



Preventing, Mitigating & Resolving Transhumance-Related Conflicts in UN Peacekeeping Settings

A Survey of Practice



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Abstract

A couple of decades ago, the idea that peacekeeping operations could be involved in addressing local conflicts triggered by transhumance and tensions between herders and farmers would have sounded odd. These conflicts are often described as ancestral, intractable and beyond the scope and mandate of UN peacekeeping operations. However, as international peace and security are increasingly being undermined by intra-state struggles rather than inter-state conflicts, peacekeepers are confronted with inter- and intra-communal violence and the need to better understand the nature of these conflicts and how they interlink with national dynamics. The present report, based on a review of current practices, challenges and opportunities in peacekeeping settings, illustrate why we should all better understand what undermines peace at the local level.





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Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
CEBEVIRAH	Economic Commission for Livestock, Meat and Fisheries
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa
CLA	Community Liaison Assistants
DPO	Department of Peace Operations
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECCA	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GCSS	Governance and Community Stabilization Section
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LCAP	Local Conflict Analysis and Planning tool
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MINUSMA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo
NSAG	Non-State Armed Groups
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PBF	UN Secretary-General's Peacebuilding Fund
POC	Protection of Civilians
UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicles
UDEAC	Union Douanière et Économique de l'Afrique Centrale
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union - United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNEC	United Nations Executive Committee
UNISFA	United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNOCA	United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa
QIP	Quick Impact Projects

Preventing, Mitigating and Resolving Transhumance-related Violence in UN Peacekeeping Settings: A Survey of Practice

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

On September 2018, Ambassador Smail Chergui, the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security (PSD), reminded the audience of a two-day workshop on transhumance conflicts that, “today, conflicts between herders and farmers on the continent take more lives than terrorism”.¹

Across Africa, about 268 million people practice pastoralism as a source of income and subsistence. Transhumance, a form of pastoralism, is widely practiced across West and Central Africa and is the main economic activity within the Sahel Region.² Historically, the livelihoods of farmers and herders have complemented each other. They exchanged produce with one another and when conflicts arose, they were addressed by traditional institutions and existing conflict resolution mechanisms. However, over the past few decades, a wide range of factors have resulted in tensions often ending in deadly violent conflicts between the two groups.

Climate change which resulted in desertification, soil erosion and drought has exasperated competition over natural

resources, pushing herders to venture into new areas to seek pasture for their herds. Drifting away from traditional migratory routes and encroaching on farming lands has fueled negative perceptions, juxtaposing sedentary communities versus nomadic ones, often stigmatizing the latter as cultural and/or religious intruders.

A second element to consider is the **weakness of state institutions and lack of infrastructures** which in most of the countries in West and Central Africa and the Sahel, has resulted in the inability of host-governments to effectively control their territory, enforce the law and provide formal avenues for the peaceful resolution of disputes. This means that, as in the past, **traditional dispute resolution mechanisms continue to play a role** in diffusing and addressing tensions triggered by transhumance, but their effectiveness remains limited. Not only because traditional authorities and their perceived legitimacy have been eroded by protracted conflicts; changing demographics and the rise of younger generations contesting traditional patriarchal power structures, sometimes at the tip of a gun, but also because they cannot offer

1 African Union (2018). Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers on the continent take more lives than terrorism.

2 Mulumba, J.B.K, Jacques, S., Yacouba, S., Hamade, K (2008). Livestock and regional market in the Sahel and West Africa Potentials and challenge.

a durable solution in the context of widespread political instability and weak rule of law.

A third factor are the **protracted regional conflicts**, which have further challenged pastoralism by either **forcing nomadic herders to changes migratory routes**, and therefore increase the risks of triggering conflicts with sedentary communities with whom they haven't dealt with in the past, or by being coopted in those conflicts and **becoming the vehicle for illegal trade and arms smuggling**. In either case, this has resulted in a militarization of herders, further compounded by the **proliferation and ease of access to small weapons** prompted by the above-mentioned regional conflicts. Despite the establishment of regional frameworks to regulate transhumance in West and Central Africa and the Sahel, the capacities and resources available to the concerned countries for their implementation are inadequate, if not inexistent.

Finally, **the 'politics of transhumance' highlights the interplay among political and military elites as well as organized crime** which can manipulate political tensions

between herders and farmers to advance their agendas, expand land ownership and take control of large herds for their economic and political gains, consequently threatening livelihoods of both communities. As much a consequence and a cause of regional instability, these tensions erode the social and economic fabric of both communities, fuel narratives of juxtaposed ethnic and religious identities and have become one of the **main drivers of inter-communal conflicts and the leading cause of civilian casualties** in most peacekeeping settings.

UN Peacekeeping operations play an important role in supporting local and traditional mechanisms to prevent, mitigate and resolve transhumance related conflicts. UN peacekeeping engages through the use of early warning/ early response mechanisms to prevent/ deescalate violent conflict or by supporting local dispute resolution mechanisms and by working with local stakeholders. It also works with the host-state authorities to cultivate sustainable solutions by promoting social cohesion and institutional frameworks to regulate the inherent tensions between herders and farmers.



Key findings

Given the above, it is not surprising that UN peacekeeping operations have found themselves at the forefront of efforts to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflicts that arise from the dynamics of pastoralism and specifically of transhumance. The first obvious reason why peacekeepers get involved is to reduce civilian casualties and therefore **protect civilians**. However, the work on preventing inter-communal conflicts goes deeper and extends more broadly by engaging with a broad range of local stakeholders and national authorities to **empower local peace efforts**, support long term mechanisms and therefore **foster reconciliation and social cohesion**.

