

STATE DRIVEN CONFLICT IN THE GREATER HORN OF AFRICA

By

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Introduction

This paper examines the conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa by looking at the causes or origins of these conflicts, their major characteristics and their impact. The paper also highlights the specific ways in which the states in the region have contributed to the genesis and perpetuation of these conflicts. The paper ends with an examination of the various responses aimed at dealing with these conflicts. The conflicts covered are those that have occurred and or are going on in Rwanda, Burundi, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Zaire and Uganda. Mention is also made of the Tanzania Uganda conflicts of 1979. The paper also discusses the violent conflicts that rocked Kenya in 1991/1992 following the legalization of multiparty politics.

Interest in these conflicts is justified on a number of practical grounds. First is that the conflicts are very costly to the governments and the peoples of the region as a whole and the individual countries in which they occur. The costs are in terms of loss of human life and property and the destruction of public infrastructure. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed in many of the countries in which the conflicts occur. Many others have also suffered and continue to suffer untold psychological trauma associated with conflicts. Second, these conflicts drain the scarce resources available to the affected countries. Once conflicts occur, scarce resources are inevitably diverted to the purchase of military equipment at the expense of socio-economic development. This is not to mention the fact that the conflicts disrupt normal economic activities such as agriculture and trade. Third, the conflicts and violence they generate in any one country creates insecurity and related problems

far beyond the countries in which they originate. Conflicts in the region have also caused diplomatic tensions between neighbouring countries in the region. Fifth, most of these conflicts have resulted in large numbers of refugees and displaced persons. Finally the failure of individual governments in the countries experiencing conflicts to solve the problems that generate the conflicts in the first place, and to maintain peace, puts the purpose of these governments into question. As Nyong'o notes, "states, or governments for that matter, justify their existence on the grounds of being able to competently manage conflicts and to ensure social progress or development" (Nyong'o:1993:2). Consequently a government that fails to provide and ensure security has no business being in power.

On the Concept of Governance

Governance is used in this paper to refer to the conscious management of public affairs through publicly promulgated rules and structures which help effect political action and the solution of societal problems. The rules in question would also determine the extent to which those in authority can legitimately exercise their power in attempting to solve or deal with societal problems. Governance thus comprises complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal and constitutional rights and obligations (UNDP: January 1997:ii). Viewed in this way, governance can be carried out at the political or state level; the institutional and administrative levels; and at the economic level. Governance at the state level we shall call political governance, while that carried out by institutions we shall call institutional or administrative governance. Political governance occurs at the state

level and involves political decisions and their execution by the politicians and other state operatives. It is also at this level that social, economic, and political relationships are regulated by major political actors. This regulation can either promote tensions or create conditions of peace and trust among citizens irrespective of the variety of interests represented in the country. Administrative governance on the other hand is carried out by those charged with the implementation of public decisions in public administrative and even legal institutions and agencies. These agencies include the civil service ministries and departments, the parastatal sector, and other public administrative organizations. Economic governance on the other hand refers to those decisions relating to the management of the economy by the state and its agencies.

From the foregoing, it is clear that we can have either poor governance or good governance. Good and legitimate governance would in this case refer to situations or practices in which the authorities rely on and use legitimate rules in an acceptable fashion to manage public affairs. The practice of good governance is usually associated with state responsiveness and accountability to the citizens on whose behalf the leaders govern or manage public affairs. Good governance uses resources in an efficient and equitable manner. Where leaders govern in this way and derive their authority from the citizens we can talk of democratic governance.

On the other hand, in situations in which leaders either misuse their powers and or disregard legitimate rules in the management of public affairs we talk of poor governance. When such rulership is accompanied by lack of responsiveness and non

accountability we can legitimately talk of authoritarianism or even dictatorship. This was a common practice under one party rule or military dictatorships that were common in Africa of the pre-1990s. Poor governance has been blamed for many of the political and economic ills affecting Africa.

It is important to note that governance or the management of public affairs affects the allocation of political power as well as the allocation of economic resources in society and this has implications for conflict as we shall demonstrate later in this paper. For now it will suffice to state that fair and legitimate allocation of resources is usually associated with good governance and reduces the incidence or chances of conflict in a polity, while unfair allocation of public resources is usually associated with poor governance and is a recipe for conflict and violence. The nature and type of governance is therefore very relevant to issues of conflict and conflict management. In this paper an attempt will be made to demonstrate that governance especially in its political and institutional \ administrative aspects has been responsible for the conflicts that have been endemic in the Greater Horn of Africa.

The Argument

The major argument of this paper is that despite the different forms in which conflicts in the region manifest themselves and the historical specificity of each conflict, they all involve primarily questions of the use or misuse of political power in the management of public affair i.e., governance. To this extent it would be misleading to treat these conflicts simply as either ethnic, clan, race or religious conflicts as is commonly portrayed in some of the literature on these conflicts. In this

regard we are in agreement with Rupensinghe that behind ethnic conflicts are often structural issues transcending immediate grievances (Rupesinghe; 1989:2).

Analysing Conflict: A Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Academic discourse about the origins of conflict particularly, though not exclusively, domestic conflict, has been informed mainly by two theoretical approaches. The first approach associates conflict and violence with the nature and behaviour of human beings. According to this view, war (read conflict) results from selfishness, from misdirected aggressive impulses of human beings. According to this view, other causes are considered as secondary and therefore have to be interpreted only in the light of these causes (Waltz, 1968:16). The second approach views conflict as arising primarily from the environment in which actors in the conflict operate or find themselves in. This is what is sometimes called the structural view of conflict or violence. Viewed from this perspective, conflict arises from the manner in which society is organized and governed. In other words, it arises from the nature of governance including the way in which public resources are distributed by the political authorities.

