



25 years of commitment in the Horn

HORN OF AFRICA BULLETIN

ANALYSES • CONTEXT • CONNECTIONS

Analyses

- ▶ **Kenyan state, society respond to extremist threat**
- ▶ **Double-edged constitutional gains for Somali women**
- ▶ **Sharing the journey to reconciliation**
 - What South Sudan can learn from South Africa
- ▶ **News and Resources**

The gory spectacle of the 21 September attack on Nairobi’s Westgate Mall has been analysed from various perspectives. What the attackers wanted to achieve has also been extensively discussed by eminent scholars and analysts. This article attempts to look at the aftermath of the tragedy from the point of view of faith and inter-faith relations in Kenya and the response of Kenyan society and state to the threat posed by religious extremism.

Kenya is a multireligious society. Numerically, a majority of the population professes faith in Christianity of various denominations. Muslims belonging to numerous sects and ethno-linguistic groups—Sunnis, Shias, Somalis, Indians, Swahili etc—make up about 11 per cent of Kenyan citizenry.¹ People of other faiths and religious traditions, such as Baha’i, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism and traditional beliefs, are also scattered across the country.

Therefore, while invoking God’s blessings, the Constitution of Kenya unequivocally states that “There shall be no State religion.”²

The methods used in the Westgate attack indicate that one of the main objectives of the attack was to incite sectarian hatred and undermine the culture of religious tolerance that is a hallmark of daily life in Kenya in general and Nairobi in particular. If there was a silver lining in the pall of gloom cast by the bloodbath in Westgate, it could be seen in the instinctive response by the city’s many religious communities and organisations, which transcended religious and ethnic divides.

The pronouncements of condemnation and expression of grief was spontaneous and universal. From the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims to the All Africa Council of Churches and national church councils, immediate statements were made to show solidarity with the victims and denounce the perpetrators. Despite the apparent tactic by the attackers to give a religious colour to the incident, none of the Christian or Muslim organisations used sectarian language or innuendo to convey their message.

“We reiterate that wanton and indiscriminate killing of innocent men, women and children is against Islamic teachings and tenets... We call upon all Kenyans to remain calm and refrain from being divided on sectarian grounds,” Adan Wachu, the Supreme Council’s secretary-general, said in statement he read out to the press outside Nairobi’s Jamia Mosque.³

On the Friday following the end of the siege, in his weekly sermon the imam of Jamia Mosque Sheikh Ibrahim Lethome “called on Muslim scholars to scale up their efforts to counter the un-Islamic teachings that are used by radical groups.”⁴

Similar sentiments were echoed in almost every public proclamation by religious and non-religious Muslim organisations.

Actions speak louder than words

The display of humanity and solidarity went beyond formal media statements. There could not have been a stronger, more illustrative and immediate riposte to those who were trying to exploit religious emotions through violence than the selfless heroic rescue work by Abdul Hajji, son of a former Kenyan defence minister. Of ethnic Somali origin, Hajji’s reaction to the attack was one of the first stories of courage to emerge from the Westgate tragedy. Before the security forces could launch a concerted operation, Hajji went inside the mall looking for his brother and ended up rescuing many more – among them a four-year old American girl and her mother.⁵ A thousand sermons of peace cannot counter the narrative of the Westgate attackers – one religion against the others, Islam versus the West – more effectively than Hajji’s actions that day.

On another front during the attack, the small 12,000-strong Jain religious community of Nairobi also set an example. About a 100 yards from the under siege mall is the community’s religious centre called Visa Oshwal Centre. Immediately after the attack, the centre opened its doors to survivors, families of those still trapped inside the mall, security forces and journalists. They were not just given shelter, but also medical treatment, counselling and food. A first-aid centre was set up in the parking lot. The centre sent meals and drinks to relief workers, soldiers and policemen standing by the mall during the operation.

“Jain families brought gallons of juice freshly squeezed at home, a sporting club donated eight vans packed with food, an industrial bakery and a top retail chain gave tonnes of bread and water bottles... On the second and third days of the brutal siege, around 400 Oshwal volunteers served around 15,000 meals inside their religious center,” an *Agence France-Presse* report said.⁶

Scores of other such stories could be heard in Nairobi even weeks after the attack. Amid criticism of the government and security forces’ response, fears of another impending attack and anti-Somali backlash, examples like these reassure us that, ultimately, what is good in human nature survives and triumphs despite its destructive tendencies.

State and religion

On a more formal and official level, the Kenyan government has also displayed an understanding of the dangers it confronts in the post-Westgate period. President Uhuru Kenyatta called for an interdenominational prayer assembly at the end of the 3-day mourning period on 1 October. Leaders from every main Kenyan church, Muslim associations, and other religious bodies assembled together at one platform to offer prayers and display interfaith solidarity. More importantly, the political elite came together to reaffirm their commitment to the fundamental principles on which the Kenyan state stands.