The report illustrates how peacekeeping operations work with government authorities, traditional and community leaders and other local and international partners to **support dialogue between farmers and herders and prevent transhumance-related conflicts**. This is done by supporting dialogue before and after the migration season in order to agree on measures that can diffuse tensions and minimize the impact on local communities. This has often resulted in the consensual demarcation of migratory routes; investment in the development of community infrastructures to ease migration (i.e. drilling new boreholes); the designation of which informal dispute

resolution mechanisms would address incidents if and when they occur, as well as by conducting joint military/police patrols along such migratory corridors to deter violence.

Moreover, to mitigate conflicts, missions work with local authorities to establish buffer zones, protect agreed corridors when necessary and deploy police/military to affected areas. Missions conduct confidence-building visits in the areas and engage with local leaders, mediation mechanisms and key actors to contain the violence. These measures tend to de-escalate the situation when incidents occur and provide an opportunity for groups to agree on the cessation of hostility and engage in community dialogue initiatives that can help address mutual grievances, thus strengthening future preventative measures.

Finally, missions contribute to resolving transhumance-related conflicts by supporting the host-government, the UNCT and other international partners to deploy and strengthen the capacities of national/local institutions to better address some of the root causes often linked to the poor regulation and enforcement measures required for good resource management, land reform, socio-economic reforms, access to public and social services for marginalized communities, and so on.



Challenges and opportunities for UN peacekeeping

One of the key challenges in addressing conflicts spurred by transhumance and tensions between herders and farmers is that although incidents may take place locally, **dynamics underpinning them expand both horizontally**, (transhumance usually crosses national borders), **and vertically** (as the political and economic agendas of elites in capitals around the region often manipulate these incidents to their advantage), beyond the local context.

While peacekeeping operations may not be the best placed to support regional initiatives to regulate transhumance, they can steer some of the political and technical support they provide to host-governments towards **supporting the enforcement of regional pastoral migration frameworks**, including developing and implementing **local and national frameworks**.

Supporting host-state capacities to resume control of its territory and become the guarantor of sustainable peace is normally part and parcel of many peacekeeping mandates. The report highlights numerous cases where missions have worked on **capacity strengthening for local officials and institutions**. However, it also highlights how endemic state weakness outside selected urban centers undermines the viability and sustainability of formal dispute resolution mechanisms unless closely linked to **more effective traditional dispute resolution mechanisms that are also increasingly weakening**.

There is a challenge, but also an opportunity for UN peacekeeping to leverage traditional practices, contribute to their reinvigoration, but also support more inclusive approaches that **integrate the perspectives and needs of various constituencies and in particular of women and youth** in devising local political solutions. Strengthening the linkages between

local authorities and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms while also promoting a larger platform for conflict resolutions and community dialogue has proven to be the key contribution made by peacekeepers in the field to support local peace initiatives.

This is best done not only by **'linking the dots' among local stakeholders**, but also in better understanding the patronage systems that **connect local actors to elites in the capital** and use that understanding to leverage the **UN's good offices and advocacy** role both in the field and at Mission Headquarters to support policies aimed at deconflicting interests, diffusing tensions and promoting peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms that enjoy sufficient credibility and legitimacy to be sustainable.

In some cases, this may require working around the complex relations between formal and informal systems and supporting hybrid systems. In other cases, it may come down to focusing on **supporting accountability frameworks that bring state institutions and authorities closer to the needs and concerns of the people** at grass-root level. UN peacekeeping operations are only one actor amongst many others that can support such processes and their abilities are limited the mandates, resources and expertise, but they ought to work in close collaboration with other UN agency funds and programs as well as international actors to align objectives and approaches.

Moreover, connecting the local to the national is critical but insufficient when it comes to transhumance and nomadic pastoralism. **The regional dimension matters as much**, and this is where peacekeeping can be at a disadvantage because rarely does it have a cross-border mandate, yet some of that disadvantage can be overcome by strengthening institutional relations among UN

peacekeeping operations and UN regional offices and presences, in ways that would provide further meaning to the ambitions of the peace and security reform.

UN peacekeepers in Darfur, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo have shown initiative and ingenuity over recent years in navigating the difficult terrain of inter-communal conflicts and tensions between farmers and herders driven by

the paramount necessity of reducing civilian casualties. They have done so with a significant degree of success, but there are untapped opportunities to play an even more meaningful role by further strengthening integrated strategic approaches to local conflict dynamics placing them against the backdrop of broader national and regional dynamics and by harnessing the UN political capital and its assets and presence to generate political space for durable solutions.

Key recommendations

Strengthening prevention

- Support **pre-migration conferences** to minimize risks and agree on mitigating measures, as well as **post-migration conferences** to learn lessons, adapt measures and renew ownership and commitment by all stakeholders.
- **Strengthen early warning mechanisms/ or systems** to address insecurity and conflict promptly. Early warning systems refer to any action that is taken as soon as the threat of potential violent conflict is identified, in order to manage, resolve, or prevent violent conflict.
- Extend the adoption of the **local conflict analysis and planning tool** (LCAP) to support field offices analyze local conflict dynamics and stakeholders which in turn develop prioritized and integrated interventions that can improve operational coherence and effectiveness.
- Leverage missions' assets and partners' (i.e. FAO and IOM) capacities to, among others, **accurately map cattle migration patterns and routes to facilitate the identification of viable corridors, and infrastructural requirements** to decrease the risk of tensions over natural resources.
- Conduct **UN military patrols** that target the potential hotspots identified through participative mapping exercises.
- Work with missions' resources (i.e. QIPs, programmatic funding, trust funds, etc.) as well as other UN resources and capacities (i.e. PBF) to **invest in critical community infrastructures**.

