examines the characteristics of conflict in different time periods, as illustrated in the below figure.

Figure 1. Timeline of different conflict periods and the events that characterize them.

Period	Events
Colonial period: Regulation and containment	• Expansion of state • Trade in ivory • Influx of weapons • Government efforts at containment
1970s and 1980s: A period of upheaval	• Political instability • Distintegration of Karimojong ethnic group • Unravelling of social order • Armory raid and famine • Extensive raids on neighboring districts

Continued on next page

[2] D. Hendrickson, J. Armon, and R. Mearns, "The Changing Nature of Conflict and Famine Vulnerability: The Case of Livestock Raiding in Turkana District, Kenya," *Disasters* 22, no. 3 (1998): 185–99.

[3] S. Gray, "A Memory of Loss: Ecological Politics, Local History, and the Evolution of Karimojong Violence," *Human Organization* 59, no. 4 (Winter, 2000): 401–418.

[4] K. Mkutu, *Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoralist Conflict and Small Arms (African Issues)* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 17.

[5] S. Gray, M. Sundal, B. Wiebusch, M. A. Little, P. W. Leslie, and I. L. Pike, "Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival, and Adaptability of East African Pastoralists," *Current Anthropology* 44, no. S5 (December 2003): S3–S30.

[6] H. Young, A. Osman, M. Buchanan Smith, B. Bromwich, K. Moore, and S. Ballou, "Sharpening the Strategic Focus of Livelihoods Programming in the Darfur Region, A Report of Four Livelihoods Workshops" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, 2007).

[7] Gray et al., "Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival, and Adaptability."

[8] E. Stites and D. Akabwai, "'We Are Now Reduced to Women': Impacts of Forced Disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda," *Nomadic Peoples* 14, no. 2 (2010): 24–43.

Continued from previous page

1990s and 2000s: **Conflict continues, disarmament resumes**	• Widespread internal insecurity • Few services • Resumption of disarmament • Uneven results of 2001 disarmament • Human rights abuses, livestock and livelihoods losses
2010-2019: **Relative peace**	• Improved security for communities, traders, programmers • Livelihood activities resume • Markets expand • Growth in investment • Infrastructure improvements, including roads and electricity
2019-Present: **Return of conflict**	• Conflict resumes • Widespread raiding • Collapse of alliances • Decreased access to shared resources • Various theories for conflict resumption

THE COLONIAL PERIOD: REGULATION AND CONTAINMENT OF CONFLICT

Violent raiding has long been a part of the culture within Karamoja. Prior to the widespread availability of firearms, young men fought with spears and bows and arrows in carefully planned and orchestrated raids. Elders regulated the extent and intensity of the raids,[9] and a ritualized fighting process, advance warnings of attacks, and prohibitions on harming women, children, or the elderly kept casualties to a minimum.[10] Firearms came into the region in the second half of the nineteenth century, brought by traders from Khartoum, Ethiopia, and Zanzibar, and were exchanged for ivory. Guns gradually replaced spears as a more effective and lethal weapon for both hunting and raiding.[11]

Britain declared Uganda a Protectorate in 1894 and reached the boundaries of today's Karamoja in 1898.[12] However, the colonial government encountered problems replicating their governance system in Karamoja, largely because it was difficult to compel a mobile and dispersed population to pay taxes, grow cash crops, or partake in organized labor. As such, the British decided that "full occupation and control was not necessary" and aimed instead for "insulation of the area from the outside, restricting the gun trade, preventing raiding into the actively administered neighboring zones, and limiting conflict within the region to a manageable level."[13] The colonial state's primary objective in regard to Karamoja was to minimize the flow of weapons and the unregulated trade in ivory, which by 1907–1908 accounted for 20% of the total value of national exports.[14] This approach largely failed, and by 1910 traders from Karamoja were exporting arms and ammunition to other parts of Uganda. The colonial authorities were worried by reports of unrest and the growing strength of tribal groups in the area and placed the region under military rule from 1911 to 1921.[15] However, the system of appointed chiefs that had proved successful elsewhere in the country did not work within the seniority-based authority system in Karamoja, and, in 1921, the authorities declared the region a "closed district, requiring a parsimoniously issued permit to enter."[16]

Closing the district did curtail the weapons trade, and by the 1920s raiding in the region was reportedly once again primarily small-scale and taking place primarily with spears.[17] Within the district, the colonial government sought to maintain control through a system of police posts near the mobile cattle camps (or kraals) and communal punishment for communities that were home to raiders.[18] This period of relative calm lasted until the flow of small arms into the region increased in mid-twentieth century.[19] Intense fighting was reported in the 1940s between the Karimojong[20] and the Suk (known today as the Pokot) in southern Karamoja and between the Karimojong and the Jie in the 1950s.[21] Of note, these clashes were primarily between Karimojong

[9] N. Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); P. H. Gulliver, "The Age Set Organization of the Jie Tribe," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 83, no. 2 (1953): 147–168.

[10] K. Mkutu, *Guns and Governance*; D. Akabwai and P. Ateyo, "The Scramble for Cattle, Power and Guns in Karamoja" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, 2007); J. Lamphear, "Brothers in Arms: Military Aspects of East African Age-Class Systems in Historical Perspective," in *Conflict, Age and Power in North East Africa: Age Systems in Transition*, ed. E. Kurimoto and S. Simonse (Athens Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1998).

[11] M. Mirzeler and C. Young, "Pastoral Politics in the Northeast Periphery in Uganda: AK-47 as Change Agent," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38, no.3 (2000): 407–429.

[12] J. Barber, *Imperial Frontier* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968).

[13] Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral Politics," 412.

[14] Barber, *Imperial Frontier*, 60. As explained by Barber, the unregulated killing of elephants with modern firearms decimated the once-large herd completely between 1900 and 1910. Those elephants that did survive fled into the remote northern mountain ranges.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral Politics," 413.

[17] M. Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society: Karamoja, Uganda, 1996," *African Studies Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (1997); J. Lamphear, *The Traditional History of the Jie of Uganda* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral Politics."

[18] Mkutu, *Guns and Governance*.

[19] Barber, *Imperial Frontier*.

[20] "Karimojong" is distinct from the term "Karamojong," which is often used to describe the diverse population of the region as if they were a single ethnic group. The term "Karimojong" refers specifically to the ethnic group of southern Karamoja, which consists of the three territorial groups of the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian.

[21] R. Dyson-Hudson, "Pastoralism: Self Image and Behavioral Reality," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 7 (1972): 30–47.

and other groups—their traditional enemies.[22] Clashes also increased with the neighboring Turkana in the 1950s and 1960s.[23] Raiding was growing in prevalence and severity within the region, but was almost always along lines of "traditional enemies." Intratribal conflict—such as within the Karimojong or within the Jie—was largely unknown. Small disputes that did occur were handled through a punitive and compensatory system managed by the male elders, and hence these disputes did not expand into more serious divisions or conflict.[24]

Nearly all government policies towards Karamoja in both the colonial and post-colonial periods aimed to minimize negative spillover effects of internal upheaval on surrounding areas considered to be more stable or politically relevant. Along with efforts to prevent cross-border migration, the most consistent of these policies was disarmament.[25] The colonial state launched campaigns in 1945, 1953, 1954, and 1960. No disarmament campaigns took place in the first two decades of independence, but they resumed in 1984 and were repeated in 1987, 2001, and 2006, as covered below.[26]

[22] Barber, *Imperial Frontier*.