The following excerpt from President Kenyatta’s speech is worth a repetition: “Throughout our history, attempts have been made to divide the people of Kenya on religious lines. But it has never been in our moral constitution to nurse an intolerant disposition,” said the president.

“This conscious drift, away from extremism and exclusion, and towards acceptance and understanding, is key to our national strength. Many nations have been riven tragically by the excruciating sword of religious intolerance. Communities have been sundered through hatred and suspicion caused by misunderstandings of own, and each other’s faiths... Religious extremism, xenophobia and misrepresentation of

other cultures have featured in global discourse from time to time...As a country, we have always found it easier staying together than giving way to fractures.”

It is these principles of Kenyan statehood that are under threat from the onslaught by extremists. Rather than abandoning these tenets of a multireligious and multicultural polity, Kenya would do well to strengthen them in order to ride out the storm it is facing.

Najum Mushtaq is policy and communications advisor at the Life & Peace Institute. He can be reached at najum.mushtaq@life-peace.org

- 1 Population and Housing Census 2009, Kenya Bureau of Statistics accessed on 7 October 2013 at <http://www.knbs.or.ke/Population%20by%20Religious%20Affiliation%20and%20Province.php>
- 2 Chapter 2, Article 8, The Constitution of Kenya (revised 2010)
- 3 Read the full statement here: <http://kenopalo.com/2013/09/23/statement-from-the-supreme-council-of-kenya-muslims-following-westgate-attack/>
- 4 “Sheikhs to counter un-Islamic teaching” *The Standard*, Nairobi, 27 September 2013, accessed on 7 October 2013 at http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/mobile/?articleID=2000094432&story_title=sheikhs-to-counter-un-islamic-teachings
- 5 “American family in emotional reunion with rescue hero Abdul Haji”, *The Telegraph*, 30 September 2013 accessed on 7 October 2013 at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/kenya/10343059/Nairobi-mall-attack-American-family-in-emotional-reunion-with-rescue-hero-Abdul-Haji.html>
- 6 “Silent Heroes of Nairobi Mall Attack Response,” *Agence France-Presse*, 29 September 2013

Double-edged constitutional gains for Somali women

When the new Somali government took over power in September 2012, optimism filled the air as it marked an attempt to end the fatigue associated with the long period of war since the fall of Mohamed Siad Barre back in 1991.¹ The fall marked the collapse of a system that at least provided some level of protection for Somali civilians and so the aftermath meant that their fate was left to the mercy of warlords and armed militia.

For Somalis who have not known peace for more than two decades, the ushering in of a new government signifies a hope of return to some level of orderliness and, most importantly, provision of security in spite of the fact that significant challenges are already evident based on the government’s slow pace in delivering its promises one year after assuming power. This, however, does not erase the existing optimism, which is especially due to the adoption of a new provisional constitution to ensure the rule of law.

The state of chaos and lawlessness characterizing the period of civil war has been especially disadvantaging and limiting to women, who became target of atrocities, barring them from playing even the most basic of their traditional fundamental roles. These atrocities consists of, among others, rape and other forms of gender-based violence, restrictive measures limiting their movement, strict specifications concerning dress codes and restricted participation in “outside-of-home” affairs.

Beyond structural discrimination, women and children comprise the largest group of refugees and internally displaced people. They are often forced to flee when their male family members are killed which translates into increased responsibility for them to provide care for their children and other members of the family on their own.

The status of Somali women

For a country that is referred to be among the worst places for women, the new provisional constitution symbolizes a milestone towards recognition of their rights

since it contains provisions to eradicate gender-based discrimination and ensure their inclusion in nation-building processes as long as they do not contradict the Islamic Sharia'h law.

A closer look at the background of Somali women since the 1970s during Siad Barre's military regime reveals a significant shifting trend in their lifestyle. During that period, women could participate in public and even enrol in the army and when many Somali men moved to the Gulf States for better employment in the mid-1970s, a further widening of their role was witnessed as they had to assume even greater responsibilities. However, upon the men's return, a new ambition was brought in: to reverse the society into a "true Islamic one" in order to curb the western influence experienced at the time, something that severely affected the status of women.²

This was complemented by the patriarchal nomadic nature of the Somali culture centred on a clan system in which women are not allowed to participate. Whereas Islam is the predominant religion in Somalia, it is practised alongside local culture and this has sparked much controversy with proponents of women's rights, criticizing the interpretation of the Quran in line with patriarchal norms to marginalize women, while at the same time citing that Islam liberated women from the cruel pre-Islamic Arabia period. It is therefore seen as sinful to defend the exclusion of women in the guise of religion.³

Recognition of women's rights — a society in transition?