Supporting local capacities for peace

- Support broader **local efforts and capacities to promote a culture of peace** through:
 - **Conducive environment for community dialogue**, constructive engagement with authorities, and inclusive political solutions.
 - **A Do-No-Harm approach** to truly support local solutions that don't undermine or put at risk local capacities for peace.
 - **Leverage the positive potential of youth in addressing peace building priorities**.
- **Better engage and support formal, informal and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms** to support sustainable solutions.
- Work with national and international partners to provide **context-tailored capacity strengthening, training and mentoring**.



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Linking local level dynamics with national and regional politics

- Develop opportunities for the **exchange of lessons learned and insights from conflict analysis, integrated responses and evaluations of integrated programming on transhumance.**
- Increase **interaction on transhumance between UN peacekeeping missions and UN regional offices** and/or other relevant UN presence in the region.
- Identify external expertise and devote capacities and resources to **map the political economy of transhumance and pastoralism in UN peacekeeping settings** to improve the ability of missions to connect local and national dynamics, enhancing its ability to leverage its good offices to diffuse tensions locally and promote lasting political solutions at the central level.
- Adopt integrated approaches and activities aimed at preventing and mitigating conflicts in partnership with local authorities, civil society organizations, the UNCT, and other local and international partners to support, among other things, **smooth political transition processes.**
- Support the operationalization of **local, national and regional pastoral migration frameworks.**

1. Introduction



1. Introduction

1.1. Peacekeeping, local conflicts and transhumance

A couple of decades ago, the idea that peacekeeping operations could be involved in addressing local conflicts triggered by transhumance and tensions between herders and farmers would have been met with skepticism. These conflicts are often described as ancestral, intractable and beyond the scope and mandate of UN peacekeeping operations. However, as international peace and security are increasingly being undermined by intra-state struggles rather than inter-state conflicts, peacekeepers are confronted with inter- and intra-communal violence and the need to better understand the nature of these conflicts and how they interlink with national dynamics.

The roots of local conflicts often dive deep into the socio-historical fabric of a country or geographical region. The complexity and intricacy of these conflicts have driven international actors to resist getting involved. Responsibility to manage local conflicts is thus appropriated to the host-state while the international community focuses on assisting governments and other main parties involved in national conflicts to find a political settlement. However, the reality on the ground underscores that the boundaries between the local, national and regional are blurry and interdependent, making it unviable to support 'solutions' by solely addressing the problem at a single level.

Moreover, in most peacekeeping settings, state fragility is flagged as the reason why there was a need for the UN to intervene in the first place. The assumption that the host-government can address all local conflicts autonomously is an erroneous one. Local conflicts amongst

communities are not only a leading cause of civilian casualties³ – and therefore a protection of civilians priority – but also highly toxic for social cohesion as they usually thrive on radicalized narratives around identity and feed on marginalization and exclusion which then perpetrate and fuel negative stereotypes. In

Box 1 Seriously lethal: Transhumance-related violence

In Central Nigeria, from 2009 to 2019, over 10,000 people were killed in clashes between herders and farmers, 4,000 of which were killed during the last two years.

In the north-eastern province of Ituri in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, over 700 people were killed in inter-communal clashes between the Hema and Lendu communities due to disagreements over land rights.

In central Mali, on 23 March 2019, 160 Fulani civilians were killed in Ogossagou village by armed farmers that belonged to the Dogon ethnic group. In another incident, on 9 June 2019, at least 95 people were killed in a Fulani raid on a Dogon village.

turn, this makes political settlements more elusive and peace processes more vulnerable to be derailed by minor incidents that can rapidly escalate and get out of control.

In conflict-affected situations, state institutions and political bodies often mirror inter-communal divides, heightening perceptions of partiality that undermine their credibility and therefore their ability to resolve conflicts. This is further compounded by a lack of resources, expertise and presence on the ground.

3 Foreign Affairs (2019). The Deadliest Conflict You've Never Heard of Nigeria's Cattle Herders and Farmers Wage a Resource War. Thomson Reuters (2019). At least 161 in northeast Congo in apparent ethnic clashes. CBC. Violence between herders, farmers leaves at least 161 dead in Congo past week. United Nations News (2020). Killings and violence targeting ethnic group in DR Congo 'may amount to crimes against humanity'. Security Council Report (2019). Monthly Forecast.

Reforming state institutions to effectively address local conflict drivers requires political will at a national level, and can benefit from the support of international actors, including peacekeeping operations.

The importance that inter-communal tensions and conflicts have attained in international politics is clearly manifested by the increasing number of references in Security Council resolutions and peacekeeping mandates, with missions being tasked, in one form or the other, to support the prevention, mitigation and resolution of inter-communal violence.⁴ Bearing this in mind, the need to better understand what drives these conflicts and how the UN can better support viable solutions has gained momentum, especially in the wake of the call made by the High-Level Independent Panel of Peace Operations (HIPPO)⁵ for more field-focused and people-centered peace operations.

Efforts to better understand how peacekeeping practices can best support local actors and promote social cohesion led the Division of Policy, Evaluation and Training (DPET) of the Department of Peace Operations (former Department of Peacekeeping Operations)⁶ to survey current practices on local conflict management in the field and summarize its findings in a report issued in 2017.⁷ The report highlighted a number of good practices, especially in terms of working with local communities and institutional and non-institutional actors. These included developing early warning mechanisms, contributing to the prevention and mitigation of the consequences

of violence, as well as supporting local mediation and reconciliation initiatives. The report also identified issues that needed further reflection as well as optimization of peacekeeping missions' contribution.