Bearing the above two theoretical approaches in mind is important precisely because they are likely to influence responses to conflict or violence situations. Understanding of the causes of the conflict is also important for purposes of developing appropriate policy interventions. If, for example, one prescribes to the view that violence is caused by human nature, then the response to an outbreak of violence or conflict may be to alter human nature. Alternatively, those in authority

may see repression as the solution. On the other hand, if one views the sources of conflict as being primarily structural, and has to do with the nature of governance, then the solution may be to alter the governance system by addressing those aspects of the system that may impede the realization and sustenance of peace. Thus, in cases where conflict occurs in an undemocratic political environment, a possible solution may include the opening up of the political space, and the encouragement of dialogue and consensus building. In short, there may be need to democratize the political system of the affected country as a first step toward resolving the conflict. It needs to be pointed out however, that every conflict has to be dealt with or responded to by taking into account its uniqueness or specificity taking into account the wider environment in which it occurs. Having said that we wish to reiterate the point that conflicts can be either violent or not violent. This point is important precisely because many countries such as Kenya have for a long time given the impression of being conflict free when in fact, it was engulfed in latent conflict. The authorities simply suppressed the explosion of this latent conflict.

In our analysis of the conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa, we adopt a structural approach. We argue that they have to do with the nature of governance in the affected countries. At the centre of governance is the state. In order to explain the relevance, role and impact of governance and the state in these conflicts, we approach the issues from both a historical and contemporary perspective. Before discussing the role of the state in these conflicts we first discuss the characteristics of the conflicts.

The Characteristics of the Conflicts

The conflicts in the Grater Horn of Africa are of two broad categories or types. On the one hand are those that begin as internal conflicts in the sense that they involve primarily domestic forces and issues. On the other hand are those conflicts that begin between two or more states in the region. In the first category would be included the Ethiopia - Eritrea conflicts, the current Somalia conflict and the Sudanese conflict. The Burundi and Rwanda conflict as well as Zairian conflict among others would also fall under this category. In the second category would be the 1975 conflict between Kenya and Tanzania, the Kenya-Somalia conflicts of the 1960's i.e. the shifta war - and the Somalia-Ethiopia conflicts among others. It needs to be noted, however, that both categories of conflict eventually take a regional and or international character as other states in the region or far beyond become involved.

The conflicts in the region under discussion have four other major characteristics. First, they tend to escalate into violence, are protracted and costly to the countries affected by them. Second, they are complex and interrelated. Third, the state has played a major role in their origins and continuation hence our argument that they are state driven. Finally most of them have a long history with some dating back to as far as the pre-colonial period.

A few examples of the conflicts will suffice to demonstrate each of these characteristics. Regarding the protracted nature of these conflicts it is noteworthy that in the case of Rwanda, the first major outbreak of conflict or violence took place in 1959, when the country was still under Belgian colonial rule. Subsequent violence

occurred in 1963, 1969, 1973, 1980, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, and 1995. (see Ibrahim; 1995:10). Similarly the Sudanese conflict has also been traced to the 1950s when southern Sudanese troops mutinied. This gave way to a full scale rebellion. It has not abated since. The Burundi conflict is also traced to the colonial period i.e the 1960s (Mandani: 1995; Ndarabagiye; 1996). The conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia has also been going on for many years. According to Greenfield (1994); this conflict has its origins in the 1800s and began as a dispute over ownership of the Ogaden territory.

It is also important that even though the current Somalia conflict started in earnest in 1991, following the downfall of President Siad Barre in January of that year, the seeds of the conflict were sown long before the fall of Siad Barre. What seems to have happened is that the feelings of dissatisfaction were simply suppressed by the dictatorial approach to governance under Barre. This incidentally goes to show the role of the state and governance in this particular conflict as indeed is the case in many of the other conflicts in the region. We shall discuss the role of the state in these conflicts in more details shortly.

Solutions to most of these conflicts have proved elusive. The only one that appears to have been resolved is the Ethiopia - Eritrea conflict, which was achieved through negotiated secession. Perhaps due to the apparent successful resolution of this particular conflict and the manner in which this was achieved, some scholars have suggested that secession be considered as a way of solving some of these conflicts. Others even suggested that the right to secede to provided in the constitution of

African countries (Abdulahi:1996). Another popularly mentioned solution is federation as was used in Ethiopia. We shall examine these proposals later in the paper. For now let us discuss other characteristics of these conflicts.

The complexity of these conflicts lies in the fact that apart from the state, a number of other forces become involved in the conflicts. In the case of the Sudan, the ongoing conflict, which has been manifested in racial, religious and regional forms (Nyot Kok, 1993: 33-66), it is also complicated by external forces which have been drawn into the conflict. On several occasions the Sudanese government has accused Uganda of supporting and allowing Sudanese refugees in Uganda to destabilise the Sudan. Uganda has also been accused rightly or wrongly of supporting the Sudanese Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA), the main opposition to the Sudanese government. In the same vein, Uganda has on many occasions, accused Sudan of supporting Ugandan Rebels namely the Lords Resistance Army (LRA) fighting the Museveni government. In fact the two countries have even severed diplomatic relations over the conflict. The Ethiopian and Eritrean governments have also joined the list of foreign governments accused of involvement in the current Sudanese conflict.

Allegations of extra-continental involvement in the conflict in the region under discussion has also been the order of the day. One has only to remember the involvement of the Super Powers in the conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia during the height of the cold war to appreciate what is being said here. Involvement of regional powers in these conflicts have also complicated the conflicts. For example, Rwanda and Uganda have been accused by both Zaire and the (USA) of being

involved in attempts by the Banyamulenge rebels to topple the Zaire government (Weekly Review, January 17th 1997:24). It is also reported that former UNITA or Angola soldiers are assisting the Zaire government in the war with the Zairian rebels (Sunday Nation May 11, 1996). Other foreign mercenaries are also said to have been recruited by the Zairian government to assist in resisting the rebels. For details of the forces at play in the other conflicts in Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Rwanda and Burundi See (Anyan'g Nyon'go et al, 1993; Ndarubaragiye: 1996; Mamdani: 1995).

Whatever the validity or otherwise of the accusations that foreigners are involved, there is no escaping the fact that it has complicated the conflicts and thus made efforts at solution difficult. Some of the countries accused of involvement find themselves in an embarrassing situation when they are part of the team negotiating a solution to the conflict. Uganda for, example, was part of the regional heads of states involved in trying to solutions to the Zairian crisis. Second, the involvement of foreign powers or actors has also changed the character of the conflict from a purely internal matter to an international problem. What this suggests is that the traditional dichotomy between internal and international conflicts does not really apply to the conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa.