[23] Quam, "Creating Peace"; Barber, *Imperial Frontier*.

[24] Gray, "Memory of Loss"; Dyson-Hudson, "Karimojong Politics."

[25] B. Knighton, "The State as Raider among the Karimojong: 'Where There Are No Guns, They Use the Threat of Guns,'" *Africa* 73 (2003): 439–46.

[26] J. Bevan, "Crisis in Karamoja: Armed Violence and the Failure of Disarmament in Uganda's Most Deprived Region" (Small Arms Survey, Geneva, 2008).

1970S AND 1980S: A PERIOD OF UPHEAVAL

Despite efforts by the post-colonial government to solve the "backwardness" inherent in the "Karamoja problem" as identified by the Bataringaya Commission established to prepare the country for self-rule, cattle raiding and interethnic conflict in the region increased in the decade following independence.[27] This set the stage for conditions in 1970s and 1980s—a period of great political instability throughout Uganda. Karamoja was no exception to the upheaval, with both internal and external dynamics contributing to the uncertainty in this period. Violent conflict characterized many of the internal processes in the sub-region.

Disintegration of an alliance, armory raid, and famine

The early 1970s brought the first signs of the collapse in relations among the previously unified Karimojong ethnic group, which ended up splintering into the territorial sections of the Bokora, Matheniko, and Pian.[28] The disintegration of the alliance was gradual and marked initially by small-scale thefts that were not resolved. Revenge attacks and rising instability led to the eventual assassination of several prominent leaders. Drought and animal disease—including a devasting outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 1975—further increased social and economic tensions.[29] Adding to the instability, following his 1971 coup d'état, Idi Amin sent soldiers into the district with a mandate to stop cattle raiding; they reportedly did so by confiscating large numbers of animals, which they then sold for their own benefit.[30] In 1975, Amin's soldiers massacred approximately 300 Bokora civilians at Nawaikorot,[31] allegedly for refusing to wear modern clothing. By the early 1980s, the Karimojong were actively raiding each other internally (across territorial group lines); Mkutu posits that they were the first East Africa pastoralists to do so.[32]

The 1970s witnessed the gradual unraveling of the political and social order, but a series of shocks beginning in 1979 brought the situation to a head. The fall of Idi Amin in 1979 led to the disintegration of his army; soldiers abandoned the well-stocked armory in Moroto town, which was quickly looted by the Matheniko.[33] A smaller armory in Kotido was also abandoned and looted by the Jie.[34] Today "1979" is used in local parlance as shorthand for a watershed event and harbinger of chaos and collapse. Insecurity worsened and spread quickly in the aftermath of the armory raid, making cultivation, trade, and collection of wild fruits—a standard coping mechanism during lean periods—extremely difficult.[35] Herders moved their animals to remote areas to escape attack, thereby limiting access of the settled communities to milk and blood. Erratic rainfall dashed any hope of harvests in areas where cultivation had occurred. The stage was set for the devastating famine of 1980, in which infant mortality rose to an estimated 600:1,000 live births (up from 169:1,000 in 1969), and 50% of children under five years of age are estimated to have died.[36] Decimation of the livestock herds further undermined the base of the economy and exacerbated vulnerability.[37]

The instability following the armory attack and the impacts of the famine existed against the backdrop of a decade of political upheaval and intratribal fighting. Damage to the Karimojong alliance was absolute, and the now-heavily armed Matheniko turned first on their Bokora

[27] K. Czuba, "Extension of State Power in Karamoja Part 1: The Objectives of the Ugandan State Managers in Karamoja" (CCDS Working Paper Series #3, Centre for Critical Development Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough, Toronto, 2017).

[28] Gray, "Memory of Loss"; Quam, "Creating Peace"; Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral Politics."

[29] Bevan, "Crisis in Karamoja."

[30] Quam, "Creating Peace."

[31] Czuba, "Extension of State Power."

[32] Mkutu, *Guns and Governance*.

[33] Estimates of the number of weapons removed from the armory vary greatly from close to 10,000 to as high as 60,000 (Bevan, "Crisis in Karamoja"). More telling, perhaps, is the account of elders who remember the pillaging of the barracks as days of loaded donkeys filing out until the place was empty (Akabwai and Ateyo, "The Scramble for Cattle"), and reports that the bundles of guns on donkeys looked like stacks of firewood (Quam, "Creating Peace in an Armed Society").

[34] Czuba, "Extension of State Power."

[35] Quam, "Creating Peace."

[36] D. J. Alnwick, "The 1980 Famine in Karamoja," in *Crisis in Uganda: The Breakdown of Health Services*, ed. C. P. Dodge and P. D. Wiebe (Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd., 1985).

[37] R. J. Biellik and P. L. Henderson, "Mortality, Nutritional Status, and Diet during the Famine in Karamoja, Uganda, 1980," *The Lancet* 2, no. 8259 (December 12, 1981): 1330–33.

neighbors, decimating herds and causing many to flee their homes and even the district.[38] The Matheniko assault next turned to the Pian. Raiding parties grew larger and used more sophisticated weapons, and raids began to result in more casualties with a wider range of victims, including the elderly, women, and children.[39] Despite the degree of chaos in the region, the broader political instability in the county in the early 1980s meant that little focus was given to internal conflict within Karamoja.

External incursions and repercussions thereof

Uganda's national political transition in the mid-1980s brought a period of extended upheaval to much of the north. The people of Karamoja had long relied on a system of mutual exchange with their Langi, Acholi, and Teso neighbors in north-central Uganda for access to dry season pasture and watering points. The mobile herds brought fertilizer, milk, and opportunities for trade to the more settled agrarian communities. Herders from Karamoja often returned to the same locations in the neighboring districts each year, building a social network and system of social insurance that was often passed down from males in one generation to males in the next.[40] In 1986, the National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) took power in Kampala after a five-year civil war. Northerners made up a large portion of the officer corps of the army of deposed president Milton Obote, and these troops fled north to Sudan in large numbers in fear of retribution for their own abuses[41] by the victorious NRM/A forces. This flight left the north-central region largely unprotected while the NRM/A worked to consolidate power in the central and southern parts of the country.[42] Raiders from across Karamoja were quick to take advantage of the power vacuum to their west, and repeatedly plundered the neighboring districts throughout the latter half of the 1980s. The combined cattle holdings in Lango and Acholi fell from an estimate of 685,000 heads in the early 1980s to 72,000 heads by 1989, and similar losses were experienced in Teso.[43] The violence and looting of assets by raiders from Karamoja over this period did irreparable damage to the relations between the populations of the two regions. This severing of ties would ultimately cut pastoralists from Karamoja off from both important dry season grazing lands and from critical social networks.