One broad area for improvement identified in the report was the need for local analysis and planning based on local realities and stakeholders that can benefit, were appropriate, from the joint efforts, resources, expertise and comparative advantages of all UN peacekeeping mission components. This led to the development of the Local Conflict Analysis and Planning tool (LCAP) by DPET and the German Center for International Peace Operations (ZIF) to support Field Offices in peacekeeping missions to conduct tailored conflict analysis and use it to prioritize integrated interventions. LCAP is currently being rolled out to UN peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali and eventually in South Sudan and the Central African Republic.

In order to shift the focus from reaction to prevention, it was deemed necessary to acquire a more granular understanding of some of the prevalent conflict drivers and factors that impact inter-communal conflict dynamics. Among others, the following were identified: a) growing tensions between herding and farming communities within and around the Sahel region; b) institutional deficits to peacefully resolve conflicts and the persisting role of traditional dispute resolution mechanisms; c) political marginalization of

4 In the Democratic Republic of Congo, MONUSCO is requested to support and undertake "local mediation efforts to prevent escalation of violence [...] facilitate the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of intercommunal conflicts through, inter alia, mediation and community engagement," SEC/RES/2348 (2019); in Darfur, UNAMID is tasked to "support [...] the mediation of inter-communal conflict" SEC/RES/2463(2019); in Mali, MINUSMA is to "facilitate the implementation of a comprehensive politically-led Malian strategy to protect civilians, reduce intercommunal violence..." SEC/RES/2480 (2019); in Abyei, UNISFA is encouraged to work with appointed authorities to "maintain stability, foster intercommunal reconciliation..." SEC/RES/2497 (2019); in South Sudan, UNMISS is "to facilitate the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of intercommunal conflict through, inter alia, mediation and community engagement in order to foster sustainable local and national reconciliation]" SEC/RES/2459 (2019); and in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA is "to provide good offices and technical expertise [...] to advance national reconciliation and local conflict resolution." SEC/RES/2499 (2019).

5 United Nations (2015). *Uniting our Strengths for Peace: Politics, Partnerships and People*.

6 Named Department of Peace Operations (DPO) in January 2019.

7 United Nations (2017). *The Role of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Addressing Local Conflicts*.

pastoral communities; d) underestimating the role that local community-based capacities can play to support efforts for peace and social cohesion; e) implications of climate change at the grass-roots level in terms of heightened competition over dwindling natural resources.

The present Survey is an effort by DPET to zoom in on the first issue mentioned above by looking at the dynamics underpinning conflict between herders and farmers in peacekeeping settings as well as by reviewing the means peacekeepers have adopted to address these tensions. The aim is to learn from these experiences and offer insights that can assist practitioners in the field to address these kinds of conflicts more effectively.

The Survey is based on a literature review as well as relevant documents, code cables and reports, especially those produced by Civil Affairs sections operating in MINUSCA, MINUSMA, MONUSCO, UNISFA, UNMISS and UNAMID. Additionally, the report relies on information provided by UN peacekeepers through a questionnaire survey and a number of semi-structured interviews with non-peacekeeping practitioners, UN Agencies (e.g. FAO), and local civil society actors.

The Survey delves into some of the notions around pastoralism and transhumance within the context of the African continent, and more specifically the Sahel region and countries south of it that frequently host migrating herds during the transhumance season. The report then focuses briefly on some of the regional efforts put in place to regulate transhumance from a commercial, health and security perspective.

The third chapter focuses on some of the main drivers and circumstances linked to transhumance and pastoralism as a livelihood and lifestyle that can trigger conflicts, and examines factors such as shifting socio-economic patterns in herder-farmer relations, the consequences of climate change for natural resources that are essential to this livestock production system, the increased levels of