Topping the list of the widely celebrated constitutional gains for women is the clause to outlaw female genital mutilation (FGM) – a practice that is common in the Somali society with a prevalence rate of 98%.⁴ Worldwide, between 100 and 140 million girls and women have undergone different types of FGM; its negative consequences mostly being birth complications and even death. It is due to these health-endangering factors that FGM was declared a violation of women's rights. Its recent ban in Somalia is a great achievement and a genuine cause for celebration, especially for women. Amidst the celebration also awaits the task of implementing the new provision, marking a shift from law-making to the beginning of action.

The other major constitutional achievement for women is the affirmative action aimed at ensuring that they are not secluded in the nation-building process of their country.⁵ The provided 30% quota for them in parliament is largely seen as an indicator of willingness to change in the backdrop of the homogeneous and still largely traditional culture. Although this provision is not yet stated in the constitution, Article 133 and 134⁶ of the provisional constitution allows for an amendment to ensure the affirmative action is included as per the recommendations of the Garowe II Principles.⁷ Additionally, despite the fact that it was more of a push by international donors of the process than the will of some local stakeholders, the current inclusion of 30 % female legislators can be seen as a remarkable historical achievement – one that, if properly nurtured, symbolizes a transformation from a discriminatory societal norm to a more "women tolerant" one.

Behind the facade, however, a critical look at the events leading the formation of the new government already depicts a bleak picture as only 25% of the 30% allocated slots went to women in the National Constituent Assembly (NCA). Similarly, in the current parliament, only 15% of the required 30% female representation was achieved and only 20% of cabinet positions were given to women as compared to the 80% allocated to their male counterparts.

When criticizing the failure to allocate the full quota, one should not overlook the fact that such an achievement was not an easy task given the situation on the ground. However, it is also important not to underestimate some powerful underlying anti-women elements⁸ that perceive the new gains as a violation of Shariah law. These elements, hiding behind the shield of a highly patriarchal clan structure, have already come out to express their condemnation of the new provisions and provide

their pro bono advice that warns against the “danger posed by the prevailing negative western” influence to the Islamic Somali society.

Why an emphasis on women?

Women fearing further marginalization in future reacted angrily and expressed their discontent at the failure to allocate them the full 30% quota in the new parliament, seeing this as a deliberate attempt to hijack the process and continue to discriminate them through political exclusion. Such an outcry can only be understood as self-confidence and belief in their capability, willingness and determination not to be left behind. For a long time, Somali women have always played vast social and economic roles,⁹ and so it is only natural that they are included in all dimensions of development and leadership.

As stated earlier in this paper, the role of women in Somalia has significantly changed to adapt to the changing circumstances but generally, beyond domestic domains, women have been at the forefront in providing social care to the community, mobilizing support for different courses, albeit within their stipulated gender roles, and participated in peacebuilding activities. They were even at the forefront during the 1940s and 50s’ struggle for independence against the British and Italians through their women’s movements and in the numerous peace accords to secure peace for Somalia. It was them who challenged delegates to remain focused by looking beyond clan affiliations.¹⁰ It is for this reason that the idea to exclude them from a process that they have highly and indirectly contributed to is deemed not only impractical but also hypocritical.

Understandably, the patriarchal nature of the Somali culture and the power vested in clan elders is enough to send terrifying signals and discourage women from making the crucial first step, something that eventually hinders their public engagements. However, the witnessed anticipation by a good number to be included in the allocated positions in the National Constituent Assembly as well as in parliament is enough evidence that it is not their will to remain undercover. Prevalent ignorance, associated with the long period of war in Somalia, also acts as a barrier in differentiating what constitutes religion on the one hand and a male-dominated clan system on the other. This could aid an explanation of the double consciousness that pulls most Somali women between their stipulated role in society and desire for change for which they need not only societal support but also the support of their fellow women.

Conclusion

The new government of Somalia is in itself an achievement for its people and it brings a new hope for state building after the suffering experienced during the long period of war. For women, this translates to a temporary relief from the double tragedy of battling as civilians while carrying the burden associated with their sexuality. The rejuvenation, therefore, symbolizes a significant relief for them; one that can last long only if a coordinated multi-stakeholder approach is utilized.

On the contrary, it has only been a year since the new government came to power and the new constitution was adopted and yet serious concerns have already been expressed about the slow pace of formation of the recommended commissions to implement the provisions of the new constitution. The automatic effect of this delay in performance is prioritization of other factors besides women’s issues. Besides, some parties have already forwarded their concerns on the specific roles that Somali women should assume. Such attempts to shoot down the positive gains made for women are camouflaged in religion in order to front self-interests. So it is vital to boost women’s engagement in order to affirm their position and prevent a reversal of the gains already made.