The massive influx of raided cattle brought other, more immediate problems for Karamoja. Many of these animals had no immunity to the local tick-borne diseases *and* carried diseases to which the local herds were highly susceptible. So although animals were moving into Karamoja in large numbers, they were also dying at a rapid rate, due both to the spread of diseases and the collapse of the system of veterinary dips and crushes that had been established in the colonial era.[44]

By 1990 the people of Karamoja had alienated their neighbors, undermining their own transhumance patterns and introducing new animal diseases into their herds. Herds from the region were no longer welcome in neighboring districts, and police units were stationed along the borders to limit migration. Violence within Karamoja reportedly abated slightly during the period of external pillage in the late 1980s, but the effective closure of the borders after the prolonged external excursions shifted tensions back into the region, leading to a decade of previously unsurpassed internal violence in the 1990s.[45]

[38] Gray, "Memory of Loss."

[39] K. Mkutu, "Small Arms and Light Weapons among Pastoral Groups in the Kenya-Uganda Area," *African Affairs* 106, no. 102 (2007): 47–70.

[40] P. H. Gulliver, *The Family Herds: A Study of Two Pastoral Tribes in East Africa, the Jie and the Turkana* (London: Routledge, 1995); C. Ocan, "Pastoral Resources and Conflicts in North-Eastern Uganda: The Karimojong Case," *Nomadic Peoples* 34/35 (1994): 123–135; Dyson-Hudson, *Karimojong Politics*.

[41] The best-known example of abuses by troops dominated by ethnic northerners was in the Luwero Triangle, in which an estimated 100,000 to 300,000 civilians were killed between 1983 and 1986. T. P. Ofcansky, *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996).

[42] Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral Politics."

[43] C. E. Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda: The Changing Significance of Cattle Raids" (Working Paper 21, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala, 1992). Ocan's figures for the cattle population in the mid-1980s are from the Ministry of Animal Industry, whereas the 1989 figures are from district veterinary officers.

[44] Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda."

[45] Gray, "Memory of Loss."

1990S AND 2000S: CONFLICT CONTINUES, DISARMAMENTS RESUME

The 1990s and early 2000s are often described as an extremely violent period in Karamoja, but the extent of this violence is difficult to quantify. Very few studies took place in the region after the late 1960s (due to insecurity), and none of those that did occur used a representative or quantitative approach to analyzing rates of violence. The work of medical anthropologist Sandra Gray and colleagues comes the closest and includes an analysis of mortality based on interviews with over 300 Matheniko and Bokora women. Their research shows that direct violence related to cattle raiding was the leading cause of death for adult men in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Raiding violence also undermined health services and delivery, thereby contributing to many deaths from preventable or treatable illnesses.[46] Qualitative research in central and southern Karamoja that investigated previous experiences of violence found that respondents rated violence in the 1990s and 2000s as worse than any earlier period in remembered history or oral tradition, and this violence had brought about widespread changes in livelihood systems, including the loss of livestock, out-migration, and sedentarization.[47]

In addition to being more prevalent, raids in Karamoja became increasingly violent, reportedly starting in the 1980s and continuing into the early 2000s. Authors attribute the heightened violence of raids in this period to a number of factors, including the ready availability of small arms,[48] the increased commercialization of raiding,[49] the collapse of internal alliances,[50] the erosion of control by male elders over young men,[51] and the general absence of state control over or interest in the region.

After an almost 15-year hiatus in active engagement in the region, the early 2000s brought a profound shift in attitude by the Ugandan government towards the region.[52] The Office of the Prime Minister and the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) implemented a short-lived forced disarmament program in 2001,[53] followed by a more comprehensive campaign beginning in 2006. Violence and insecurity initially increased following the start of the 2006 disarmament campaign due to the loss of firearms for protective purposes. Human rights violations by the Ugandan military were also widespread, including gender-based forms of abuse (such as requiring young men to lie naked in the sun with bricks on their chests and intentional injuries to male genitalia).[54] A policy of protected kraals, in which a community was required to corral all animals into an enclosure adjacent to a military barracks, resulted in widespread livestock deaths and upended traditional gendered divisions of labor.[55] Communities were repeatedly subject to cordon and search operations, in which the entire population would be removed from their homes, often before dawn, and made to wait while soldiers ransacked their huts and searched possessions. Those who did surrender weapons were not provided with proof of having done so, meaning that they could be harassed, arrested, and detained multiple times.[56] This period of intense disarmament continued for approximately three to four years, depending on the location.

[46] Gray et al., "Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival, and Adaptability."

[47] E. Stites, "Identity Reconfigured: Karimojong Male Youth, Violence and Livelihoods" (PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Somerville, MA, 2013).

[48] Mkutu, "Small Arms and Light Weapons," "*Guns and Governance*."

[49] M. L. Fleisher, "Cattle Raiding and its Correlates: The Cultural-Ecological Consequences of Market-Oriented Cattle Raiding among the Kuria of Tanzania," *Human Ecology* 26, no. 4 (1998): 547–572; M. L. Fleisher, "Kuria Cattle Raiding: Capitalist Transformation Commoditization and Crime Formation among an East African Agro-pastoral People," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 42, no. 4 (2000): 745–769; D. Eaton, "The Rise of the 'Traider': The Commercialization of Raiding in Karamoja," *Nomadic Peoples* 14, no. 2 (2010): 106–122.

[50] Gray, "Memory of Loss."

[51] E. Stites, "A Struggle for Rites: Masculinity, Violence and Livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda," in *Gender, Violence and Human Security: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, eds. A. Tripp, M. Marx Ferree, and C. Ewig (New York, NY: New York University Press, 2013).

[52] Czuba, "Extension of State Power."

[53] The 2001–2002 disarmament was an uneven campaign that left many communities vulnerable to attack by those who still possessed weapons. The Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) abruptly scaled back the campaign after only three months in March 2002 when two brigades of regular troops were transferred to north-central Uganda to engage with the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), leaving only local defense units (LDUs) behind in Karamoja. Revenge raiding and attacks quickly resumed, with those groups that had already disarmed (voluntarily or by force) bearing the brunt of these assaults. Many groups, especially those near the Sudanese or Kenyan borders, rapidly rearmed. See Office of the Prime Minister, "Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Program (KIDDP)" (Office of the Prime Minister, Kampala, 2007); Bevan, "Crisis in Karamoja."

[54] Human Rights Watch, "'Get the Gun!' Human Rights Violations by Uganda's National Army in Law Enforcement Operations in Karamoja Region" (Human Rights Watch, New York, 'NY, 2007); Stites and Akabwai, "'We Are Now Reduced to Women.'"

[55] Ibid.

[56] E. Stites and D. Akabwai, "Changing Roles, Shifting Risks: Livelihood Impacts of Disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, June 2009).