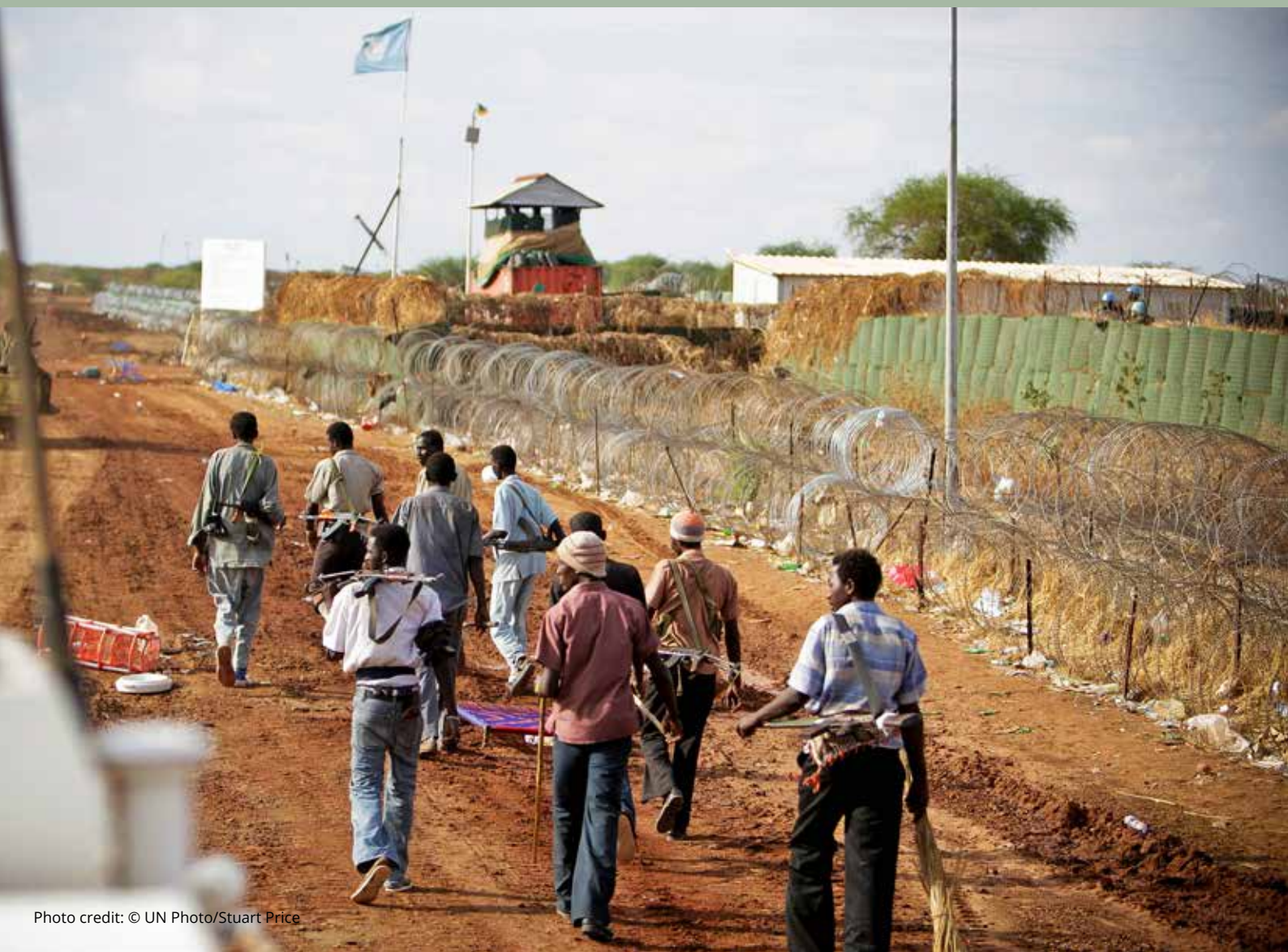
insecurity and instability in the region, the weakening of formal and informal regulating mechanisms, as well as the specificities of the politics of transhumance. This section is critical in providing a deeper understanding of the dynamics that drive conflict in herder-farmer relations against the backdrop of an evolving socio-economic landscape characterized by conflict, its consequences for state capacities and contradictory political agendas.

The fourth chapter examines current practices in peacekeeping settings to prevent, mitigate and resolve conflict stemming from transhumance and pastoralism, highlighting lessons learned, good practices and recurring challenges.

Finally, the last chapter focuses on a number of practical considerations that can assist UN practitioners in the field in analyzing and designing interventions to address transhumance-related conflicts.



2. Pastoralism and transhumance in context



2. Pastoralism and transhumance in context

Pastoralism, far from being a residual legacy of an ancestral livelihood model, remains a vibrant economic system. In Africa, it spreads across some 43% of the continent's landmass and affects around 268 million people who practice some kind of pastoralism, be it in the form of transhumance, nomadism, or agro-pastoralism.⁸ Livestock production represents a vital part of agricultural GDP in countries across the Sahel and West Africa and, in some cases (i.e. Mali) it contributes to up to 40% of the agricultural GDP.

Pastoralism is particularly well suited to take advantage of the region's specific geographical characteristics. In West Africa, 38% of the land is primarily arid and unfavorable for crop production and is instead well-adapted to livestock production.⁹ Most of this livestock is maintained under transhumant production systems, characterized by varying seasonal and cyclical migration. Herders from Burundi, Sudan, Rwanda, and Uganda have been present in DRC since the mid-18th century, while Sudano-Sahelian herders have moved in and out of the CAR since the early 20th century¹⁰ in order to graze their animals during the dry season, and were welcomed by local farmers in the host regions.

Box 2 Pastoralism, Nomadism, Transhumance and Agro pastoralism

Pastoralism is the overarching term given to a form of animal husbandry which, given its practitioners have historically been nomadic people, often includes a mobile aspect.

The most mobile identifiable form of pastoralism is **nomadism**, wherein herders travel alongside their herds all year round in search of fresh water and pasture for their animals. There is no limit to how far such nomadic pastoralists will travel, nor are there any specific routes which they will follow: they travel according to their herd's needs.¹¹

Transhumance is a mobile livestock farming method that is based on regular, seasonal movements. The movements are mostly predictable; each year, herders follow the pattern of the seasons and travel through trails and pasturelands that they already know. On the other hand, nomadism is characterized by the continual and unpredictable movements of all members of a family or group. Today, most agro-herders in West and Central Africa and the Sahel practice semi-transhumance; only a part of the family moves according to the seasons, while the rest of the family practices sedentary farming.¹²

Agro-pastoralism is the integration of crop production and livestock production, and is practiced amongst settled, nomadic, and transhumant communities.¹³

8 Luizza, M. (2017). Transhumant Pastoralism in Central Africa: Emerging Impacts on Conservation and Security, p. 1.

9 Mulumba, J.B.K, Jacques, S., Yacouba, S., Hamade, K (2008). Livestock and regional market in the Sahel and West Africa Potentials and challenges, p. 12.

10 Mulumba, J.B.K, Jacques, S., Yacouba, S., Hamade, K (2008). Livestock and regional market in the Sahel and West Africa Potentials and challenges p. 1.

11 Blench, Roger (2001). *Pastoralists in the new millennium*, p. 11–12.

12 West Africa Brief (2018). *Transhumance and Nomadism*.

13 <https://knowledge.unccd.int/knowledge-products-and-pillars/best-practices-sustainable-land>, p.1.