Such efforts will also promote mobilization to push for ratification of recognized international women’s rights instruments and contribute to changing the negative discourse on women in Somalia.

Hawa Noor Mohammed is a Training Researcher at the CIPRA/TTIC Division, Institute for Security Studies, Nairobi, Kenya and lectures on media and conflict resolution at the University of Nairobi's School of Journalism from time to time. Her areas of focus include terrorism and transnational crime, gender relations, identity and intercultural relations, and religion and governance. She can be reached at e-mail: hmohammed@jissafrika.org and hwnoor@yahoo.com

- 1 David W. Graney, Women's Rights in Somalia: Women's Roles in Conflict Resolution, http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/Academic/hr-reconpb_womensrightsinsomalia_graney_april2010.pdf (2), (Accessed on 18th September 2013)
- 2 UNICEF, Women Rights in Islam and Somali Culture, http://www.unicef.org/somalia/resources_11626.html (6), (Accessed on 17th September 2013)
- 3 Jamal A. Badawi, Woman- Under the Shade of Islam, A Discourse on Women's Issues, El-Falah, Pg. 13
- 4 WHO, Female genital mutilation and other harmful practices, <http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/fgm/prevalence/en/> (Accessed on 18th September 2013)
- 5 Article 3 of the provisional constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia.
- 6 Article 133 and 134 of the provisional constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia.
- 7 Darman Farah Adde, Garowe II conference established new government structure, http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/02/21/feature-01 (Accessed on 22nd September 2013)
- 8 Mahmoud Mohamed, Somali women fight for promised share of parliamentary seats, http://sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/08/01/feature-02 (Accessed on 22nd September 2013)
- 9 Cawo Abdi, Marginalizing Women in Somali Politics, <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201282385318698928.html> (Accessed on 25th September 2013)
- 10 Farhia Ali Abdi, Somali Women Parliamentarians: The predicament of finding a voice, http://www.hiiraan.com/op4/2013/may/29375/somali_women_parliamentarians_the_predicament_of_finding_a_voice.aspx (Accessed on 25th September 2013)

Sharing the journey to reconciliation – What South Sudan can learn from South Africa

“We have killed and wounded one another and destroyed our own property. We have spawned a culture of violence, corruption, nepotism, and inequity. We cannot continue this way. Enough is enough!”

This was the Most Reverend Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul's call to the people of South Sudan to unite “in order to achieve lasting national healing, peace and reconciliation” delivered as part of his first statement as Chairperson of the Committee for National Healing, Peace and Reconciliation, which was established by presidential decree earlier this year.

In September 2013, Archbishop Bul, committee member Bishop Rudolph Majak, advisor John Ashworth and the Archbishops' international coordinator Tim Berke visited South Africa. The purpose of the visit, facilitated by the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR), was to raise awareness about the South Sudan reconciliation process and engage with like-minded organisations able to provide insights into developing reconciliation processes.

Mandated to further healing

For an organisation like IJR, born out of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (SATRC) and mandated to further healing and social cohesion in South Africa and beyond, engaging with like-minded individuals and organisations tasked with similar pursuits presents an exciting and treasured opportunity. Not only do op-

portunities like these allow us to reflect very critically on our accomplishments and challenges but, in speaking the hopeful language of reconciliation, bridges are built, friendships made and collaborations formed.

South Sudan, like most countries whose past is marred by oppression, marginalisation and large scale human rights violations, faces significant challenges on its path to reconciliation. Almost five decades of civil war have significantly and negatively affected the population in a number of respects. Education levels are extremely low here, and social and physical infrastructure covering this large country of approximately 12 million people needs much expansion before citizens have access to much needed and long awaited schools, clinics and transport infrastructure.

Against this backdrop of vast and urgent socio-economic need, and while conflict continues in a number of states, reconciliation is not currently at the top of the national planning and budgetary agenda. However, Bul is working with an impressive committee: a consultative body comprising well-known and respected elder statesmen and women.

The committee aims to create spaces for listening and consultations whereby the views and needs of the nation's citizens can be ascertained. It is envisioned that once this consultative process has been developed, a credible reconciliation and healing process can begin. How South Africa went down this difficult path, is what IJR and others hope to share with the delegation.

No blueprint for dealing with the past

There is of course no blueprint for dealing with the past—every context and every history deserves a nuanced and home-grown approach that is attuned to the needs of its people. Managing expectations at the outset of any transitional justice process is vital, especially when the victim community constitutes the majority of a population.