2010–2019: RELATIVE PEACE

Despite the initial increase in insecurity at the community level and the widespread allegations of human rights abuses, security had improved across the sub-region by approximately 2010. These improvements were noted by officials, development actors, and local communities alike. Importantly, the improvement in security had widespread positive impacts, including on inter-group relations, herd mobility, access to natural resources, private sector expansion, growth of markets, dynamic internal and external trade, and access by national and international development and investment stakeholders.[57] By 2015, large-scale cattle raids were rare, though other, more localized forms of violence and insecurity continued, including opportunistic theft committed by young men and linked to the loss of male livelihood options.[58]

Communities in both northern and southern Karamoja credited security improvements in large part to the government-led disarmament campaign. In addition, two parallel local resolutions emerged in 2014 from local dialogue among communities and with the support of the security sector and local officials. Known as the Nabilatuk Resolution and the Moruitit Resolution in southern and northern Karamoja respectively and enforced by local "peace committees," these resolutions proved highly effective. Also known as "two for one" or "two for one plus one" policies, these resolutions required alleged thieves to pay back double the number of animals stolen in addition to one additional animal offered as payment to trackers or to the peace committee.[59] These community-based resolutions also gave male elders the impetus to again effectively sanction and punish the behavior of male youth in their communities,[60] who for many years had been engaged in what many elders considered openly rebellious actions.[61]

The period of relative peace saw periods of greater and lesser security, with variations by location and season. Incidents of insecurity began to rise in approximately 2019, again with differences by location. The thefts that had been small scale and occasional over the previous 10 years became more organized and larger, with greater numbers of animals stolen. Rumors began of a resurgence in the weapons trade, and soon guns were again being used with regularity in attacks. Road ambushes, which were frequent in the 1990s and early 2000s, again began to increase. Seemingly targeted killings in towns and other locations began to rise. International and national actors curtailed movements and adjusted programming accordingly. The national government responded with a resumption of disarmament activities in early 2020, but insecurity largely continued.

The remainder of this knowledge synthesis takes as its premise that the reasons behind the resumption in insecurity are opaque. As such, it lays out different strains of thought regarding the resumption in violence and insecurity and discusses the relevance of each of these theories to the current situation. Where relevant, findings from the accompanying assessment of community perspectives on insecurity are incorporated.

[57] J. Burns, G. Bekele, and D. Akabwai, "Livelihood Dynamics in Northern Karamoja: A Participatory Baseline Study for the Growth, Health and Governance Program (Mercy Corps)" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, 2013); K. Howe, E. Stites, and D. Akabwai, with Mercy Corps, "'We Now Have Relative Peace': Changing Conflict Dynamics in Northern Karamoja, Uganda" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, November 2015); E. Stites, K. Howe, T. Redda, and D. Akabwai, "'A Better Balance:' Revitalized Pastoral Livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, July 2016).

[58] E. Stites, and A. Marshak, "Who Are the Lonetia? Findings from Southern Karamoja, Uganda," *Journal of Modern African Studies* 54 (May 2016): 237–52.

[59] Howe et al., "We Now Have Relative Peace."

[60] Stites and Marshak, "Who Are the Lonetia?"

[61] E. Stites, "A Struggle for Rites."

2019 TO THE PRESENT: INVESTIGATING THEORIES ON THE CURRENT VIOLENCE

COMMERCIALIZED RAIDING

The concept of commercialized raiding has long been cited as a factor behind periods of increased insecurity and violence in Karamoja and other pastoral societies in East Africa. This is the case at present, as evidenced by the accompanying KRSU assessment of community perceptions on the renewed violence of the past three years in which both men and women (but not male youth) participants said that "traders" were the second-most involved stakeholder in the current insecurity (after "youth"). Other stakeholders—including youth—are viewed as raiding animals primarily in order to sell them in internal markets or to external actors. These aspects all point to a strong "commercial" component of the current conflict but fail to indicate if this component is causal—i.e., the commercial element is *driving* the raiding—or is simply the most practical and advantageous means of converting stolen animals into liquid assets. Answering this question requires an examination of what "commercialized raiding" means and how it has been understood in earlier periods.

At its most simple, the term commercialized raiding refers to the exchange of stolen animals for cash or other commercial gain. This contrasts with raiding for the purpose of restocking, raiding to settle scores, raiding to increase one's own herd size, raiding to accrue bridewealth, raiding to demonstrate masculine prowess, or any combination of the above. Put another way, commercial raiding means that animals are taken with the intent to sell.

While commercial raiding is often linked to the modern characteristics of pastoral societies in East Africa, there is no clear date when this practice began. The timeline for the origin of commercial raiding varies based on location and historical interpretation. For instance, in his study of the Kuria of Tanzania, Fleischer argues that raiding evolved from a form of cultural expression to a capitalist strategy beginning in the colonial era.[62] Anderson also ascribes colonial roots to commercial raiding in his work on the Kalenjin in Kenya.[63] Other scholars of both Turkana (Kenya) and Karamoja locate the emergence of commercial raiding in the decades following national independence.[64] Mkutu, on the other hand, believes that the commercial component did not become the main motivation in Karamoja until the mid-1990s.[65] Regardless of the time period and region, the commercialization of raiding is best understood as a gradual and irregular process: some raided cattle in some areas are sold for commercial gain at certain times, while on other occasions the same raiders may retain or exchange stolen animals for traditional purposes, such as marriage, tribute, and increasing one's own herd size. The fact that raids—even by the same actors—vary in motivation, scope, and outcome means that we cannot explain any period of violence or conflict as being due purely to commercialization, but rather must see the commercialized element as one factor among many.

In Karamoja, the commercialized element is believed to have influenced raiding patterns and characteristics starting in the 1980s and 1990s and continuing today. One key pattern is in the characteristics and motivations of raiding parties as raids became more commercialized. Groups of young men engaged in raiding became smaller, in part because proceeds were shared directly among the raiders as opposed to being dispersed more widely throughout the community. Relatedly, young men engaged in these raids operated in smaller groups to avoid detection from *within* their communities: raids undertaken for commercial gain did not usually have the same approval or blessing of the male elders and community members that existed for traditional raids.[66] Animals from successful traditional raids had been incorporated into collective herds and paid as tributes to those who had planned and blessed the raids, including the elders. Commercial raiding, in contrast, largely benefitted the raiders alone, with fewer benefits (or blessings) passed vertically. Horizontal transfers that did continue were more circumscribed, with benefits going to the raider's friends, his immediate family, or to an in-law in the form of bridewealth.

Reflecting on an earlier period of intense raiding in

[62] Fleischer, "Cattle Raiding and Its Correlates"; and M. L. Fleischer, *Kuria Cattle Raiders: Violence and Vigilantism on the Tanzania/Kenya Frontier* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2000).

[63] D. Anderson, "Stock Theft and Moral Economy in Colonial Kenya," *Africa* 56, no. 4 (1986): 399–416.

[64] Ocan, "Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda"; J. Markakis, "Pastoralism on the Margin" (Minority Rights Group International, London, 2004); Mirzeler and C. Young, "Pastoral Politics."

[65] K. A. Mkutu, "Pastoral Conflict and Small Arms: The Kenya-Uganda Border Region" (Saferworld, London, 2003).

[66] Mirzeler and Young, "Pastoral Politics"; Akabwai and Ateyo, "The Scramble for Cattle."

Karamoja, from the 1980s to early 2000s, respondents and observers often cite businessmen, politicians, police, and members of the military as being either directly involved in the orchestration or receiving direct benefits from the raids. Allegations of external involvement and profit making are also a factor of the resumption of raiding and insecurity that has taken place in Karamoja since 2019. While very difficult to prove, these rumors of outside involvement are notable in part because they are so widely believed by the local population. Many sources on commercial raiding elsewhere in East Africa have explored the role of external actors and highlight a wide range of potential types and facets of involvement. This "external collaboration and assistance"[67] can reportedly take a variety of forms, such as an extended chain of transactions and actors originating with a specific order for cattle,[68] training in military tactics and use of modern weapons,[69] the involvement of external "armed military or bandit groups" seeking to "procure cattle in vast quantities either to feed warring armies or to sell on the market,"[70] logistics and transport support,[71] and the financing of cattle raids for commercial purposes.[72] Eaton is one of the few authors to directly challenge the reliability of the widespread allegations regarding the linkages between raiding for profit and external criminal linkages, saying that some scholars tend to rely on unverifiable assumptions to advance the more sensational aspects of commercial raiding.[73]

The commercialization of raids is certainly one factor in the resumption of conflict and insecurity in Karamoja since 2019. However, it is highly unlikely both to be the *only* factor and for the degree and extent of external involvement in commercial raids to be established with certainty.