However, population growth and climate change in the past few decades have led to the intensification of southward cattle migration in search of grazing resources. This has instigated competition for already scarce resources for sedentary communities and heightened the scrutiny by national governments that have often perceived the free movement of herders and cattle across borders with suspicion and as a real or potential threat to their economic national interests. Nevertheless, given the fluidity of nomadism and transhumance patterns, it is not always simple to determine the national origin of transhumance groups who generate an environment of mutual distrust among herders, sedentary groups (whether farmers or agro pastoralists) and authorities.

While climate change itself is not generally regarded as a direct cause of conflict, it exacerbates tensions and accelerates desertification processes across countries such as Mali and Chad. This results in the reduced availability of water, fodder and grazing land against a backdrop of growing populations of farmer and herder communities, as well as heads of cattle. Additionally, globalization affects livelihoods across borders whilst alternating cultural patterns, with some herding communities turning towards a sedentary lifestyle. This

results in an increased demand for farmland and pasture alike. Considering the rapidly dwindling land available, the two groups are put in direct competition with one another. The combination of desertification and lack of available pasture prompts herders to travel earlier in the season and to new, more distant regions, many of which have historically not been exposed to transhumance and maintain a long tradition of farmland societies.

Across many regions and countries, transhumance activities and the areas in which they are practiced suffer from a state of profound neglect due to a lack of coherent or supportive government policies, shortages of capable bureaucrats and poor infrastructure to improve access to and availability of resources. Different business models have weakened traditional livelihoods by those either pushing for large-scale mechanized farming¹⁴ or seizing land to maximize the extraction of natural resources,¹⁵ as well as by well-connected rich investors monopolizing livestock breeding and circumventing established agreements between traditional herders and farmers to acquire pastures, land and water stations.¹⁶ Connivance between powerful political and business elites often results in the disruption of traditional livelihoods for both herders and farmers.

14 In Sudan land seizures have been common in the states of South Kordofan and Blue Nile, and in the eastern region. The state has seized land and leased it out to private entities for development of large mechanized farming operations. The government has used gunships and helicopters to clear people from villages to secure land for the development of oil fields. Taha, Mohyeldeen E. (2016). *Land Use, Ownership and Allocation in Sudan*, p. 12.

15 State seizure of land following the discovery of natural resources or identification of economic potential, a move that displaces or infringes upon the livelihoods of farmers and pastoralists alike. For example, in Sudan, the 2010 Agriculture and Animal Producers Legislative Act, gives the state full authority to “use any land with proven natural resources of national significance (oil, minerals, gas, forests, or agriculture).” Between 2003 and 2014, Sudan transferred “nearly four million hectares of land to foreign private investors,” and “as a result, smallholders and pastoralists have been evicted from land and denied access to natural resources in favour of private investors, land speculators, military personnel, and elites.” Such massive transfers displaced thousands of pastoralists and farmers, without distinction. Cormack, Zoe & Young, Helen (2012). *Pastoralism in the New Borderlands: Cross-border Migrations, Conflict and Peacebuilding*, p.6.

16 For example, in the Sahel, due to an increase in meat demand by countries South of the Sahel (Nigeria, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire), livestock breeding become an important business sector in the 1990s and is Niger's second-largest industry after uranium production. Local elites invested heavily in livestock, so animals are no longer only owned by traditional pastoralist groups like the Fulbe and Tuareg, but rather by rich, influential and “invisible” businesspeople who are well connected to government officials. These “new” livestock breeders use their influence to – often illegally – acquire pastures, watering places and sometimes even land that has been set aside for crop farming. De Haan, Dubern, and others (2014). *Pastoralism Development in the Sahel: A Road to Stability?* P. 35; Günter Schöneegg. *A complementary relationship turns competitive*.



Systemic issues are then further aggravated by conflict, with the proliferation of automatic weapons and a general state of insecurity in large areas of countries such as Mali, the CAR, Sudan and South Sudan. This often results in traditional migration routes being impassable, forcing herders to seek alternative routes and pasture lands, only to enter areas that are already suffering from a shortage of resources and where there is no traditional relationship between herding and farming communities.

2.1 The international and regional frameworks for transhumance in Africa

Acknowledging the socio-economic relevance of transhumance, but also the potential for tensions and conflicts, a number of UN policy statements and mandates related to transhumance have been issued in which the UN recognizes the adverse effects of climate change on stability and sustainable peace, as well as the need for long-term strategies by governments and the UN to support stabilization and build resilience.¹⁷

Security Council Resolution 2417 (2018), explicitly acknowledges the link between conflict and hunger and calls on all partners to protect civilians, including their means to produce or access food, such as farms, markets, water systems, and modes of transport. The UN Executive Committee Decision (2018) requested the UN System to strengthen its cross-pillar approach and integrated support to stem the ongoing violence between herders and farmers and to address the long-term drivers of conflicts through several practical actions.

In addition, the Peacebuilding Commission and ECOSOC have also highlighted the importance of addressing transhumance not only as a

peace and security issue, but also as one deeply rooted in development questions. The World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) are working on projects that impact transhumance routes as well as in areas where malnutrition, food insecurity and tensions between farmers and herders are most prevalent.

