

ASPECTS OF CONFLICT IN KENYA

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Background

The views in this article and other articles in the series of peacebuilding and conflict analysis in Kenya are not necessarily those of the author. This is a synthesis of the situation contributing to causes of violence and potential conflict. The articles in the series are intended for sharing and exchange among practitioners in peacebuilding. The content is open for concrete additions for insights on new perspectives, feedback, criticism and correction for learning. Any views obtained will be used purely for learning, enhancing conflict sensitivity and peacebuilding. Reflective reviews on the article and feedback to the author or among practitioners in peace building is highly encouraged. These could be addressed to Kisuke Ndiku precise@precise.or.ke

Some Key Factors influencing and affecting the Conflict Matrix in Kenya

It could be arguably said that the state of "peace" which Kenya finds itself in, is complex¹. As far back as 1969, the civil society led by faith-based entities led calls for the government to address issues of peaceful co-existence among communities in Kenya². This was after Tom Mboya, one of Kenya's vibrant intellectual and political icons of the time was shockingly murdered in Moi Avenue Nairobi³. It is perhaps acceptable that, social tension is inherently a normal factor in society. But when tension exceeds limits and embraces response or action by parts of a community using weapons only common at the war front, the dimension changes. Some of the social tensions in Kenya have demonstrably used not only menial, but also automatic weapons, explosive devises and improvised explosives. In addition some of the tension has been as a result of crime that has included demands for ransom after individuals; (children, adults etc) have been abducted. Sadly, some of the tension fueling violence and conflict has come from political platforms, writing the political history of Kenya⁴.

At another level, violence and conflict in Kenya is rife based on the fact that there is an estimated 600,000 small arms in circulation as reported by the Small Arms Survey Special Report of June 2012⁵. In this regard, access to small arms is rife and is made easy by the proliferation of these weapons (a conspicuous business informal line of buying selling and even term renting of weapons exists). With the advent of armed operations supported by the government in Somalia increased occurrence of violence and conflict involving the use of small explosive devises, improvised explosive devices and use of small automatic weapons. The incidences related to this aspect have been impromptu and spread out in different localities in Kenya. The incidences (6 incidences since January 2012) are associated with Al-Shabaab make this evident. The politics of Al-Shabaab continue to unravel tactics and approaches on social and sectarian issues in society, and the implications thereof to Kenya and other neighbor states⁶.

It is also evident that with Kenya's proximity to Somalia, the Republic of the Sudan, Yemen and Eritrea, there is a link to the types of violence related to high sea crime and terrorism. Somalia, the Republic of the Sudan, Yemen and Eritrea have been known to empathize with Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab⁷. The Seaway from the Gulf of Aden into the Indian Ocean has been rife with piracy. Shipping lines plying the sea headed for the port of Mombasa have in occasions been invaded by pirates. The impact of this has been more direct on shipping lines plying the Eastern Africa coast and is an international security threat and cause for serious humanitarian crises⁸. Kenya has supported counter terrorism and the fight against piracy and perhaps part of the piracy is linked to overall international terrorism⁹. The potential consequences of that are obvious.

At another level, Yemen has been a traditional training ground for Al Qaida, and Somalia has demonstrated itself to have the responsibility for some possible link to training. The Republic of the Sudan and Eritrea have been safe havens for elements associated with these two terrorist entities. In addition, obtaining recruits from Kenya drawn from among others, idle young men and disgruntled elements are easy as travel to Yemen or Somalia is not very difficult. Inherently porous borders with Somalia contribute to this state of affairs as well. The factors leading to enticing recruits include social and economic aspects faced by the young men. The range of aspects young males face include among others, deep levels of poverty, political disenfranchisement, unemployment among youth, sectarian extremism, among others¹⁰.

At the local internal context, there are issues which influence and drive conflict¹¹. Key among them is what has now been identified as the dimension of community identities. Community identities is a factor closely reacted to this is the issue of land and borders whether land related as in defining specific parcels of land or administrative and political constituency type of borders¹². The transition into multi-party politics and later constitutional transition have defined new factors for conflict. The new constitution in Kenya defines the status of new governance (comprising constitutional change, governance structures, and devolution of governance). However, the constitution does not provide is no definitive specialization on the process of how these would be achieved to attain new governance modalities.