NATURAL RESOURCE SCARCITY AND CONFLICT

The argument that natural resource scarcity is a cause of conflict is widely accepted, with some authors positing that "resource-wars" are themselves a new form of conflict.[74] Although often associated with the greed theory of violence whereby groups seek to grab resources that are in short supply,[75] other authors point out that the struggle over resources also fuels grievances, including in pastoral areas where livelihood systems hinge on successful access to resources.[76] Conventional wisdom regarding pastoral and agro-pastoral areas is that the growth of human and animal populations over the past 50 years has led to increased competition over pasture, water, and migratory routes. When coupled with a rising incidence of multiyear droughts, poor land management policies, and growing restrictions on mobility and land use, this competition has led to an inevitable rise in violent conflict among and within pastoral populations, as well as between pastoral and settled groups.[77] This analysis thus offers a convincing explanation for much of the conflict in these East African locations, including Karamoja, as well as a prediction that conflict increases in periods of increased pressure on resources. Gray adheres to this theory in her description of the 1990s in Karamoja: "Competition for resources, raiding, and the disappearance, absorption, or emergence of distinct pastoralist geopolitical entities tended to be

[67] J. Oloka-Onyango, G. Zie, and F. Muhereza, "Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation in Karamoja," in "CBR Pastoralism Workshop, Makerere University" (1993), 12.

[68] J. Schilling, M. Akuno, J. Scheffran, and T. Weinzierl, "On Arms and Adaptation: Climate Change and Pastoral Conflict in Northern Kenya" (Working Paper CLISEC-15, University of Hamburg, Research Group Climate Change and Security, Hamburg, 2011).

[69] Ocan, "Pastoral Resources and Conflicts."

[70] Hendrickson et al., "The Changing Nature of Conflict," 191.

[71] Akabwai and Ateyo, "The Scramble for Cattle."

[72] Mkutu, "Pastoral Conflict."

[73] D. Eaton, "The Business of Peace: Raiding and Peace Work along the Kenya-Uganda Border (Part I)," *African Affairs* 107, no. 426 (2008): 89–110.

[74] See T. Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity and Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); J. Cilliers, "Resource Wars—A New Type of Insurgency," in *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds*, ed. J. Cilliers and C. Dietrich (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2000); P. Le Billon, "The Political Economy of Resource Wars," in *Angola's War Economy*, ed. Cilliers and Dietrich.

[75] P. Collier, "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy," in *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. C. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, and P. Aall (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2001).

[76] J. G. Porto, "Contemporary Conflict Analysis in Perspective, " in Scarcity and Surfeit: *The Ecology of Africa's Conflicts*, ed. J. Lind and K. Sturman (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies, 2002); H. Young, "The Conflict-Livelihoods Cycle: Reducing Vulnerability through Understanding Maladaptive Livelihoods," in *Environment and Conflict in Africa: Reflections on Darfur*, ed. M. Leroy (Addis Ababa: University for Peace, 2009).

[77] Markakis, "Pastoralism on the Margin"; P. Meier, D. Bond, and J. Bond, "Environmental Influences on Pastoral Conflict in the Horn of Africa," *Political Geography* 26 (2007): 716–735; C. Kahl, "Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence: The Case of Kenya," *International Security* 23, no. 2 (1998): 80–119; P. T. W. Baxter, "Immediate Problems: A View from a Distance," in *African Pastoralism: Conflict, Institutions and Government*, ed. M. A. R. M. Salih, T. Dietz, and A. G. M. Ahmed (London: Pluto, 2001); P. O. Otim, "Scarcity and Conflict in Pastoral Areas: A Look at the Other Side of the Coin," in "Regional Workshops on East African Drylands" (Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Khartoum and Addis Ababa, 2002); Ocan, "Pastoral Resources and Conflicts."

clustered into periods of extreme environmental stress, when both intratribal and intertribal tensions escalated."[78]

Other authors, however, question the strength of the association between resource scarcity and conflict in pastoral areas and seek to further nuance this relationship. Most of the literature that endorses the scarcity-conflict link generally does support the idea that natural resource scarcity is only one of many factors that can precipitate or exacerbate conflict, including in pastoral areas.[79] Importantly, resource scarcity alone does not drive conflict; rather, there must be *competition* over these natural resources, normally among or between groups already experiencing tense relations. Even so, conflict over resources is by no means guaranteed even when scarcity and competition both exist. The outbreak of conflict in these settings most often occurs in contexts with additional structural issues that exacerbate grievances, including inadequate systems for development and land management; restrictions on mobility, habitation, or use; poor governance; and sharp limits on access to land for productive purposes.[80] Sociopolitical pressures such as poverty, ethnic or inter-group tensions, and marginalization of a given group or geographic region also contribute to resource-related conflict.[81] Political elites may use resource scarcity as a political tool to ignite or contribute to civil strife.[82] Many of these characteristics exist in Karamoja, both historically and at present. A body of work also more forcefully challenges the scarcity-conflict theory in relation to violence in pastoral areas in East Africa. Authors in this camp have used empirical data to track and compare periods of resource scarcity (caused, for instance, by drought) and incidents of increased violence. A number find that either there is no correlation between these two aspects or that the relationship is in fact an inverse one. In other words, rates and incidences of violent conflict may be *lower* in periods of resource scarcity, either because groups turn to dialogue to ensure access or because poorer environmental conditions hinder raiding logistics.[83]

Work in Karamoja in 2010–2011 found that conflict was occurring at sites of shared resource use, but not *because* of competition over these resources. In other words, different groups, including those with historical differences, were most likely to interact in these places, and hence these were the most likely sites of conflict.[84] This dynamic may still characterize the conflict today.

CONFLICT OVER MINERAL ACCESS, RIGHTS, AND WEALTH

Scholars have dedicated specific attention to the conflict over minerals as a subset of conflict over natural resources. Czuba argues in a 2017 working paper that the shift in state attention to Karamoja witnessed in the early 2000s and taking the form of forced disarmaments was driven not by a desire to bring peace to the region and incorporate the marginalized area into the central state, but instead by the goal of state managers for self-enrichment from the exploitation of minerals.[85] Czuba argues that these intentions are visible in part in the priorities of the government following pacification: rather than invest in social services to benefit the local population, the state left these efforts to the UN and NGOs and instead prioritized road building, electrification, and sedentarization—policies that either did not benefit ordinary citizens or actively harmed them by undermining pastoral livelihoods. These investments did, however, pave the way for land grabbing and exploitation of minerals. At the same time, the "UPDF's actions during disarmament can be seen as intending to keep the region's inhabitants docile, afraid of challenging the government, and unable to oppose its future actions."[86] The combination of pacification (through

[78] Gray, "Memory of Loss," 404.