African states and regional organizations have also established various instruments to coordinate pastoralism and provide conflict mediation measures to resolve disputes between transhumance herders and farmers. The ECOWAS Transhumance Protocol, Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 and Regulation C/REG.3/01/03 (2003), is considered one of the most comprehensive and ambitious instruments in the management of transhumance activities. In addition to stipulating requirements for travel, herd characteristics, and the responsibilities and relations between herders and host-states, the Decision mandates for 'commission[s] of conciliation' to resolve disputes between herders and farmers. Following the ECOWAS Decision, A/DEC.5/10/98, the governments of Burkina Faso and Niger signed a memorandum of understanding to implement its provisions in 2003. Niger is recognized for its efforts to regulate agricultural activities, both herder or sedentary, by codifying rights and providing an institutional framework in its Rural Code.¹⁸

In a similar vein, the African Union Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa aims to secure, protect and improve the lives and rights of African herders. It is a platform for mobilizing and coordinating political commitment to herder development in Africa that also emphasizes the regional nature of many transhumance ecosystems in Africa and the need to support and harmonize policies across the Regional Economic Communities and Member States.¹⁹ In Central Africa, cross-border transhumance is regulated by CEBEVIRHA,

17 Security Council resolutions on Lake Chad 2349 (2017), Somalia 2408 (2018) and 2431 (2018), Sudan 2429 (2018) and Mali 2432 (2018) and Presidential Statements on UNOWAS (PRST/2018/3) and UNOCA (PRST/2018/17).

18 African Union (2010). Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa: Securing, Protecting and Improving the Lives, Livelihoods and Rights of Pastoralist Communities.

19 Ibid.

created by Heads of State representing the six member states of the UDEAC (now CEMAC) in 1987, and is charged, among other tasks, with promoting and harmonizing livestock-related rules, regulations and practices in the Central African region.²⁰ UNOCA provides support to ECCAS on the development of a regulatory framework on transhumance, in line with a decision at the 5th Ordinary Session of the Council of Ministers of the Central African Peace and Security Council held in March 2018 in Libreville, Gabon. While East Africa and the Horn do not yet have any regional agreements on transhumance comparable to those in West and Central Africa, there were recent discussions about a protocol for the Treaty of East African Cooperation to deal with cross-border movement of herders. In the past, Central and West African states have collaborated on region-wide policies and agreements, and many have engaged in bilateral arrangements. The interventions have resulted in relative change in the political context and agricultural production systems. The past twenty years have also shown significant challenges in domesticating and implementing the Transhumance Protocol. This calls for a review of both the content and implementation of the Transhumance Protocol in order to develop a framework that addresses current challenges.²¹

The existence of such regulatory frameworks is important and should be considered when peacekeeping missions engage in addressing transhumance-related tensions because they help bring in the transnational dimension that escapes peacekeeping operations by the very nature of their mandates. Nevertheless, it is also important to emphasize that these policies are rarely resources with the means and capacities required to enforce their implementation and, in many cases, remain an aspirational reference rather than a reality on the ground.

2.2 Impact of farmer and herder conflicts on women

In the Sahel, herders are already economically, socially and politically marginalized which can lead to conflicts with sedentary farmers. This marginalization further affects women due to their lack of influence within national development frameworks, and subsequently acts as a doorway to other negative impacts.

Due to the complex dynamics around transhumance, families must travel for long periods of time in order to find pasture for their herds. As climate change continues to degrade such lands, subsequently increasing the duration families must travel in search of pasture, herders suffer from increasingly limited access to government-provided services such as healthcare and education. The lack of access to maternal healthcare services results in a significantly elevated maternal mortality rate among herder women. Furthermore, where herder women are able to raise their children and have access to education, their daughters are even less likely to be afforded the opportunity to go to school as, culturally, it is not considered worthwhile to invest in education for girls.

Another challenge is the lack of asset ownership as common herder cultural norms dictate women may not own livestock or land. Consequently, women are forced to seek alternative income-generating activities in addition to the already heavy burden of running the domestic household. In cases where this leads to food scarcity, women will play a sacrificial role by offering food to their children and relatives before themselves.²²

Farmer women also often suffer from the consequences of herder-farmer conflicts as crop destruction, cattle theft and theft of farm produce directly impacts their livelihoods.

20 MINUSCA: Transhumance Evaluation 2015-2017.

21 International Organization for Migration (IOM). Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region (2019) Pg. 1.

22 Administrative committee on the coordination /subcommittee on nutrition (1989). *Women's Role in Food Chain Activities and the Implications for Nutrition*.

They have limited livelihood opportunities, forcing them to take on subservient jobs or resort to begging. Also faced with ownership limitations, the loss of loved ones can disrupt family structures. Widowed women often find themselves evicted from their farmlands and unable to provide for their family as they have no produce to sell.

While the consequences of herder-farmer conflicts may have different economic impacts for women in both communities, both are equally likely to suffer from gender-based violence. Throughout areas such as the Horn of Africa, harmful practices such as female genital mutilation, early marriage, rape and abduction are likely occurrences.²³ Such violence can also have community-related motives, with women and girls from farmer communities being targeted for rape by herders while working on farms or collecting firewood.

In spite of these challenges, it is crucial to note that given the opportunity, women are highly resourceful and adaptable when it comes to providing alternative sources of income, especially during periods of heightened drought. They protect the environment and community and because they are usually the ones responsible for crop cultivation and obtaining water and firewood, they have experience in food security and natural resource management. For example, in times of drought, herder women collect wild foods to supplement their families' diets, although their availability is continually being reduced because of environmental degradation and land privatization. They also distribute livestock products among themselves throughout the year and support each other's households in times of heightened vulnerability. These informal groups may also engage in small-scale trading during times of drought. Herder women are known to be the custodians of

pastoral livelihoods, culture, and communities, and play a key role in adapting to changing conditions. Farmer and herder women also play a vital role in preventing community violence and instability, and spearhead farm-herder cohesion, thus contributing to conflict resolution and sustainable land and resource management.²⁴

While this role is increasingly recognized, a recent study from the Global Gathering indicated that this powerful role is often underestimated among these communities.²⁵ However, a study by Creslo highlights the necessity of combatting the marginalization of herder and farmer women alike, as lower levels of gender inequality reduce the likelihood of inter-community conflicts.²⁶ When the participation rate of women in labor force is higher, there are lower levels of violence which reduces the likelihood of military force being used to resolve such conflicts: countries wherein only 10% of women are employed are nearly 30 times more likely to suffer from conflict than those wherein 40% are employed.