Based on the fact that the constitution does not define the process of how to progress systematically to attain it, interpretations and counter-interpretations of the constitution have occurred on the political and parliamentary platforms. These have often fueled duels related to access to national power and resources among political personalities. This informs political fronts and rivalries which at the grassroots level boil down to contention hence potential for conflict. Aside from these, are factors such as historical injustices. Some include the Shifita war, the ten-mile coastal land strip, political and government handling of specific issues and communities that led to community disaffection¹³. There is also a contributive element of the emergence of media power over opinion and purveyance of information to the masses to inflect certain issues including how media forms perceptions among communities and others related to specific communities. In summary these factors constitute structure-systemic, social dynamics, and interplay dynamics as potential causes of conflict¹⁴.

¹ICG: *Kenya in Crisis; Africa Report 137; 2008*

²See the *Annals of NCK and KEC Memoirs- John Kamau and Ndingi Mwana'Nzeki; Public Speeches*

³Hilary Ng'weno: *Thomas Joseph Odhiambo Mboya's Murder & the Return of one-party State; July 2007*

⁴Mara J Roberts: *Conflict Analysis of Post Conflict Violence 2007 in Kenya; 2009*

⁵Small Arms Survey: *Availability of Small Arms and Perceptions of Security in Kenya-an Assessment; Special Report, June 2012*

⁶John P. Lederach et al: *Somalia-Creating Space for Fresh Approaches to Peacebuilding; LPI 2011*

⁷Adrian T Taylor: *Countering Terrorism- Humanitarian Security Solutions in the Horn of Africa; attaylor@bowiestate.edu*

⁸UNICEF: *Exploring Responsible Framework for the Horn of Africa Responses; October 2011*

⁹Peter Tibber Interim High Commissioner UK in Kenya: <http://blogs.fco.gov.uk/ukinkeny/2012/04/15/counter-terrorism-important-for-both-the-uk-and-kenya/> April 15, 2012

¹⁰Roland Marchal: *Harakat Al Shabaab Al Mujaheddin in Somalia; March 2011*

¹¹Maj. Hared H. Adan: *Combating Transnational Terrorism in Kenya, 2005*

¹²Thomas O Hansen: *Political Violence in Kenya, November 2009*

¹³KHRC: *Justice Delayed-A Report of Historical Injustices in Kenya; April 2011*

¹⁴Ndiku K: *Working Papers on Conflict Analyses; 2011*

Some key localities with Conflict in Kenya

Conflict in Kenya is not new. The cross-border areas with Somalia, Ethiopia, Southern Sudan, and Uganda have been characterized with conflict since time immemorial. Conflict in these cross-border localities is associated with cattle rustling, whose key drivers are water and pasture land. A culture of cattle as the only form of wealth informs these conflicts that occur usually between two or three communities across each border area. But it has also attained new dimensions due to the political issues. There is also the element of radicalization of sections of Islamic communities¹⁵. Internally in Kenya, there are some key localities within which conflict has occurred with regularity since the first election of parliamentary delegates in 1962 albeit in low scale levels of conflict. At this level conflict has always been about community identities in terms of the politics of the day.

Later aspects of conflict have included this ideation of community identities in relation to administrative and political constituency orders. Another type of conflict has been among non-pastoral communities that has had to do with land. This is frequently at low levels as has been the case along the Samburu-Isiolo, Narok-Kisii border, Kericho-Kisumu border, Kericho-Kisii border, Kajiado-Limuru border (Maai Mahiu), Tana River and the Mount Elgon area. In these cases, conflict is around access to land for livelihoods on the one level and community identity as defined by the land a community occupies.

In the outset, it is important to point out that the struggle for independence in Kenya was focused on re-possession of land. Conflict in Kenya is therefore informed by a history where the original communities to these lands were forcefully removed to give way to large scale farming for white farmers. After independence this issue was never revisited for restitution. Communities continue to clamour for ancestral land as part of their identity as well as their political rights to land.

The Rift Valley as a whole is a peaceful place but some localities experienced different types and levels of conflict from time to time. Significant in some of the types and levels of conflict is cattle rustling, and conflict over commonly shared natural resources, mainly water and grazing land among the more pastoral communities such as the Pokot, Marakwet, Turkana, and others. This notwithstanding, some conflicts associated with the political history of Kenya have occurred at different times (1982-2008). The occurrence of conflict in the rest of the Rift Valley escalates during periods of electioneering. Narok, Burnt Forest, Molo and Kurosei are the most volatile locations. The key drivers to conflict in these localities are access to land for livelihoods and broken dialogue among communities. This has led to suspicion, and mistrust of each other. There is evidence that, some element of historical injustices associated with Kenya's political history underpins conflict in these localities as well.