[79] See, for instance, Oloka-Onyango et al., "Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation"; Young, "The Conflict-Livelihoods Cycle;" M. Rugadya, "Pastoralism as a Conservation Strategy: Uganda Country Paper" (Prepared for IUCN Study, Associates for Development, Kampala, 2006).

[80] S. Pavanello, "Pastoralists' Vulnerabilty in the Horn of Africa" (Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, London, 2009).

[81] T. Homer-Dixon, "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases," *International Security* 19, no. 1 (1994): 5–40.

[82] P. Uvin, "Tragedy in Rwanda: The Political Economy of Conflict," *Environment* 38, no. 3 (1996): 6–17.

[83] J. Lind, "Fortune and Loss in an Environment of Violence: Living with Chronic Instability in South Turkana, Kenya" (PhD diss., King's College, University of London, London, 2007); J. Lind, "Manufacturing Peace in 'No Man's Land': Livestock and Access to Resources in the Karimojong Cluster of Kenya and Uganda," in *Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, ed. H. Young and L. Goldman (London: Routledge, 2015); W. R. Adano and K. Witsenburg, "Surviving Pastoral Decline in Marsabit District" (AGIDS/Uva, Amsterdam, 2003): T. Dietz, W. Adano, and K. Witsenburg, "Natural Resources and Conflict: Theoretical Flaws and Empirical Evidence from Northern Kenya" (Paper presented at Moi University First Annual Conference, Eldoret, February 14, 2005).

[84] E. Stites and L. Fries, "Foraging and Fighting: Community Perspectives on Natural Resources and Conflict in Southern Karamoja" (Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA, 2010); Stites, "Identity Reconfigured."

[85] Czuba, "Extension of State Power." Czuba lists the following minerals and resources that have been detected in the sub-region: gold, silver, copper, iron, titanium, manganese, niobium, tantalite, chrome, rare earth and radioactive minerals, precious and semi-precious stones (ruby, sapphire, red and green garnet, labradorite, fluorite, quartz), and limestone and marble (p. 20). Oil exploration is also underway in the region.

[86] Ibid, 16.

removal of guns and destruction of pastoral livelihoods) and the infrastructure investments in the region paved the way for self-enrichment of state managers through natural resource extraction. This process relates to conflict through its undermining of pastoral livelihoods and particularly the role and identity of young men, weakening of the customary system of authorities of the elders, and expanding of ready access to the region by external actors, including those who facilitate the quick sales of stolen animals.

The processes described by Czuba lay the foundations for mineral exploitation and profit on a commercial scale. Against this backdrop, however, takes place widespread artisanal small-scale mining (ASM), primarily of marble, limestone, and gold. Research by Iyer et al. in 2019 examined the ways in which ASM contributed to conflict in Tapac Sub-County in Moroto District.[87] They found an increase in conflict over a number of factors relating directly to mining, including conflict over land access price negotiations and payment of surface rights. In addition, a number of factors contributed to increased tension in the area, including a lack of negotiations with communities regarding access to sites and the influx of outsiders seeking to benefit from ASM. Similar to Czuba, Iyer et al. identify the shift in authority from the male elders to the elected local council (LC) system as creating problems in conflict resolution and mitigation around land and mineral access. In addition, Iyer et al. point out that the contention over ASM and heavy involvement of the LCs in conflict mitigation has undermined the traditional role of women in being able to protest against threats to their resource base.

As described by these authors, conflict over minerals is primarily on a more systemic than interpersonal level and is unlikely to directly fuel the resumption of conflict experienced in the region since 2019. This form of conflict does, however, contribute to a broader environment characterized by tension between groups, the erosion of customary authority structures, the emergence of new forms of economic power and of economic centers of power, and increased involvement by external actors with little regard for local systems (including systems of resource management and conflict resolution). Taken together, these aspects contribute to a situation in which conflict is both tolerated and occurring at multiple levels between various actors.

CLIMATE CHANGE-RELATED CONFLICT

An area of increased attention is the role of climate change in contributing to conflict. Abrahams examines the climate change-conflict nexus through the use of Karamoja as a case study.[88] He collected primary data shortly before the current resumption of insecurity in the region and argued that Karamoja could be considered "post-conflict," although with a risk of conflict resumption. More specifically, he posited that the continued effects and stresses of climate change create vulnerability to "new splintering forms of conflict linked to increasing climatic vulnerability and lengthening dry seasons."[89]

Abrahams' 2021 article provides an interesting snapshot of a period directly before the resumption of conflict. Respondents in October of 2017 reported that both cattle raids and violent incidents with small arms were extremely rare, although some raised the question as to whether the stability at that time would be "lasting" or "fictitious." Abrahams' premise was that the peace was fragile, but that if conflict resumed, it would not be driven by cattle raids and the presence of small arms, but rather—in line with the resource competition theory above—by competition over land and related resources central to pastoral production, i.e., water and pasture. However, he went on to describe what he saw as "new forms of conflict, many with roots in land use, environmental change, and decreasing livelihood options for men who had traditionally been pastoralists."[90] These new forms of conflict included land grabbing, conflict over pasture and water, and theft, largely driven by pressures on the land due to government policies promoting sedentary agriculture and climate change. According to both local government and NGO respondents to Abrahams' study, "pressures on the landscape have produced increases in theft, clashes between pastoralists groups, clashes between pastoralists and agriculturalists, and in some cases, pastoralists and the state."[91] Local respondents cite drought and the uncertain onset of the rains as caused by climate change and as the two most apparent changes. They described a host of socioeconomic problems emerging from these two impacts, including alcoholism, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and intracommunity theft by young men.

[87] P. Iyer, S. Longoli, P. Lokol, J. Achia, and R. Kodet, "We Do Not Know Whose Land This Is: Land Ownership and Conflict Dynamics in Mining Areas of Karamoja, Uganda" (Karamoja Development Forum/Ford Foundation, 2019).

[88] D. Abrahams, "Land Is Now the Biggest Gun: Climate Change and Conflict in Karamoja, Uganda," *Climate and Development* 13, no. 8 (2021): 748–60.

[89] Ibid, 748–749.

[90] Ibid, 751.

[91] Ibid, 753. He cites the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) as the state actor with whom clashes have occurred.

Ultimately, Abrahams highlights the *overlap and interaction* between climate change and conflict, as opposed to a clear chain of causality. His data and analysis, however, took place in what he describes as a "post-conflict" environment—i.e., before conflict resumed in 2019 in a form that mirrors many of the previous periods of insecurity. In a 2021 book chapter, Abrahams argues that the impacts of climate change in Karamoja create a form of insidious "slow violence" which threatens human security and fuels localized conflict.[92] Is the conflict that besets the sub-region today driven more directly by climate change impacts and pressures—including those that might be gradual and compounding—on the land than that of two, three, and four decades previously? The participatory assessment conducted by KRSU and released in conjunction with this knowledge synthesis points to hunger as the primary root cause of the return of insecurity, which aligns with the resource scarcity argument and the stresses created by impacts of increased unpredictability of rainfall and prolonged droughts. However, the participatory assessment also highlights the complex and multifaceted nature of the return of conflict and calls attention to the role of weak interventions, the collapse of local initiative and cross-border policies, and the malfeasance of security sector actors.