While South Sudan can definitely learn from South Africa's rich, though certainly not perfect, TRC experience, the model in the way it worked here will be a difficult one to implement in South Sudan, where the sheer size of the country, coupled with lack of roads and transport infrastructure, would prevent a commission from going to the people; an element which greatly contributed to the SA TRC's relative success.

Who will cover the huge costs of funding a commission (the SA TRC cost approximately US\$18million), how will victims be able to testify if they are not based in the capital, how to provide for interpretation for the country's many languages, etc? Is the time right for South Sudan to have a TRC at all? If not now, then when? Will there be compensation? How much, for whom and based on which criteria and will the government be able to pay?

The TRC was of course not the only tool South Africa used to undo some of the damage the country inherited in 1994. The delegation met with senior members of leading civil society organisations such as Catholic Archbishop Steven Brislin, Anglican Archbishop Dr Thabo Makgoba, the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Group's Peter John Pearson and his team, the Institute for the Healing of Memories' Father Michael Lapsley and the International Centre for Transitional Justice' founder Alex Boraine—all of whom continue to work on the unfinished business of the TRC in different ways.

The guns will have to be silenced

However, before this hope-filled young country can embark on its journey of reconciling, the guns will have to be silenced—especially in the troubled Jonglei state. A recent Human Rights Watch report implicated the South Sudan People's Liberation Army in a series of brutal human rights violations against civilians, including women and children. The conflict is a complex one, the resolution to which will not come overnight. But while the powers that be continue to use the May 2012 All Jonglei Peace Conference as a platform for sustained dialogue, large scale security

sector reform and police training is vital, especially where ‘rogue elements’ within the liberation army are blatantly abusing the SPLA Code of Conduct.

Reading between the lines of the report, which details many cruel and often purposeless violations of babies, children, the disabled and the elderly, it is hard not to interpret these senseless acts as a result of anger, frustration and deep seated trauma within the economically deprived populace. We cannot forget that those citizens born before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005 have not known anything other than a country at war. Since then, very little has tangibly changed for the bulk of the population. The resulting trauma, which is so often overlooked in transitional justice processes, needs to be dealt with in a sustainable and systemic manner. This must include demystifying trauma in order to generate empathy and understanding in communities. This could enable communities themselves to care better for those affected psychologically by the wars. Here, notes should be taken from South Africa, where large scale trauma inflicted on the population by the Apartheid state was not adequately addressed, and where the impact today manifests in some of the worlds’ highest rates of violence, sexual violence and unemployment.

Though these challenges may appear insurmountable to some, South Sudan is in the privileged position of being able to learn from the many African countries in the region that have implemented creative transitional justice processes in fairly recent years. A body like the Kenyan National Cohesion and Integration Commission, run by a team of deeply committed individuals, is a case in point. In collaboration with local and international partners, it has managed to reach out to communities in Kenya’s furthest corners to ensure that the pursuit of cohesion and reconciliation continues to be on local agendas. Though that country’s Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission continues to be criticised on many fronts, many lessons have emerged of how not to run a Truth Commission.

In Uganda and Rwanda...

In Uganda, since the signing of the 2006 Juba Peace Agreement and despite the somewhat stifling political context in which they operate, Ugandan civil society organisations have managed to push for a very progressive and consultative transitional justice policy framework which they themselves have developed based on in-depth community consultation and documentation.

And despite much criticism, the Rwandan community justice model ‘Gacaca’, which tried thousands of perpetrators during its 13-year existence in the post-genocide era, continues to be praised and studied as an effective tool with which to deal with large numbers of perpetrators. Finally, both the Liberian and Sierra Leonian TRC, the latter of which is excellently documented on a comprehensive and easily accessible website, provide a rich body of challenges and successes.

South Sudan itself has a rich history of peacebuilding and community consultation, from, amongst others, the church-led People to People Peacebuilding process of the 1990’s that supported the peace process leading up to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and promoted community-identified and -driven peace work, to the All Jonglei Communities Peace Conference held just last year.

Dedicated community of practitioners

All these processes have given birth to a small but dedicated community of practitioners and experts who have contributed significant research, analysis and practice to the growing field of transitional justice and who continue to infuse new and growing processes with their wisdom.

Imperative for Bul and his team at the outset of what will be a long path is to consult widely and listen out for important lessons that others have learned. That there is no right and wrong goes without saying, but it would be a shame if the many errors that have been made, and that have cost many victims the chance to testify or to see justice in other countries, were to be repeated in South Sudan.

Transparency, consultation and good listening are important elements of any reconciliation process; ultimately the people must be ready for reconciliation—it cannot be imposed from above. Building a nation after decades of conflict is no easy feat, but with committed and honest leadership in pursuit of a noble cause, this journey will be a worthwhile one for South Sudan.