In Mombasa, Tana Basin and other parts of the Coastal areas have also experienced some conflict associated with land. In this case, land is the key driver, as large chunks of land are owned by absentee landlords, yet local communities live there and it is the only place they know as home. In addition the coastal areas have an interesting political history right from the colonial past. During the colonial government, the imperial government agreed with the Zanzibari Sultanate at that a ten mile strip on the coast of Kenya be left under the Sultanate, without due consultation with the local communities in that ten mile strip. When Kenya attained its independence this factor was not clearly addressed with involvement of local communities either¹⁶. In this regard, it could be stated that with this kind of history; the ten-mile coastal strip set out without due consultation and participation of the indigenous communities, bears part of the land issue.

A community is not community enough if it is not defined by the locality of its land of ancestry. This is a deep concept of identity that informs the politics of land in Kenya. It is a concept to which economics and financial theory cannot easily change. In the context, local communities view land as their own, and define their identity with land (any community in Kenya holds this view). As a result, communities continue to express dissatisfaction with the way the management of allocations and certification of land by the government up to today where locally they were not adequately informed, included engaged and involved in decisions about land¹⁷. Even though the Ministry of lands has land certification mechanisms, from a community perspective, these are subsidiary to community right to land. The local communities feel inadequately involved when land issues are being dealt with in this locality. As a result there are a number of local community entities some conspicuous and others not so conspicuous that voice and agitate for land issues in the coastal areas be addressed. A discussion with any cleric or opinion leader in the coast readily raised land as a factor for which justice was never delivered to the people communities of the coast since independence. They expressly state, to quote one Imam, Sheik Mohammed "when Kenya became independent in 1963, the coast never attained independence".

There are three other areas in the context of the Coast with unique types of conflict, and these include; urban localities in Mombasa, i.e. Likoni and Bombolulu. These locations comprise large informal human settlements with mixed communities from both the coast and other parts of Kenya. Access to resources, opportunities for livelihoods, as well as opportunities to participate adequately in dialogue on issues affecting local people is often fanned and results into conflict. A key example is the Canadian firm, Tiomin Resources Inc complex in Kwale County, a mining initiative in the coast where communities have voiced their grievances and objection on how the land under which concession for mining were allocated and the low levels of compensation associated with the whole resource management. In addition they also pointed to environmental degradation, and health risks due to the toxic emissions associated with titanium mining and other forms of pollution associated with the mining process. As a result of such unresolved grievances and lack of involving local communities of the coast frequent conflict and high loss of lives, including the burning of a school and a police station have been witnessed in these localities.

Two more aspects present interesting types of conflict in Kenya. This has to do with conflicts that occur in Kisumu, Nairobi and Naivasha from time to time. In Kisumu, the recent conflict which occurred in the aftermath of the elections in 2007/2008 is an example. It is important to state in the outset that, during elections, this locality has been associated with fracas symbolized by stone throwing at candidates and supporters of opposing groups. In the case of the 2007/2008 conflict, local communities rose up to evict non-local members of the community who had been in Kisumu on account of business, employment or any such reasons. Characteristic in this conflict was that looting, burning of property such as business premises, vehicles, and some homes occurred; perpetrators were both young and old, men and women but predominantly they were from one local community of Kisumu.

In Nairobi, Kibera and Huruma, election-related conflict has occurred since 1992. While in Huruma it was associates with Mungiki, a quasi-political group of young people; in Kibera, it is unclear what the drivers of conflict are. Suffice to say, dialogue across communities is lacking and they perceive each other in adversarial terms. A clear characteristic of the conflict in the two localities in Nairobi is that it involves many jobless or under-employed young people, conflict has occurred more during elections, and seems to be fanned by issues related to access to political and economic power at community level.