Recognition of this fact is significant because it has implications for the role of actors especially the United Nations (UN) and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Both organizations, for example, have tried to play a role in the solution to these conflicts but find their effectiveness reduced because they are barred by their charter from getting involved in internal affairs of independent states. There is a tendency to

regard these conflict as purely internal. This is a major handicap. It may also determine the type of solutions that may be appropriate for the conflict. These factors should therefore not just be appreciated but taken into account in any efforts to solve the problem and to develop appropriate policy interventions. This unfortunately has not always been the case as demonstrated in the paper by Mwagiru aslo presented at this workshop.

The Role of the State in the Conflicts

The role of the state in the conflicts in the Great Horn of Africa can be understood from a number of perspectives. In the first instance, it is state which establishes the rules of governance and is responsible for the enforcement of these rules. To the extent that the state fails to enact legitimate rules and structures that ensure good governance then the state will have created conditions for potential and eventually actual conflict and violence. States can also create conditions for conflicts by failing to observe governance rules. The literature on governance in Africa is replete with observations that leaders of African states have either ignored or changed constitutions at will in order to serve their short term political interests (Markakis; 1994:223). This has been manifested in over cartellization of power, authoritarianism and repression.

While both military and one party civilian governments in the Greater Horn Africa were guilty of authoritarianism, this type of governance was particularly cruel under military rule. Rules that were used by military leaders were in most cases illegitimate. This was due to the fact that they were not popularly developed and

sanctioned by any popularly elected representative body. This means that citizens were not consulted. In fact most military rulers in the region simply ruled by decrees issued from time to time by the head of state and imposed on the citizens. Under Idi Amin of Uganda, for example, there was no parliament that could even rubber stamp the numerous presidential decrees. Amin dictated every rule and decision used in the management of public affairs in Uganda. It was therefore not surprising that the initial excitement that accompanied his rise to power in 1971, soon gave way to resentment and the eventual emergence of popular armed opposition to his rule.

With the support of the Tanzanians, the conflict in Uganda took a regional character. In 1979 Tanzania at the request of Ugandans opposed to the Amin excesses and in response to numerous provocations from Amin, attacked the regime of Idi Amin and removed him from power. It is instructive also to note that at one time Amin even claimed that large parts of Kenya belonged to Uganda and that he would fight for its return to Uganda. This led to one of the strongest reactions from President Kenyatta. Kenyatta hurriedly called a public rally in Nairobi to condemn the claims and to urge the country to prepare to defend itself from Amin. It was quite clear that Amin's continued stay in power was going to create regional conflict involving Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. It was clearly the nature of governance under Idi Amin that encouraged internal rebellion. It was also Amin's disrespect for her neighbours and particularly the sovereignty of their countries and his erratic behaviour that made the involvement of Tanzania necessary as Tanzania did not attack until Uganda invaded the Kagera region of Tanzania in 1979.

The state can also contribute to the genesis and perpetuation of conflict by failing to exercise fairness in the allocation of public resources under its control. The resources in question include political power. In this regard it is instructive to note that in Africa it is only South Africa that has since its first multiracial elections in 1994, shared power between the ruling party and the opposition parties. Most other African states have excluded opposition parties from sharing power and thereby encouraging fierce struggles for power that in many instances degenerates into violent conflicts. Kenya is a good example in this region. The point is that groups that view allocation of resources as being discriminatory against them are likely to seek redress. This may sometimes take violent forms including attempts to overthrow such governments.

Conflict and violence can also be blamed on a state that either relies on violence and repression rather than dialogue and the rule of law to respond to popular and legitimate demands from the citizens. This had been quite common in the Greater Horn of Africa and applied to both military and civilian governments. Governments in the region tended to abhor any form of criticism or demands placed on them by citizens either as individuals or as groups. Rather than listen to such demands and respond peacefully, many governments in the region chose to use violence and other forms of repression to deal with their citizens. Detention of politicians opposed to the regime was a common thing in places like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. In other cases, such as Zaire opponents of the regime were either killed or forced to go into exile. Yet in places like Sudan outright military operation was carried out continuously to deal with opponents of the regime. The Sudanese government also imposed

Islamic or sharia law on all citizens irrespective of their religion. All these were recipes for conflict and the blame lies squarely on the state and the nature of governance.

The violence that was witnessed in Kenya on May 31st, and on July 7th, 1997 is another good example of what we are talking about here. The ruling party had since the introduction of multiparty politics in 1992 ruled out any form of dialogue with the opposition parties and their leaders. The ruling party and by extension the government, chose instead to frustrate any efforts by the opposition to sell their policies to the public and even to meet their supporters. This was done or achieved in several ways. First the government relied on the notorious and contentious Public order Act to deny opposition politicians licenses to hold public rallies. The Act requires anybody or party wishing to hold political rallies to obtain a license from the Provincial Administration and specifies the period within which the application must be made and submitted to the relevant office of the Provincial Administration. The relevant officer can issue or deny a license. The Provincial Administration can also cancel a licensed meeting at the eleventh hour or stop an ongoing meeting without any consultation with the organizer. Denial of licenses are usually explained in terms of maintaining security. In other words, the government argues that it cancels or denies a license if holding the rally would cause security problems.

An interesting thing to note is the discriminatory manner in which these licenses are given or applications are handled by the Provincial Administration. The ruling party seems to get all licenses it applies for and their rallies are not stopped by the

Provincial Administration, the police or any other security forces. It would appear that the law was aimed at frustrating the opposition since most of their applications are either rejected or their meetings cancelled. This has created a lot of tension and mistrust between the ruling party and by extension the government on the one hand, and the opposition on the other. The tension eventually exploded into violence on May 21st and July 7th, 1997 when the opposition insisted on holding rallies without a licence as an attempt to demonstrate their displeasure with the law and the discriminatory manner in which it was applied. It is instructive that when the government finally indicated its willingness to hold dialogue with the opposition and other pro-reform groups, political tension decreased considerably. In fact a rally held by the pro-reformists in Mombasa on Saturday 26th July, 1997 after the government had indicated willingness to debate the issue of constitutional reforms did not result in any destructive violence. This contrasts sharply with the destruction that occurred on July 7th, 1997 when the government disrupted a planned opposition rally in Nairobi. The difference goes a long way to show that violence and conflict in Kenya's political system is due mainly to the repressive nature of governance that KANU has used all along. This is unfortunate because dialogue and debate form the cornerstone of democracy.