Work by Longoli and Iyer also investigates possible links between the current insecurity and climate change. They argue that prolonged drought and unpredictable rainfall increases stress on shared resources and contributes to tensions at these locations, which can in turn lead to a rise in interethnic conflict among groups. In a point that relates back to the findings of the recent KRSU participatory assessment, Longoli and Iyer call attention to the role of climate change in increasing the scale and duration of migration of Turkana herders into Karamoja in search of water and pasture due to the increased scarcity of pastoral resources on the Kenyan side of the border.[93] Participants in the KRSU assessment listed two drivers of conflict that relate to this trend, namely the collapse of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Kenya and Uganda stipulating shared access to resources and the resumption of conflict between the Turkana and the Jie.

[92] D. Abrahams, "From Violent Conflict to Slow Violence: Climate Change and Post-Conflict Recovery in Karamoja, Uganda," in *A Research Agenda for Geographies of Slow Violence: Making Social and Environmental Injustice Visible*, ed. S. O'Lear (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited, 2021), 89–106.

[93] S. Longoli and P. Iyer, "Livelihoods, Resilience and Migration in the Context of Slow Onset Climate Change in the IGAD Region: Case Study of the Karamoja-Turkana Cross Border Area" (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), 2022).

CONCLUSION

The historical trajectory of conflict and insecurity in Karamoja is one in which periods of violence ebb and flow in response to both internal and external patterns. External interventions have followed similar patterns of greater and lesser intensity, with a range of efforts to stem conflict (such as forced disarmament or efforts to promote inter-group reconciliation), to counter the consequences (such as programs for food assistance or restocking of lost assets), or to address the presumed underlying factors (such as trainings for alternative income generation and efforts to keep youth in school or to build community management structures). For much of its history, however, Karamoja has been marginalized, overlooked, and ignored. Today there is much greater attention to the region, from the Ugandan press, the national government, and international donors and organizations, and it is under this lens that we view the resumption of conflict since 2019. Unknown is whether it is this attention to the resumption of conflict that is unique, or the resumption of conflict itself.

This knowledge synthesis has attempted to place this return of conflict and insecurity in historical perspective through examining patterns and characteristics of conflict in the recent decades. We also engage with some of the theories that may explain this resumption of conflict but ultimately find that they do not adequately cover or explain the current phenomenon. As such, we draw readers' attention to the accompany participatory assessment, which relies not on the perspective of external academics but on the voices of communities and participants in the violence. This assessment illustrates the wide range of overlapping factors that contribute to and perpetuate the current conflict in the region.

SOURCES CITED

Abrahams, D. 2021. "From Violent Conflict to Slow Violence: Climate Change and Post-Conflict Recovery in Karamoja, Uganda." In *A Research Agenda for Geographies of Slow Violence: Making Social and Environmental Injustice Visible*, ed. S. O'Lear. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing Limited. 89–106.

Abrahams, D. 2021. "Land Is Now the Biggest Gun: Climate Change and Conflict in Karamoja, Uganda." *Climate and Development* 13 (8): 748–60.

Adano, W. R., and K. Witsenburg. 2003. "Surviving Pastoral Decline in Marsabit District." AGIDS/Uva, Amsterdam.

Akabwai, D., and P. Ateyo. 2007. "The Scramble for Cattle, Power and Guns in Karamoja." Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA.

Alnwick, D. J. 1985. "The 1980 Famine in Karamoja." In *Crisis in Uganda: The Breakdown of Health Services*, ed. C. P. Dodge and P. D. Wiebe. Oxford: Pergamon Press Ltd.

Anderson, D. 1986. "Stock Theft and Moral Economy in Colonial Kenya." *Africa* 56 (4): 399–416.

Arasio, R. L., and E. Stites. 2022. "The Return of Conflict in Karamoja, Uganda: Community Perspectives." Karamoja Resilience Support Unit (KRSU), Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Kampala.

Barber, J. 1968. *Imperial Frontier*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House.

Baxter, P. T. W. 2001. "Immediate Problems: A View from a Distance." In *African Pastoralism: Conflict, Institutions and Government*, ed. M. A. R. M. Salih, T. Dietz, and A. G. M. Ahmed. London: Pluto.

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

Biellik, R. J., and P. L. Henderson 1981. "Mortality, Nutritional Status, and Diet during the Famine in Karamoja, Uganda, 1980." *The Lancet* 2, no. 8259 (December 12): 1330–33.

Burns, J., G. Bekele, and D. Akabwai. 2013. "Livelihood Dynamics in Northern Karamoja: A Participatory Baseline Study for the Growth, Health and Governance Program (Mercy Corps)." Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA.

Cilliers, J. 2000. "Resource Wars—A New Type of Insurgency." In *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds*, ed. J. Cilliers and C. Dietrich. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Collier, P. 2001. "Economic Causes of Civil Conflict and Their Implications for Policy." In *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*, ed. C. A. Crocker, F. O. Hampson, and P. Aall. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Czuba, K. 2017. "Extension of State Power in Karamoja Part 1: The Objectives of the Ugandan State Managers in Karamoja." CCDS Working Paper Series #3, Centre for Critical Development Studies, University of Toronto Scarborough, Toronto.

Dietz, T., W. Adano, and K. Witsenburg. 2005. "Natural Resources and Conflict: Theoretical Flaws and Empirical Evidence from Northern Kenya." Paper presented at Moi University First Annual Conference, Eldoret. February 14.

Dyson-Hudson, N. 1996. *Karimojong Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dyson-Hudson, R. 1972. "Pastoralism: Self Image and Behavioral Reality." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 7:30–47.

Eaton, D. 2008. "The Business of Peace: Raiding and Peace Work along the Kenya-Uganda Border (Part I)." *African Affairs* 107 (426): 89–110.

Eaton, D. 2010. "The Rise of the 'Traider': The Commercialization of Raiding in Karamoja." *Nomadic Peoples* 14 (2): 106–122.

Fleisher, M. L. 1998. "Cattle Raiding and its Correlates: The Cultural-Ecological Consequences of Market-Oriented Cattle Raiding among the Kuria of Tanzania." *Human Ecology* 26 (4): 547–572.

Fleisher, M. L. 2000. "Kuria Cattle Raiding: Capitalist Transformation Commoditization and Crime Formation among an East African Agro-pastoral People." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (4): 745–769.

Fleischer, M. L. 2000. *Kuria Cattle Raiders: Violence and Vigilantism on the Tanzania/Kenya Frontier*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press.

Gray, S. 2000. "A Memory of Loss: Ecological Politics, Local History, and the Evolution of Karimojong Violence." *Human Organization* 59, no. 4 (Winter): 401–418.

Gray, S., M. Sundal, B. Wiebusch, M. A. Little, P. W. Leslie, and I. L. Pike. 2003. "Cattle Raiding, Cultural Survival, and Adaptability of East African Pastoralists." *Current Anthropology* 44, no. S5 (December): S3–S30.

Gulliver, P. H. 1953. "The Age Set Organization of the Jie Tribe." *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 83 (2): 147–168.

Gulliver, P. H. 1995. *The Family Herds: A Study of Two Pastoral Tribes in East Africa, the Jie and the Turkana*. London: Routledge.