¹⁵ICG: *Kenya Somali Radicalizations, Policy Briefing, Africa Report 85; January 2012*

¹⁶Agostine Ndung'u: *A Goat for a New Boundary; Article Published June 2011* <http://thinkafricapress.com/kenya/goat-new-boundary-post-violence-resettlement-kenya>

¹⁷ACTS: *Consultative Conference Report –Land Tenure and Violent Conflict in Kenya; 2008*

Naivasha, conspicuously experienced serious conflict in the aftermath of elections in 2007/2008 more than any time before. In Naivasha, the two localities where conflict occurred the most were, Maai Mahiu and Naivasha Town. Similar to the conflict in Kibera and Huruma, the conflict in Naivasha brought to view hundreds of young people into fractions with law enforcement organs and between themselves in ethnic divide. Had it occurred at a different period in time, one would have to seek deeper to find the key drivers of conflict. As it coincided with an election, it signified the great need there is to address the role and place of young people in political and public leadership in the country on the one hand. On the other, the need for improved action to provide political space, role and clear functions for young people in the democratic space, including the engagement of the labour force young people represent through productive employment and adequate compensation for work done.

Key Types of Conflict in Kenya

There are therefore five main types of conflict in Kenya thus:

a) Natural Resource related Conflict

This is more dominant type of conflict among pastoral communities and along the international borders mainly although sporadic occurrences internally among the Turkana and Pokot; Karamajong and Turkana, Turkana and communities east of them among them Rendile and Boran.

Under this type of conflict, competition over commonly shared resources mainly pasture land and water are the main drivers. Second to this is the desire to acquire more livestock hence a cultural practice of livestock raiding. As a result, a culture vested with a desire for revenge exists. In this are issues related to proceeds to community emanating from valued economic activities and valued resources such as oil, coal, gypsum, metals, sand, stone, wood, water and other minerals. The government regime in managing these is varied and differs from community to community, hence opening itself to contradiction of practice and seeming to give favour to one community while exploiting, disadvantaging, marginalizing, discriminating against other communities.

b) Land Related Conflict

This is a dominant factor in the Coastal area but more frequent in the Kwale County, Likoni, Bombolulu, Tana River County, Rift Valley and Mt Elgon Area. It is also emerging as a flashpoint in localities with valued resources such as minerals (viz. oil in Turkana and Merti), as well as valued commercial hubs as in the case of Lamu. Access to land, rights associated to value minerals, and opportunities in commercial hubs or occupation of land are the main drivers. The management of the administration in regard to land issues in these localities has shown evidence of vested political interests. This is illustrated by examples of how large portions of land vested on government control and are then dispensed with.

Despite defined reasoning such as, allotting land for purposes such as; re-settlement for the landless communities after independence, or after humanitarian emergencies, or exploration and exploitation of valued resources and construction of infrastructure for commerce etc; but local communities are not consulted, engaged or involved in the decision making and policy making process. As a result, local communities (host) have a perception that they are not adequately involved in the decisions that led to the decision on how the land use is defined and allocated for new use. They see such allocation as unjust and a means to deprive them of ancestral lands.

c) Politically fanned Conflict

This occurs mostly during political efforts such as elections, and any political electioneering process, or any community or large group oriented elections e.g. large group farms e.g. Mbo-I-Kamiti, also savings and credit societies when politicized, and may be few labour unions etc. The dominant factor in this type of conflict is that it involves many young unemployed or under-employed young people under the influence of the political class. The identifiable drivers to this are that political parties are vested with narrow perspective beyond a clique or ethnic group. Such definition and perspective of a political part is defined with strong elements of rivalry as opposed to a spirit of fair and just competition. Hence politically fanned conflict carries some inimical elements.

d) Community Identities and Cultural Ethnical Rivalry in context

This type of conflict has been more dominant among some of the major communities in Kenya and in recent times it has also included some minority communities that have not been in the main previously. The core drivers to this type of conflict have been the political history of Kenya where on occasions force and not dialogue were used to address issues on the one hand.

On the other, the voice of minority communities has not been given space and place hence it has not been given room for expression. In this context, where minority voices have had room to be expressed, even if in a court of law, (e.g. Ogiek, and Mau Mau Case) that voice has not been listened to¹⁸. It is also important to point out that there are some minority communities with issues that have not been addressed, such as what is referred to as "the unresolved massacres" (e.g. Wagalla Massacre).