The government has also used Chief's Act, another contentious legislation, to arrest and confine opposition politicians and thereby creating tension and grounds for conflict and violence. All these and other repressive measures used to govern have been major sources of conflict and violence not just in Kenya but in other countries in the Greater Horn of Africa and beyond. The best example outside the Greater Horn

of Africa is South Africa under apartheid. There is no doubt that conflict and violence in apartheid South Africa was caused primarily by the repression and absence of dialogue, two of the variables that help define poor governance. Finally many conflicts occur in response to the expansionist tendencies of many states especially in Africa. Writing about the Horn of Africa, Markakis observes that:

Expansionist trends did not cease with the decline of colonialism. A new round began at the end of the second world war, with the disposal of Italy's former colonies. Seeking an outlet to the sea, Ethiopia at the time laid claims to all parts of Somalia and succeeded in annexing Eritrea. In turn, when it gained independence in 1960, the Somalia republic laid claims against all its neighbours, and the pursuit of these claims became a source of perennial conflict in the region. (1994:221).

These expansionist tendencies account for the violent conflicts between Kenya and Somalia in the 1960s as well as those between Ethiopia and Somalia over Djibouti. Expansionism is also largely responsible for the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Whether the initial problem was caused by the colonial powers is not the issue. What is significant is that both the colonial authorities and those of post independence periods have been engaged in expansionist tendencies and thus causing resentment and conflict.

A close examination of the conflict in the Greater Horn of Africa reveal that states in the region have not always demonstrated neutrality in any of these conflicts. Instead they have behaved as interested parties and actors with some of them being the object of conflict. In other cases such as the 1991/92 internal conflicts in Kenya, the state has either turned a blind eye to an impending conflict or has simply encouraged such conflicts to occur. 'States tend to respond in this manner when they

view the conflict to be in their interest and in the interest of those who preside over the state. Thus the state has been involved in one way or another in most of the conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa.

A major factor in virtually all these conflicts in recent time has been the failure of the states to respect fundamental human rights and to accord each individual and group its rightful place in society. Many states in the Horn of Africa have been authoritarian and repressive and thereby violating human rights at will. This violation of human rights has continued despite the introduction of multiparty rule in Africa since the 1990s. There is no wonder that conflicts continue unabated in the region.

Tracing the history of violence in Rwanda to the colonial times Mamdani observes that:

The Germans understood Africa through the lenses of the late 19th century imperial Europe, which saw humanity as a conglomeration of races that needed to be identified and hierarchically classified... But it was the Belgians who from 1922 to 1933 turned this theory into the very basis of organizing the administration of the colonial state and creating demarcations amongst the colonized. They classified the population into Batutsi and Bahutu (and Batwa) and issued passes identifying all. Even the relative flexibility in the political distinction in the pre-colonial period was removed, and the distinction frozen into a rigid caste-like structure" (Mamdani 1995:7).

He goes on to say that:

So harsh was Belgian rule, and with such impunity was it translated into practice by the hierarchy of Batutsi chiefs- the instrumentality of Belgian administration- that hundreds of thousands of Bahutu peasants fled into Uganda in the decade after 1928.. Thus colonial rule strengthened and polarized an apparent physical difference into an antagonistic political relation (p7).

The result of this deliberate political strategy by the state has been a protracted struggle by the Hutu to regain their rightful position in the political economy of Rwanda. The Tutsi on the other hand are determined to retain their power and domination over the Hutus. The result has been numerous cases of genocide of one group by another starting from about the late 1950s. These struggles that date to the colonial period were carried over to the independence period and remains the major contributing factor to the current conflict in both Rwanda and Burundi. According to Rupesinghe,

"in the process of state formations the weaknesses and fragility of political structures allowed for ethnicization of the state. The concept of ethnicity or religion became increasingly useful for political legitimation and domination... What evolved was a type of state formation strongly bound by patron-client loyalties which became all - pervasive, with some groups included and others excluded" (3).

Thus what appears be an ethnic conflict has its origins in the use and misuse of political power by state officials.

In the case of Burundi the state is said to have not only discriminated against the Hutu but also encouraged the stereotyping of the Hutu as inferior to the Tutsis (Ndarubagiye: 1996). This was in addition to the practice in which the Hutu were relegated to manual workers for the Tutsi who controlled political and military power in Burundi. Thus even though not all the Tutsi were powerful or materially rich, they were made to feel closer to power and this in itself made them despise or look down upon the Hutu in Burundi. It is important to note that such attitudes are very hard to eradicate once they take root and particularly when they get official recognition and support as in the case of the Burundi and Rwanda governments.

States also contribute to conflict and violence by failing to deal decisively with leaders who cause violence by, for example, inciting the public into violence. This is especially so when such incitement is intended to result in large scale violence such as the one that was witnessed in many of the countries in the Greater Horn of Africa. More often than not, the incitement that goes unpunished by government comes from those leaders who are close to the political establishment and therefore who enjoy political protection. Usually they tend to promote a hidden agenda of the state on behalf of the powers that be. There have been many examples of this kind of thing in many countries of the region under consideration.

Perhaps the most vivid example to the present author were the statements made by some Kenyan politicians just prior to the outbreak of 1991/92 violence in some parts of the country. These clashes which have been christened ethnic clashes were between section of the Kalenjin, the Kikuyu, the Luhya, and the Luo ethnic groups. The relevant point about these clashes for our purposes is that their eruption was preceded by inflammatory statements by government ministers who were opposed to the introduction of multiparty politics in the country. One such government minister was Mr. William Ole Ntimama, a Maasai politician from the Rift Valley province, who at that time was a close confidant of President Moi. He made several inflammatory statements about the Kikuyu community resident in Enoosupukia area of the Rift Valley in which the Masaai ethnic group constitute the majority. In one of these statements, Ole Ntimama is reported to have remarked that the Masaai were fighting for their rights and that he had no regrets about what happened and that he had to lead the Maasai in protecting their rights (Sunday Nation, January 15,

1995:7). He was referring to the Kikuyu attack on the Maasai in Enoosupukia. There were also reports in the early 1990s of other leading Rift Valley KANU politicians calling on their supporters to chop off fingers of those displaying the two finger sign that symbolized multiparty politics in the country. It is significant that the state did not censure Ole Ntimama or other KANU politicians who made these inflammatory statements. As one observer remarked, such statements cannot be dismissed as having no influence on the violence (The Standard, March 23, 1992:16-17) in question. By keeping silent the state encouraged such politicians and acted in ways that suggest that it condoned this type of violence.