Friederike Bubenzer is a Senior Project Leader in the Justice and Reconciliation in Africa Programme at the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation. She can be reached at FBubenzer@ijr.org.za

The initial version of this article was published in the Cape Times, South Africa, on 26 September 2013.

NEWS

Tensions rise as new EAC coalition emerges

The emergence of the ‘Coalition of the Willing’, comprising Kenya, Uganda and Rwanda, has sent ripples in the East African Community (EAC), with Tanzania dismissing it as an “act of isolation”.

On 18 September, the Tanzanian Minister for East African Community Affairs, Mr Samwel Sitta, warned that the move by the three countries was against the spirit of integration and poses a threat to the future of the community.

“We will not be bullied into fast-tracking the integration because it will not be sustainable,” Mr Sitta noted.

This is the first statement issued by Tanzania since the three countries met in Kampala in July to plan on grand regional infrastructure projects. The leaders of the three countries met in Kenya’s coastal town of Mombasa last month and resolved to fast-track political federation.

Experts then reportedly met in Kigali in mid-September to advance negotiations on how to implement the directive of their heads of state and a committee was created to spearhead the federation process.

Mr Sitta told reporters that the move by the Coalition was discouraging and ran counter to the original integration spirit of the five-member East African Community. It is also a general and wrong interpretation of article 7(3) of the EAC protocol that allows member countries to have separate special-interest engagements, he added.

In early September, the council directed its chairperson, Uganda’s EAC Affairs minister Shem Bageine, to prepare full information on the blossoming alliance between Kenya and its landlocked neighbours Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda.

“The Council requested the chairperson of the council to provide more information on these developments to the Council at its 28th Meeting,” the ministers said after a meeting in September.

The three countries have also initiated talks to introduce a single tourist visa from 2014 in order to enhance the flow of tourists across the three countries without additional fees. Infrastructure development and improvement is also on the agenda. They also want to implement a passport-free travel zone which would allow their nationals to use identity cards or voter registration cards to travel from one state to another.

But Mr Sitta has accused the three countries of embarking on a “political agenda” while well aware of the fact that a committee formed to look into the subject is due to submit its report to the heads of state summit in November. Tanzania’s position is that approaching integration matters with the kind of haste championed by Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya was a recipe for disaster and it is not ready to bow to such pressure.

The EAC secretariat has denied any divisions, saying the treaty allows members to sign pacts for implementing milestones agreed at regional level as long as there was room for others to join when ready.

Source: Africa Review

Karamoja Cluster Ministers meet for policy-level regional approach

The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Office of the First Lady and Minister of Karamoja Affairs of the Republic of Uganda H.E Hon. Janet Museveni, was co-hosting a meeting of ministers from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda in the middle of October. The goal of the meeting was to launch a policy-level regional approach to further the peace, security and development agenda of the Karamoja Cluster by connecting “expert and community-level cooperation with high-level policy framework” as well as strengthening the coordination of efforts conducted in the area.

Relevant experts from the four countries gathered before the ministerial meeting to exchange experiences on national policy and practices as well as develop principles of cooperation on these issues. In a parliamentary caucus, Members of Parliament discussed how to effectively undertake advocacy and policy support to the Karamoja peace, security and development agenda.

Source: CEWARN

Sudanese official hails secular system in South Sudan

The Sudanese state minister at the Ministry of Guidance and Endowments Mohamed Mustafa al-Yakooti described South Sudan’s adoption of a secular system as “positive”, in an unusual admission by an official from Khartoum’s Islamist government.

Al-Yakooti mentioned that there is no tendency in South Sudan to coerce the Muslim population there to take on a specific ideology which offers an opportunity for expanding Islamic proselytizing activities there.

The official told the consultative coordination meeting on the executive programme with the Islamic Council of Southern Sudan in Khartoum on 8 October that his ministry is seeking to upgrade a memorandum of understanding with the council to a higher partnership.

He stressed that the expansion of the proselytizing movement in the south is a ‘religious duty’.

Around 10% of South Sudan’s population is Muslim. The region seceded from Sudan on 9 July 2011 as part of a peace deal that ended decades of civil war, which was often categorized as one between Sudan’s predominantly Islamic north and Christian south.

Many critics assert that the separation of Sudan into north and south in July 2011 was in part a result of Khartoum’s insistence on Islamic law.

Sudanese officials including president Bashir made it clear that following South Sudan’s independence the upcoming constitution will be “100% Islamic”.

Muslims in South Sudan are believed to be generally well treated though they have filed complaints with the government regarding their properties consisting of buildings that they claim are confiscated by state governments.