The Shifita war, and other forms of the use of government forces in certain contexts among communities; the assassination of certain luminary politicians along the political Kenya, the manner and use of political expedience in the of sharing of resources and opportunities, the political loyalties and interests that drive policy for development of different localities and the business clout in the country all become signals to this type of rivalry¹⁹. As a result, certain communities are disgruntled and the rivalry often raptures into some conflict.

e) Adversarial Context and Platforms related Conflict

This category represents the types of conflict that erupt out of an adverse context or reports. The context might have to do with issues such as the constitution making process, allocation of land to investors and private developers and so on. For instance, during the constitution making process a number of issues emerged that continues to fan coals for possible conflict. Some of them include the creation of functions as well as

¹⁸Ngunjiri Wambugu: *A Garment of Many Colours- The Clash of Kenya's Identities and the Solution*; Jan 2012

¹⁹Aquiline Tarimo SJ: *Politicization of Ethnicities and the Political Good in Kenya; An Article on Applied Ethics*; 2011

the creation of Counties. Similarly the creation of Constituency and Administrative borders is another context that creates tension likely to escalate to conflict.

On the other hand, platforms have to do with statements made or information shared. Statements made by some opinion leaders especially those associated with community, religious and or political leadership serves as an example. Information shared could come from such leaders. On the other hand, information shared could emanate from the media. Often the media has taken the proposition of demanding or demonstrating “who is to blame”, or “who caused the problem” thereby declaring a verdict on an issue even before all sides of the story are in view. This has included all types of media including social media (internet, mobile phones, Facebook etc.). Such presentation of information has contributed to tension. On the inverse, lack of leadership in managing information whether by religious, political or community leaders has also contributed to these situations of tension.

On the surface are verbal wrangles, accusations, counter accusations, denials and cover-ups, connived betrayals as well as indirect rifts. The perceptions of the majority of the public on this have been that of tension, uncertainty and acrimony in social places and gatherings at times. Most of the time; the adversarial nature of this type of conflict drives a wedge between communities along ethnic lines. This has potential of leading to political fractures and flare-ups between leaders which contributes to tension and at times eruption of conflict among supporters.

f) Access to small Arms and Perceptions of Conflict

In a recent study, it was reported that there are over 600,000 small arms in the hands of private individuals in Kenya²⁰. The majority of these are automatic weapons ranging from AK 47 to pistols of a wide range in variety. The distribution of where these are found depicts an alarming picture. Localities with the most frequent occurrence of politically reacted violence seem to have more individuals having access to small arms. Access to small arms has serious implication in the management of security and peace to the government. At community level it has grave concerns in terms of the shift of social dynamics in the acquisition, and use of power and influence at the local level. It also has a bearing in the implications of small arms in uncontrolled realms of society in relation to, occurrences of crime and violent incidences.

Another angle to this is that beyond automatic weapons, a recent wave of explosives some being ordinary grenades, and others being locally improvised explosives have featured prominently in different locations in Kenya. These are associated with a number of pressure groups. The government is very firm to manage and deal with those suspected of perpetrating non only the explosive devises themselves but also substances suspected to be potential viable in the making of fabricated and or improvised explosive devises. It is the view of the author that the discourse of small arms cannot be ignored in the context of conflict analysis, and peacebuilding in any community in Kenya from now on.

g) Proximity to Training Grounds of Yemen and Somalia

It is an open secret that the geo-political position of Kenya in relation to Al Qaeda, Al Shabaab, has an effect and influences the trends and patterns of both regional and internal security and approaches to counter terrorism regionally. It is also an open secret that, Al Qaeda and to lesser degree Al Shabaab use Yemen as training grounds for recruits employed by these entities in terrorism²¹. As a result, and due to internal socio-economic factors, some elements from Kenya soil could be lured to the training grounds. There is no evidence that this is happening, but proximity and the temptation for young people to join in. It is considered plausible that the proximity to unstable states such as the case of the two Sudans, the Great lakes, and Somalia, and given the enormous movement of small arms from these states onto Kenya, there is probability of some Kenyans joining the ranks of recruits of unruly groups in the region as the Sabao case would suggest²².

h) Conflict related to high sea crime and terrorism

Kenya has a major port serving the Greater horn and Great Lakes Region in Eastern Africa. The sea traffic headed into Mombasa through the Gulf of Eden and from the Far East plying the Indian Ocean is significant. Piracy in the waters of the Gulf of Eden and the Indian Ocean is part of the counter terrorism effort in this region. In this Region are two states known to empathize if not support terrorism whether Al Qaeda or Al Shabaab; Yemen and Eritrea²³. Kenya plays a key role in this counter-terrorism effort whose headquarters is in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. In this connection, landings of pirates who have been arrested, as well as support to the various Navy Forces providing security in the high seas is a significant aspect for which Kenya is “marked for” by those who wish to perpetrate high sea crime.