The question that begs an answer as far as the behaviour of the state in this regard is concerned is precisely this: what might have been the motive behind state support for these violent clashes? This is no doubt a difficult question to answer especially in view of the state's position that it was the opposition which encouraged the violence. The state also blamed the violence on multiparty politics. Moi had always argued and maintained that Kenya was not yet ready for multiparty politics because of its multi-ethnic composition. His position was that multiparty politics would breed violence as parties would be based or formed along ethnic lines with the consequence of violence.

The persuasiveness of these arguments notwithstanding, the failure by the state to censure its supporters who made the inflammatory statements indicate some measure of state support for the violence. One can identify at least two plausible reasons why the state may have at least indirectly supported these clashes. The first

was to prove that Moi was right in predicting that multiparty politics would bring about ethnic violence. The other plausible explanation is that Moi and the state would have wanted to force non KANU supporters living in the Rift Valley province to leave the area before the registration of voters for the 1992 parliamentary and presidential elections. This would ensure that the majority of voters in the Rift Valley were KANU supporters. Moi had suspected, and perhaps had reason to believe, that the Kikuyu, the Luhya and the Luo would not support KANU. Members of these ethnic groups living in the Rift Valley had therefore to be prevented from registering there as voters.

The significance of this lies in the fact that just prior to the 1992 elections KANU parliament passed a constitutional amendment requiring that for a presidential candidate to win the presidency he / she had to obtain at least 25% of the votes cast in at least (5) of the eight administrative provinces into which the country is divided.

While these explanations basically may be speculative, they are certainly quite plausible and cannot be dismissed unless other evidence is provided to the contrary. In fact a committee set up by the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) which investigated these clashes reported that the clashes were deliberately instigated by the state (NCCK, April, 1992). A parliamentary select committee on the clashes also reported a similar finding. It is unfortunate that the state has not done much to compensate the victims of these clashes especially those who lost property including their land. In fact according to one report, the government frustrated efforts by the UNDP to resettle some of the Kikuyu victims who were displaced in Maala & Kericho areas of the Rift Valley province (Weekly review, January 13, 1995).

The declaration, after the legalization of political pluralism, that some parts of the country belonged to particular political parties also created tensions and potential grounds for conflict and violence. This idea was first expressed by KANU which declared some parts of the Rift Valley to be KANU zones. The party went ahead and dared other parties to set foot in these areas or zones. The unfortunate thing is that it is only the opposition parties that were barred from entering certain parts of the country for purposes of selling their party programmes. KANU on its part used its enormous resources as a ruling party to campaign in all parts of the country while making it virtually impossible for the opposition to do the same. There is as a result a lot of tension in the country which might lead to civil war on a scale similar to that of Somalia and Sudan or even those that occurred recently in Rwanda and Burundi. This is particularly likely to happen as the hitherto robust economy takes a nose dive. This is already happening. Once the economy collapses and peoples feel their future is doomed, they are likely to revolt against the government or support a rebel movement. This is what happened to Uganda and recently in Zaire.

The current Zairian conflict too indicates very clearly that the state and modes of governance is at the root cause of the conflict. To start with it is a historical fact that when the colonial powers drew the boundaries that gave birth to present day Rwanda and Burundi, they did not care to ensure that all Hutus and Tutsis, in the Great Lakes region were brought under one territory. Yet according to Amaza (1995) the Tutsis and the Hutu who are commonly known as the Banyarwanda, were to be found in present day Zaire, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania even before colonial rule set in. Many of them were therefore left scattered in many countries in

the region by the colonial boundaries. This is what explains the large presence of people of Tutsi origin in Eastern Zaire. Based on the history just described, it would be correct to say that the Tutsis have a right to be in Zaire and Rwanda, just as the Maasai have a right to be in both Kenya and Tanzania. The refusal by the Mobutu regime in Zaire to recognize the Banyamulenge as bona fide citizens and to accord them equal treatment with other Zairians is a major cause of the current problem. The state in Zaire must thus be blamed for causing the conflict by disowning and discriminating against a group of its own citizens, the Banyamulenge. It is thus not a tribal or ethnic war as such, but a war caused by poor governance. The Zairian conflict should also be seen in the wider context of the repressive and dictatorial mode of governing that Mobutu employed ever since coming to power in military coup in 1965. It would appear that Kabila, the rebel leader, was simply waiting for an opportunity for rebellion to present itself before taking up arms against the Mobutu regime. This opportunity presented itself when Mobutu withdrew citizenship from the Banyamulenge. Kabila and the rebel forces had also built up adequate military power to effectively challenge the demoralized Zairian army. Judged by the support given to this rebellion by different ethnic groups in Zaire it would be correct to argue that the rebels are not fighting as Tutsis but as oppressed people in search of liberation. In short, they are in search of better or improved governance.

The hand of the state can also be easily demonstrated in the case of the Somalia, Sudanese and many other conflicts in the region. In all these cases the conflicts have had to do with the injustices meted to a community either by the state or with the approval of the state. This point is well covered by the various

contributors to the Book "Arms and Daggers in the Heart of Africa" 1993 and by Abdullahi (1996) among other scholars. What this tells us is that these conflicts and violence have a lot to do with the nature of the state and the mode of governance in these countries. Many of these conflicts have escalated because of the way states in the region have responded to ethnic, racial, religious, or any other group claims, many of which are quite legitimate. Very often these states have, rather than solve the problems, visited either violence or threats of violence on the citizens. In other cases states have responded by marginalising whole communities and excluding some groups from the country's political and economic resources.