Source: The Sudan Tribune

Abyei dispute ‘troublesome, problematic’

The “troublesome, problematic” issue of whether the Abyei region belongs in South Sudan or Sudan is the most important issue still to be resolved between the two countries, says African Union mediator Thabo Mbeki.

Addressing a church meeting in Benoni, near Johannesburg on 4 October, Mbeki was upbeat about progress in bringing about peace between the Sudans since the south became independent in 2011.

Both Khartoum and Juba are in practice implementing the range of nine agreements they signed a year ago, he said.

“Whereas all of us were very fearful that the countries could slip back into a civil war, now there’s a very strong sense that both countries are moving further and further away from that possibility.”

But the future of Abyei is “one big matter that has not been resolved.” The people of the region are scheduled to decide in a referendum which country they want to be part of.

Mbeki said the Ngok Dinka people, who claimed the area historically – “and nobody disputes that” – could be expected to vote in the referendum to join South Sudan. But the Misseriya people – “who are called an Arab tribe” – also said the area belonged to them.

“I’m sure that all of us know this very well,” said Mbeki, “that once any... one in our countries gets described, characterised, caught up in these tribal, ethnic identities then it becomes difficult to solve.”

But the AU panel was continuing to engage both governments: “It’s troublesome, problematic, it’s got its own dynamics which make it difficult for both sides to move.”

Mbeki was speaking to the provincial synod of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, which had as a guest Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul, the leader of the Episcopal Church of the Sudan.

Source: allafrika.com

South Sudan Rebel leaders abandon rebellion in Upper Nile

Two rebel leaders active in Upper Nile State have reportedly abandoned rebellion against the South Sudan government and sought pardon under an amnesty initiated by President Salvar Kiir.

Reports say Ayuok Agot and fighters loyal to Gordon Koang voluntarily abandoned armed rebellion on 28 September and handed themselves over to the South Sudan army with about 1,500 of their fighters. This number could not, however, be independently verified.

The rebels are said to have been responding to an amnesty offered by President Salvar Kiir and were received by General Johnson Gony Bilieu, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA) Upper Nile sector commander.

When contacted, SPLA Spokesperson, Colonel Philip Aguer said he had only received reports about Oyuok Ogot showing up with his forces at Kaka Tajaria and not Gordon Koang.

“I do not have information about Gordon Koang at the moment. We received a report today that only Oyuok Ogot has come. We thanked them for realising the importance of peace and stability in this country”, Aguer told Sudan Tribune in an interview on 29 September.

The SPLA spokesperson did not provide specifics on the number of fighters that had abandoned rebellion saying that information was still being assembled.

Sources that spoke to Sudan Tribune said Gordon Koang will fly to Nairobi from Khartoum before joining his fighters who came out with those of Oyuok Ogot. The sources say it is likely the Sudan government is aware of Gordon Koang’s plans.

In April President Salva Kiir Mayardit offered an amnesty to six militia groups irrespective of the crimes they had committed while fighting against the government.

The militia groups have also claimed that they together with government are in contact with another militia leader- David Yauyau, whose forces have repeatedly rejected Presidential amnesty and continued to fight government forces in Jonglei State.

The abandoning of rebellion by the rebel groups has been welcomed by Bapiny Montuil, a former rebel leader of the South Sudan Liberation Movement which was the first group to respond to the presidential amnesty in April 2013.

Monytuil said he was happy with the decision of the militia groups to abandon rebellion and called on the international community to assist the government to expedite integration of the various groups into the national army.

“We urge the international community to assist the government of South Sudan to integrate those who accepted amnesty into the organized force. The United Nations mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and the donor community needs to complement the efforts of president Kiir who is working very hard to bring peace in South Sudan”, the former militia leader group said in a statement on 29 September.

Source: Sudan Tribune

Message of the Catholic Bishops of Sudan and South Sudan

“Our two countries became independent entities two years ago. However, much is still desired on the way of achieving a durable peace for the citizens of the two nations. It is our wish and prayer that the political leaders of the two nations will exert every effort in their power so that peace may reign supreme in the land of Sudan and South Sudan. We are also mindful of the hostilities still visible in Darfur, the Nuba Mountains and the Blue Nile region in the Sudan, Jonglei State and some other areas in South Sudan, still causing death, displacement and forcing people to migrate as refugees in search of safety and subsistent livelihood.”