Hendrickson, D., J. Armon, and R. Mearns. 1998. "The Changing Nature of Conflict and Famine Vulnerability: The Case of Livestock Raiding in Turkana District, Kenya." *Disasters* 22 (3): 185–99.

Homer-Dixon, T. 1994. "Environmental Scarcities and Violent Conflict: Evidence from Cases." *International Security* 19 (1): 5–40.

Homer-Dixon, T. 1999. *Environment, Scarcity and Violence*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Howe, K., E. Stites, and D. Akabwai, with Mercy Corps. 2015. "'We Now Have Relative Peace': Changing Conflict Dynamics in Northern Karamoja, Uganda." Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA. November.

Human Rights Watch. 2007. "'Get the Gun!' Human Rights Violations by Uganda's National Army in Law Enforcement Operations in Karamoja Region." Human Rights Watch, New York, NY.

Iyer, P., S. Longoli, P. Lokol, J. Achia, and R. Kodet. 2019. "We Do Not Know Whose Land This Is: Land Ownership and Conflict Dynamics in Mining Areas of Karamoja, Uganda." Karamoja Development Forum/Ford Foundation.

Kahl, C. 1998. "Population Growth, Environmental Degradation, and State-Sponsored Violence: The Case of Kenya." *International Security* 23 (2): 80–119.

Knighton, B. 2003. "The State as Raider among the Karimojong: 'Where There Are No Guns, They Use the Threat of Guns.'" *Africa* 73:439–46.

Lamphear, J. 1976. *The Traditional History of the Jie of Uganda*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Lamphear, J. 1998. "Brothers in Arms: Military Aspects of East African Age-Class Systems in Historical Perspective." In *Conflict, Age and Power in North East Africa: Age Systems in Transition*, ed. E. Kurimoto and S. Simonse. Athens Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Le Billon, P. 2000. "The Political Economy of Resource Wars." In *Angola's War Economy: The Role of Oil and Diamonds*, ed. J. Cilliers and C. Dietrich. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Lind, J. 2007. "Fortune and Loss in an Environment of Violence: Living with Chronic Instability in South Turkana, Kenya." PhD diss., King's College, University of London, London.

Lind, J. 2015. "Manufacturing Peace in 'No Man's Land': Livestock and Access to Resources in the Karimojong Cluster of Kenya and Uganda." In *Livelihoods, Natural Resources, and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding*, ed. H. Young and L. Goldman. London: Routledge.

Longoli, S., and P. Iyer. 2002. "Livelihoods, Resilience and Migration in the Context of Slow Onset Climate Change in the IGAD Region: Case Study of the Karamoja-Turkana Cross Border Area." Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Markakis, J. 2004. "Pastoralism on the Margin." Minority Rights Group International, London.

Meier, P., D. Bond, and J. Bond. 2007. "Environmental Influences on Pastoral Conflict in the Horn of Africa." *Political Geography* 26:716–735.

Mirzeler, M., and C. Young. 2000. "Pastoral Politics in the Northeast Periphery in Uganda: AK-47 as Change Agent." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 38 (3): 407–429.

Mkutu, K. A. 2003. "Pastoral Conflict and Small Arms: The Kenya-Uganda Border Region." Saferworld, London.

Mkutu, K. 2007. "Small Arms and Light Weapons among Pastoral Groups in the Kenya-Uganda Area." *African Affairs* 106 (102): 47–70.

Mkutu, K. 2008. *Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoralist Conflict and Small Arms (African Issues)*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Ocan, C. 1994. "Pastoral Resources and Conflicts in North-Eastern Uganda: The Karimojong Case." *Nomadic Peoples* 34/35:123–135.

Ocan, C. E. 1992. "Pastoral Crisis in Northeastern Uganda: The Changing Significance of Cattle Raids." Working Paper 21, Centre for Basic Research, Kampala.

Ofcansky, T. P. 1996. *Uganda: Tarnished Pearl of Africa*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Office of the Prime Minister. 2007. "Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Program (KIDDP)." Office of the Prime Minister, Kampala.

Oloka-Onyango, J., G. Zie, and F. Muhereza. 1993. "Pastoralism, Crisis and Transformation in Karamoja." In "CBR Pastoralism Workshop, Makerere University." 12.

Otim, P. O. 2002. "Scarcity and Conflict in Pastoral Areas: A Look at the Other Side of the Coin." In "Regional Workshops on East African Drylands." Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA), Khartoum and Addis Ababa.

Pavanello, S. 2009. "Pastoralists' Vulnerabilty in the Horn of Africa." Humanitarian Policy Group, Overseas Development Institute, London.

Porto, J. G. 2002. "Contemporary Conflict Analysis in Perspective. " In *Scarcity and Surfeit: The Ecology of Africa's Conflicts*, ed. J. Lind and K. Sturman. Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Quam, M. 1997. “Creating Peace in an Armed Society: Karamoja, Uganda, 1996.” *African Studies Quarterly* 1 (1).

Rugadya, M. 2006. “Pastoralism as a Conservation Strategy: Uganda Country Paper.” Prepared for IUCN Study, Associates for Development, Kampala.

Schilling, J., M. Akuno, J. Scheffran, and T. Weinzierl. 2011. “On Arms and Adaptation: Climate Change and Pastoral Conflict in Northern Kenya.” Working Paper CLISEC-15, University of Hamburg, Research Group Climate Change and Security, Hamburg.

Stites, E. 2013. “Identity Reconfigured: Karimojong Male Youth, Violence and Livelihoods.” PhD diss., Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, Somerville, MA.

Stites, E. 2013. “A Struggle for Rites: Masculinity, Violence and Livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda.” In *Gender, Violence and Human Security: Critical Feminist Perspectives*, eds. A. Tripp, M. Marx Ferree, and C. Ewig. New York, NY: New York University Press.

Stites, E., and D. Akabwai. 2009. “Changing Roles, Shifting Risks: Livelihood Impacts of Disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda.” Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA. June.

Stites, E., and D. Akabwai. 2010. “‘We Are Now Reduced to Women’: Impacts of Forced Disarmament in Karamoja, Uganda.” *Nomadic Peoples* 14 (2): 24–43.

Stites, E., and L. Fries. 2010. “Foraging and Fighting: Community Perspectives on Natural Resources and Conflict in Southern Karamoja.” Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA.

Stites, E. and A. Marshak. 2016. “Who Are the Lonetia? Findings from Southern Karamoja, Uganda,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 54 (May): 237–52.

Stites, E., K. Howe, T. Redda, and D. Akabwai. 2016. “‘A Better Balance:’ Revitalized Pastoral Livelihoods in Karamoja, Uganda.” Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA. July.

Uvin, P. 1996. “Tragedy in Rwanda: The Political Economy of Conflict.” *Environment* 38 (3) 6–17.

Young, H. 2009. “The Conflict-Livelihoods Cycle: Reducing Vulnerability through Understanding Maladaptive Livelihoods.” In *Environment and Conflict in Africa: Reflections on Darfur*, ed. M. Leroy. Addis Ababa: University for Peace.

Young, H., A. Osman, M. Buchanan Smith, B. Bromwich, K. Moore, and S. Ballou. 2007. “Sharpening the Strategic Focus of Livelihoods Programming in the Darfur Region, A Report of Four Livelihoods Workshops.” Feinstein International Center, Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, Boston, MA.