The states in the Greater Horn of Africa have also contributed to the conflicts in the region by failing to manage their economies well. The history of post independence Africa as a whole has been one of both political and economic decline. At the economic front the continent has been characterised by declining or stagnant economic growth, rising unemployment, deepening poverty and a general social degradation. Many countries in the Greater Horn of Africa were not able to feed their people either because they did not produce enough food or they did not plan well for the future. In some countries, for example, food stocks were sold before the next harvest only to be faced by crop failure and therefore famine. This has happened in Kenya on many occasions. Food shortages is therefore not always caused by drought although many leaders in the region are always quick to blame drought for the frequent food shortages in these countries. In many cases it is due simply to poor planning. In yet other cases food shortages is caused by general political instability due to poor governance. This make it impossible for people to work on their farms

thereby causing food shortages. The media's frequent pictures of starving people in the Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia and further afield in Mozambique provides adequate evidence of the situation being described here.

The problem of lack of or poor planning has combined with economic mismanagement and corruption in these countries' public bureaucracies and lack of accountability to condemn the citizens of these countries to poverty and suffering. It has also ensured that economies of these countries are no able to generate jobs to employ the rising number of job seekers. Many of these job seekers come from the expanded education system. Then there is the problem of people in the Greater Horn of Africa not being able to gain access to decent clothing and shelter. Inadequate and poor housing is particularly problematic in the urban areas. The education and health sectors of these countries were not spared either. There is evidence that these sectors were seriously affected by poor planning, mismanagement, corruption and general neglect by the state. (Wanyande 1993). This was despite the enormous explosion in the number of education and health facilities in many of these countries. Thus even the donor assistance given to these sectors could not help as mismanagement, corruption and government discriminatory policies led to a waste of the resources. Poor governance at both the political and economic level therefore combined to create conditions of conflict at the socio economic levels. This is particularly true in places like Kenya where as Abdullahi points out, the disparity in development is not an accident; rather, it is the undeclared policy of the Kenya government, a government which claims that all Kenyans are equal, but which deliberately discriminates against certain ethnic nationalities and communities

(Abdullahi; 1996: 374). Again the case of Kenya is just an example. Many other cases in the region and indeed the rest of Africa can be given. The point is, however, that even economic violence that we readily associate with (SAPs) has something to do with the way in which the state has and continues to manage the economy i.e economic governance.

It is this state of violence that has made victim communities such as those in southern Sudan so bitter that it becomes difficult to heal the wounds inflicted on them. It is against this background that failure to reconcile clans in Somalia or ethnic groups in Rwanda and even Burundi and the violence between them ought to be understood. This is because of the psychological problems that these victims experience.

Impact of the Conflicts

The conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa have been very costly to the countries in which they occur as well as in the wider region. The most obvious effect of these conflicts have obviously been in terms of human lives lost. The recent genocide in Rwanda, for example, is said to have led to the death of over half a million people. Similarly a large number of people have died in Somalia since the current conflict erupted following the fall of Siad Bare regime in 1991. According to a 1995 United Nations report on the Somalia conflict,

The hostilities resulted in widespread death and destruction, forcing hundreds thousands of civilians to flee their homes and causing a dire need for emergency humanitarian assistance. Almost 4.5 million people in Somalia-over half of the estimated population were threatened by

severe malnutrition and malnutrition related disease, with the most affected living in the countryside. It was estimated that perhaps 3000,000 people died since November 1991 and at least 1.5 million lives were at immediate risk. Almost one million Somalis sought refuge in neighbouring countries and elsewhere (UN Report, April 1995:1).

Equally significant is the psychological effects of these conflicts on the individuals who either lose their relatives and friends or whole communities that are forced to seek refuge elsewhere due to conflict conditions. A lot has been written about the large number of refugees in Africa, most of whom flee from political violence in their countries of origin. What we need to note here is that the number of refugees fleeing from conflicts in the Greater Horn of Africa is one of the highest in the continent compared to those from other regions in the continent. This may be due to the protracted nature of the conflicts, their violent form and the frequency with which they occur or recur. There are always waves of refugees looking for elusive peace and tranquillity in the region. To this number must be added thousands of displaced persons who are forced to live in forced camps within their own countries. The recent ethnic violence in Kenya, for example, displaced many families who were forced to flee their original homes to live elsewhere in the country. Those are people who were forced to abandon their homes in areas such as Molo and Narok districts in the Rift Valley province. A UNDP sponsored study reported in 1994 that about 42,500 families were affected by the clashes while between 10,000 to 20,000 people were displaced and lived in camps. The report covered only Nandi, Nakuru, Kisumu, Bungoma, Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu districts. Areas such as Molo, Naivasha, Kisii and many others are left out. The number of misplaced persons is therefore very high.

While victims of poor governance suffered in silence under one party rule, the opening up of political space following political liberalization has changed this. The current demands by ethnic groups such as the Banyamulenge in Zaire for recognition can be attributed to the opening up of the political space and the demands that Zaire democratize its political system. Such groups know that they are fighting a cause that has legitimacy in the eyes of not just other oppressed groups but also the international community. Democratization, however, is not the cause of these ethnic demands for autonomy or recognition, the close association between them notwithstanding. Democratization has simply provided an opportunity for the hitherto oppressed groups to make their conditions and demands publicly known.

Responses to the conflict generating conditions

Thus far we have attempted to shed insights into the causes, characteristics and impact of these conflicts. The paper has discussed the specific ways in which states in the Greater Horn of Africa have contributed to the genesis and continuation of the conflicts.

In the next several pages we shall turn our attention to some of the ways in which both the international community and the countries in the Greater Horn of Africa have responded to these conflicts. The discussion will focus on three major responses. The first is the policy changes that have been suggested as having the greatest chance or potential for solving the conflicts. The second relates to the debates about constitutional reforms while the third is the civilian uprisings that have occurred in a number of countries in the region. The policy changes that have been

suggested and tried in some countries in the region, relate to the economic as well as political aspects of the problem. This has been done on the basis that the causes of the conflicts in the region have both economic and political dimensions i.e, that the two are closely linked. It is therefore hoped or assumed that changes are required both in the political and in the economic systems if the conflict generating situations are to be reduced if not eliminated. We shall not therefore discuss the traditional conflict management strategies and approaches since this is the subject of another paper in this workshop.