(Quote from the Plenary Assembly, which took place in Khartoum 21 August to 05 September 2013)

RESOURCES

State of Civil Society 2013: Creating an enabling environment

CIVICUS is a global network dedicated to enhancing the rights, freedoms, health and vitality of civil society as a whole. It has worked for two decades to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world. This report is the second edition of the State of Civil Society by CIVICUS’s World Alliance for Citizen Participation. The report draws from nearly 50 contributions made by people active in civil society all over the world, including 31 new pieces of analysis and thinking on the state of civil society. The report also benefits from 16 responses to a questionnaire from national civil society platforms.

Read the full report here:

http://socs.civicus.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2013StateofCivilSocietyReport_full.pdf

3 Steps for Working in Fragile and Conflict-affected Situations

Since the discussion around international assistance and development work in conflict-affected situations started in the 1990s, many tools and guidelines have been developed. Some are more hands-on, others less so. Swisspeace’s Centre for Peacebuilding (KOFF) has worked with different tools and approaches intending to make development and humanitarian work more suitable or adapted to difficult contexts. After years of work, the centre has developed this 3-Step approach, a corresponding manual and field guide. “We especially thank the colleagues from the HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation country programmes in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Guatemala, Mali and Kyrgyzstan. We are very grateful for all the time, energy, thoughts and reflections they shared with us, which was decisive for the elaboration of the manual and the field guide,” says the centre’s website.

The comprehensive manual is available at

https://assets.helvetas.ch/downloads/2013_hsi_manual_3_steps_wfcs.pdf

Sudan-South Sudan: Ambiguity over the “Safe Demilitarized Border Zone”

More than a year has passed since the 27 September 2012 agreements, which committed both Sudan and South Sudan to implement a Safe Demilitarized Border Zone (SDBZ) along their mutual border, following a map drawn up by the African Union High-Level Implementation Panel (AUHIP).

Despite numerous declarations to the contrary, both countries retain troops within the SDBZ, and the Joint Border and Verification Monitoring Mechanism (JBVMM), which was designed to oversee the demilitarization of the border, remains effectively inoperative.

This report is published by The Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) for Sudan and South Sudan, which is a multi-year research project administered by the Small Arms Survey, an independent research project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

Find the report at:

<http://www.smallarmssurveysudan.org/facts-figures/borderdisputed-areas/sdbz.html>

Gender equality and women’s rights in the post-2015 agenda

This recent report by OECD focuses on gender equality and the post-2015 agenda. Read summary points below.

- Gender equality and women’s rights are key to addressing the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and accelerating global development beyond 2015. Gender equality matters in its own right, and as a prerequisite for the health and development of families and societies, and a driver of economic growth.
- The post-2015 framework should 1) retain a strong, stand-alone goal on gender equality and women’s empowerment, as recommended by the UN High Level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (HLP); and 2) include gender-specific targets and indicators in the other goals.
- A strong post-2015 framework will take a holistic view of gender inequalities: 1) addressing girls’ completion of a quality education, 2) women’s economic empowerment, 3) universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, 4) ending violence against women and girls, 5) women’s voice, leadership and influence, 6) women’s participation in peace and security, 7) women’s contributions to environmental sustainability.
- The new framework will need to confront the discriminatory social norms and practices that underlie gender inequality, such as early marriage or tolerance of violence against women.
- Targets and indicators on gender equality act as a powerful stimulus for action. When girls and women are visible in data collection and reporting, governments and donors invest more in gender equality. There is an urgent need for ongoing investment in statistical capacity building and monitoring to improve the measurement of gender equality indicators and the collection of data disaggregated by sex.

Access the full paper at:

<http://post2015.org/2013/09/12/gender-equality-and-womens-rights-in-the-post-2015-agenda-a-foundation-for-sustainable-development/>

Horn of Africa Bulletin, Volume 25, No. 5, September-October 2013

Editorial information

The media review Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) was published by the Life & Peace Institute between 1989 and 2006. The re-formatting of HAB as an e-bulletin 2007 was done in close collaboration with the Nairobi-based All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA).

The electronic base of HAB is LPI and the editors for this issue are Tore Samuelsson (tore.samuelsson@life-peace.org) and Najum Mushtaq (najum.mushtaq@life-peace.org).

For subscription matters contact: Tore Samuelsson, tore.samuelsson@life-peace.org

For a link to HAB and more information see www.life-peace.org

This publication is produced with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Bread for the World and Church of Sweden. The donors are not involved in the production and are not responsible for the contents of the publication.

Editorial principles

The Horn of Africa Bulletin (HAB) is an international newsletter, compiling analyses, news and resources primarily in the Horn of Africa region. The material published in HAB represents a variety of sources and does not necessarily represent the views of the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) or the cooperating partners, the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) and the Fellowship of Christian Councils and Churches in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa (FECCLAHA). Writers and sources are normally referred to, although in exceptional cases, the editors of the HAB may choose not to reveal the real identity of a writer or publish the source.