On the one part, some of Kenya’s Crew men and women as well as risk to ships with cargo meant for the port of Mombasa stand at risk. Should high sea crime reduce the frequency and level of dockings in the Port of Mombasa, many individuals in the port would loose jobs. Joblessness is already an big issue among youth in Mombasa and Kenya as whole²⁴. This as has been voiced both by government, political parties and pressure groups such as the Mombasa Republican Council. The fact of loss of jobs is also related to loss of business in the port as well as loss of revenue to the government of Kenya. Even though somewhat indirect, high sea crime is an aspect of conflict as well that needs careful analyses in the context of peace building for Kenya.

Some Challenges faced in Situations of Conflict in Kenya

Communal-centric perception of identities is a challenge. Even within one community, elements of clan, or family lineage and “gates” arise, which create challenges about how a community perceives itself. For most part, perceptions drive the view a community holds about their identity, their issues and their leaders. There is a part of the root to conflict which has to do with identities and that is once core reason issues of ethnicity arise. This suits a number of people in small cliques who seem to benefit from conflicts among them, some politicians and their supporters.

²⁰Small Arms Survey: *Special Report-Small Arms Survey and Perceptions of Security in Kenya, June 2012*

²¹National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies: *The Al-Shabaab Myth: Notoriety not Popularity; Melbourne University;2010*

²²Institute of Security Studies: *Militarization of Resource Conflicts; 2008*

²³Reuters: *Obama Names Three Kenyans in global Terrorism; July 6 2012*

²⁴MERCY CORPS: *Understanding Political Violence among Youth; June 2011*

Negative emphasis of identities of others presents them in public view as people who are not likely to take or have the best interests of others. Thus one community living with suspicion that other communities are/do not have the best interests concerning that specific community. An example arose in relation to the emergence of businesses owned by Kenyans of North Eastern Origin in other parts of the country. Often they are perceived as if they are not Kenyans and therefore their businesses suspect. This is a challenge among and between some communities more than others.

Limited positive dialogue and communication between and among communities is rife and often exists creating serious challenges among communities and between communities. With this any aspect that raises suspicion is fueled up quickly to tension level. Poor communication which carries negative overtones can easily create crisis and conflict. As a result communication by communities in regard to others might carry with it negative epithets that continue to soil dialogue, communication and perceptions between communities.

Low sense of being Kenyan and poorly defined Kenyan identity are structural elements. The common people do not have a definitive concept of what Kenya and being Kenyan is. As a result, majority of individuals especially persons aged 30 and above define themselves first in ethnic lines. This is seen during different situations at the level of greetings and introductions, where one might be asked to state which District they are from. Since the administrative boundaries were originally installed along ethnic lines, this drives the ethnic perceptions.

Ill conceived role of outsiders in a conflict situation is also a challenge. Whenever and wherever conflict has occurred in Kenya, outsiders are called upon to respond. This comprises the role of law enforcement arm of government. Community perception about the police and administration is that they use excessive force or are partisan and impartial. Moreover the civil society responds sending in a range of interventions such as humanitarian emergency relief and peace building initiatives.

Usually, members of staff from civil society organizations form a category of outsiders to the conflict situation. They bring approaches and methods that may not at times augur well with the local situation. In addition, they act from outside not fully aware of the sensitivities of neither the conflict nor the factors driving conflict. They see their role as needful and because they have resources communities accept their presence but not the solutions they attempt to bring into place. Other outsiders comprise the political and administrative leaders who by and large even though some might be from the community, but they bring with them some biases. In this case it could be either a bias about the role of the government or bias about community identities. These are all ill conceived roles that might not address the pith of conflict.

Lack of effective models for conflict sensitivity, analysis and effective responses for addressing the drivers of conflict is a challenge as the local situation is polarized and external help is usually insufficient. This notwithstanding, the models used by the Lorupe Peace Initiative, and other efforts in Mt Elgon cannot be ignored. But it is important to note that they are efforts from within the communities convened, affected by conflict. At the national level, the law enforcement agencies, the administrative arm of government, the political class are impotent in regard to models that can address the types of conflict evident in Kenya when it erupts.

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