Response through economic policy changes

One of the ways through which both the international community and some domestic forces have responded to the causes of the conflict is to recommend and insist on the introduction of major economic policy changes. This has been done in the assumption that many of these conflicts have to do with poor economic management and policies pursued by these states. Led by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and some western donor countries, the international community has pushed for the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). These programmes which are mainly economic in thrust, aimed at economic liberalization, price decontrol, a more prominent role of the private sector in economic management. The idea is to shift the emphasis of economic management from the state to the private sector. This is intended to inject rationality and efficiency in the management of the economies of these countries. The hope or assumption was that this would lead to the restoration of economic growth which had declined or stagnated in many of the countries of the region. The severity of Sub-

Saharan Africa's economic decline has been well documented (see for example, Hearnly and Robinson: 1994, Hyden G: 1983; Anyang' Nyong'o; 1993). The assumption behind these policy changes was that they would also lead to better economic management and that this would reduce tensions and potential conditions for conflict.

Since, the subject of Structural Adjustment Programmes will be discussed in another paper, what we need to note here is simply that most countries in the region that have introduced these policy changes have done so very reluctantly and haphazardly. Kenya, for example, continues to express its displeasure at the IMF and the World Bank for forcing these policy changes on it (Daily Nation, July 28, 1997). Many other countries such as Zaire and Sudan and Somalia have not even introduced the policy changes although pressure is on that they do so. Sudan and Somalia have been engaged in such serious civil wars that they do not have time to even think about the changes being suggested. In fact the problem in Somalia is that since the overthrow of President Siad Barre in 1991, there has been no central government to discuss issues of economic reform with. The impact of these reforms is therefore yet to be felt and is one area that requires detailed empirical study.

Democratization as a response

The other significant response to the conflict arising from poor governance has been the pressure for democratization. The idea is to take care of the political dimension of the problem. Democratization as an approach to the crisis of governance was also supported by both the international and domestic forces in many of the countries of the Greater Horn of Africa. International forces that supported

democratization as a response to these conflicts include the western countries and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The IMF and even the World Bank initially focussed on the economic reforms and did not think that the reforms required a democratic political environment. It was not until much later that these two institutions realized that the African crisis had economic and political dimensions and therefore had to be tackled from both fronts. In short, the crisis could only be solved if there was improved economic and political governance.

What has emerged as far as this response is concerned is the emphasis on the introduction of multiparty politics. This has been accompanied by calls for transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs. Again not all countries in the region have introduced multiparty politics. Those that have done so include Tanzania and Kenya. In fact both countries have held their first multiparty elections with Kenya preparing for the second one later this year. Tanzania held its first multiparty elections in 1995. The government under President Mkapa has put a lot of emphasis on transparency and accountability. The President has even declared his personal wealth and how he acquired them. He has done this as a demonstration that he is committed to democratic governance, accountability and transparency.

Other countries such as Zaire did not introduce multiparty politics. Mobutu kept giving mixed signals to those donor nations that wanted him to introduce this type of system. He was in fact overthrown in May 1997 before he introduced any form of democratic governance nor serious economic adjustments along the lines demanded by the IMF, the World Bank and other donors. Uganda on the other hand, allows the

existence and operation of different political parties and organizations but rejects the idea of holding elections along party lines. According to Uganda's system, politicians seeking elective office do so as individuals and not as party candidates. There is, however, some level of political openness, competition and a measure of accountability and transparency. Sudan and Somalia, on the other hand have been too unstable to create conditions that might facilitate any form of democratic politics. The pressure is, however, on them just as it is on Rwanda and Burundi to democratize their politics as a way to avoid the current conflicts.

A major factor behind the pressure for democratization has been the realization that the conflicts have come about mainly due to misuse of political and economic power. It needs to be noted here that one party regimes and the military dictatorships, failed to bring about national cohesion in Africa. It also failed to bring about the expected socio-economic development which its proponents had said it would. Instead these systems of governance were characterized by human rights violation, intolerance of diversity of opinion, political repression, economic injustices and general political decay. All this led to dispare and created conditions for potential and actual conflict and violence. The hope and assumption then is that the conflicts can be reduce, if not eliminated, by improving the system of governance. The introduction of democracy, multiparty politics, and a more humane form of governance is one of the steps in this direction.

Constitutional Debates as a response

Other responses to the crisis of governance in the Greater Horn of Africa have included attempts to alter the existing political arrangements without necessarily removing those in power. In countries such as Kenya, there have been suggestions that the country adopt a federal system of government, commonly referred to as majimbo in local parlance. The idea behind federalism is that it would lead to a more democratic and participatory system of government which had been lacking under the one party system of government. The one party system of government had centralized power in the presidency to the extent that many interested groups had no political space in which to exercise their right to determine their political destiny and that of the nation. The majimbo debate was particularly strong in the early 1990s after the introduction of political pluralism. This was partly because under one party rule, citizens have no opportunity or forum to suggest alternative model of political organization for the country as this would have been interpreted as being disloyal to the state. Multiparty politics therefore provided the opportunity for the expression of new ideas. Secondly, with the advent of multi-party politics, every group was interested in protecting its interests. Some of those in power felt threatened and argued for majimboism in the belief that this would give them a chance to control their own regions where they come from. Others in the political "cold" also viewed majimbo as potentially advantageous to them in that it would provide them with an opportunity to participate in and influence the political system within their own regions. This debate however ended with a statement from the President that he was not for majimbo.

Federalism has also been suggested as a solution to the Sudanese conflict. According to one scholar (Nyot Kok; 1993), it has not worked for several reasons. First there is no trust by the southerners that the ruling groups in the north would abide by such an arrangement particularly when it involves, as it must, a far reaching restructuring of the central government power in a manner that fairly and effectively reflects the federal character of the Sudan. Secondly, many secular minded Sudanese would not accept a federal scheme, or any other decentralized arrangement, as long as it is within an Islamic or non-Islamic authoritarian state. The third obstacle is the issue of democracy. The present regime has made its choice: no multi-party democracy in the Sudan and return to secularism (Nyot Kok: 1993, 60-61). Other suggested solutions to the Sudanese conflict include a confederation and even partition. None has however found overwhelming support. They however represent important responses to solve the conflict of governance in the country.

Abdullahi on the other hand suggests succession as the solution to conflicts in which ethnic communities are discriminated against (Abdullahi; 1996:372-390). Abdullahi's suggestion is based on the assumption that ethnicity is the cause of many of the conflicts in Africa. This in my view misses the point. To start with, as we indicated already, many of the problems or conflicts that manifest themselves as ethnic are caused principally by poor governance. This means that even if an ethnic group were to succeed and form its own state, their problems will not be solved unless they adopt good governance. The case of Somalia demonstrates this point well. Somalia is a country made up of one ethnic group yet it is characterized by more or less similar problems as Kenya which is a multi-ethnic country. In any case,

Abdullahi's solution does not take into account questions of viability of the succeeding units. What would happen, for example, if the ethnic community that succeeds begins to discriminate against smaller groupings such as clans or even villages? Should such clans also be allowed to succeed even if they are not viable? Abdullahi gives the example of Ethiopia where the right to succeed has been legalized and included in the country's constitution. The point, however, is that succession is not necessarily the solution to every case where ethnic, religious, or even racial groups are subjected to poor governance. This is true even if even the right to succeed can be defended on the grounds of the right to self determination as Abdullahi correctly argues. It needs to be noted that in most of these cases ethnicity per se is not the problem nor is it simply the absence of the right to succeed. This is despite the possibility that such a scenario may encourage aggressors to violate the rights of the ethnic groups in question. As we said before, these problems have to do with poor governance which is therefore what ought to be addressed. In saying this we are not suggesting that sessions will always fail. All we are saying is that each case ought to be treated in its own merit.

Civilian Uprising

The third major response to these conflicts has been civilian uprising aimed at ousting the existing political establishment. A major aim of this response appears to be to revolutionize the entire socio-political order. It is in other words a most revolutionary response than the other two. Successful civilian uprising in the region have occurred in Uganda, Rwanda and most recently in Zaire. In all these cases poor governance and the desire to improve governance appear to be the driving force.

These uprisings have also occurred in situations where the incumbent regime has for one reason or another refused to introduce democratic forms of governance and the military or army is not ready to stage a coup. This situation makes civilian uprising the only viable alternative. In the Ugandan case, Museveni mobilized Ugandans to overthrow the government of Tito Okello in 1984 and went on to introduce village level democratic institutions of governance known as Resistance Councils.

The most recent examples of a successful civilian uprising against an existing regime is that spearheaded by Laurent Kabila against Mobutu of Zaire, now renamed The Democratic Republic of Congo. Kabila mobilized and organized a coalition of democratic forces to fight against Mobutu who was accused of among other things, poor governance. Mobutu was ousted in May, 1997. Kabila's major task is to reconstruct the national economy which had declined to embarrassing levels. He also has to show his countrymen and women that his regime will be better than that of Mobutu. Kabila has not yet unveiled any particular economic policy programme or political orientation that he wants he pursue. It is therefore difficult to characterise his regime. Perhaps this will be possible in the next few months as his plans begin to unfold. What is clear from the Uganda, Rwandan and Zairean cases is that they were all driven by need to bring an end to poor governance.

There are also a number of other interesting things about these types of responses that are now becoming common in the Great Horn of Africa region. First is that it represents a new form of changing unpopular governments in the region and Africa generally. During the 1960s, 1970 and to some extent early 1980s, the most

common way of replacing governments in Africa was through military coups by the armed forces of the governments in power. Military coups resulted in the establishment of military rule, which were basically dictatorial. Military coups have become less common in Sub-Saharan Africa. The few that have occurred in the 1990s involve Nigeria, Siera Leone and Burundi.

The second interesting thing about these uprisings is that the governments established after they overthrow the existing regimes receive almost immediate support and recognition by other African leaders and even the OAU. This was not the case with the military governments that followed military coups. In fact, the Burundi coup under General Buyoya which occurred recently has been severely condemned by leaders in the Greater Horn of Africa. These countries have even imposed sanctions on the regime to bring it down. The same leaders however, recognized the government of Kabila almost immediately Mobutu left the throne. These governments also appear to enjoy a fair amount of political legitimacy among the general population of their countries. This legitimacy and popularity also tend to last a little longer than was the case with governments established after a military coup.

The other interesting thing that this type of response has brought to the fore has to do with the strength of official armed forces and their efficacy. In all the three successful civilian uprisings discussed in this paper, the regular government army did not offer any strong resistance to the advancing rebel forces. In fact many of the regular forces simply disintegrated with many soldiers surrendering without firing a shot. The question then is how can we explain the helplessness of the regular

armies? Has it got to do with poor remuneration and other causes? Could it be that the regular armies of African countries are also unhappy with the governance records of their civilian or other military bosses and are therefore also in search of a change, but are not daring enough to seize power themselves. These are empirical questions that can only be answered through research. Because they are important questions, we recommend that a study into the causes of poor performance of the regular armies be conducted. These issues are important because these armies consume a lot of budgetary resources from the national sources. Secondly, their weaknesses become a source of worry as we can no longer be sure of our countries' ability to defend their citizen from external aggression. There is therefore a need to research into the problems of armed forces of the region.

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to shed insights into the causes, nature and impact of the conflicts that are endemic in the Greater Horn of Africa. It is argued in the paper that the root causes of these conflicts is the issue of governance and the nature of the state. Poor governance which has characterized the countries of the region is singled out in the paper as the major cause of these conflicts. This is despite the fact that these conflicts manifest themselves as ethnic, clan, racial religious, regional in character and form. The paper argues that what needs to be done to reduce the incidence of conflicts is to improve the nature and mode of governance in the region.

The paper has also discussed as the various responses to these countries. The response involve the introduction of structural adjustments to the economies of the region, demoralization, and civil uprisings. We also discussed other suggested solutions to the crisis such as federalism, and emperialization. These have to wear remained at the level of political discourse and one yet to be tested. The only exception is is Ethiopia where federalism is being experimented with at the moment.

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