The marginalization of women and girls stems mostly from gender inequality within the herder and farmer communities. Most often, women and girls are the most affected by conflict while they can play significant roles to support conflict prevention and resolution. It is therefore pertinent that peacekeeping operations and local authorities ensure that programs to empower women are designed and implemented, and that women are included in interventions, especially in decision-making and conflict resolution processes. It is popularly believed that when messages from women are mainstreamed in decision-making, changes benefiting families and communities will occur.

23 Council of Europe (2017). *Female Genital Mutilation and Forced Marriage*.

24 Women Pastoralists (2007). *Preserving traditional knowledge Facing modern challenges*. Secretariat of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. Bonn, Germany.

25 IFAD. (2012). *Women and Pastoralism*. P.4.

26 Crespo-Sancho, C. (2017). *The Role of Gender in the Prevention of Violent Conflict*.



3. Transhumance and local conflict dynamics



3. Transhumance and local conflict dynamics

Transhumance tensions and violence could be summarized in terms of fierce competition over dwindling natural resources. However, the reality is much more complex with several factors exacerbating such competition. Changes that have a direct impact on pastoralism in general, and more specifically on transhumance, are systemic and have been in the making for decades. Others are linked to recent developments, but all of them are intertwined, adding to the complexity of the problems that communities, governments and international actors such as the UN are addressing. This Survey identifies 5 broad drivers of change that directly or indirectly impact the propensity of transhumance to become a source of tension and a catalyst for inter-communal violence:

1. Socio-economic shifting patterns
2. Climate change
3. Increased instability and violence
4. Breakdown of formal and informal regulating mechanisms
5. The politics of transhumance

3.1. Socio-economic shifting patterns

Transhumance has traditionally been managed by mutual agreements between herding and farming communities so as to address the inherent risk of competition over resources, resolve conflicts once incidents have occurred, and prevent smaller incidents from escalating. Herds trampling and eating crops, farms expanding over existing herding routes, the rustling or killing of livestock and the intrusion on protected areas as well as the use of wells and water sources without permission are all

recurring incidents that can provoke violence between communities. While longstanding efforts have been made to use traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to address such conflicts, these mechanisms have come under increasing pressure and often become inadequate; some have failed dramatically and have since fallen out of use.

Outbreaks of violence have exacted a heavy toll on the lives and economic capacities of herders. In the Sahel, by 2011, an estimated 1.1 million people had been forcibly displaced by conflict, at least 50 per cent of which were herders.²⁷ Many of these displaced herders move into areas where they face new tensions as they compete for resources with resident farmers. In Um Dhukhun in Darfur, the conflict between the Salamat and the Misseriya is an example of a conflict among herders competing over pasture and water resources. Incidents and extended periods of conflict further deepen deprivation and disrupt efforts to develop infrastructure, deliver services, or attract investment.

3.1.1. Bigger communities and larger herds

While the herder sector across certain countries displays economic promise, some economists fear that any gains will be absorbed by the growing population, asserting that there are “too few animals for too many people.”²⁸ Rising populations exert pressure on the environment as sedentary farmers expand their acreage under pasture. In Mali, the FAO estimates that there is “a loss of 100,000 ha/year,” owing to the expanded consumption of biomass energy and forestland clearing by brushfires.²⁹ In Burkina Faso, the annual rate of conversion of forestland to cropland was estimated to be 0.96%. Despite the reduction in

27 De Haan, Cees et al, (2014), p. 28.

28 Ibid.

29 Pe arson, Nakia & Niaufre, Camille (2013). Desertification and drought related migrations in the Sahel – The case of Mali and Burkina Faso, The State of Environmental Migration, p. 81-82.

forage land, “cattle populations have doubled from 1997 to 2008 leading to disequilibrium between the number of livestock and available resources.”³⁰ These developments have led to “mounting pressures on natural resources and converging production systems (mixed cropping and herder farming) are increasingly ending in conflict.”³¹

Despite the assertion that there are not enough animals to go around, data suggests that herds are in fact increasing in size, perhaps driven by the need for greater financial and social security by herders under perceptibly increased strain. For example, in South Sudan, it is estimated that there are more livestock than people.³² Furthermore, the government of Chad estimated that, in 2010, there were 16 million tropical livestock units in the Sahel region; a figure which is expected to reach 21 million by 2020.³³ A 2015 study on human and livestock densities in the territory southeast of Lake Chad concluded that, accounting for rainfall patterns and growth in populations, “fodder could be insufficient for the number of animals, with overuse of herder resources contributing to emaciation in animals and, furthermore, malnutrition of people in the area.”³⁴ The same trends are observed in Darfur where, “despite recurrent droughts,” the population of livestock has been growing as a “response to market demand.”³⁵

3.1.2. *Shifting economic and livelihood patterns*

In the past, farmers and herders co-existed with one another, fostering symbiotic relationships. Farmers who owned herds were increasingly used as conduits between transhumance herders and those who purchased livestock or their products, increasing economic interdependence.³⁶ Herders who practice transhumance livelihoods are present across all the countries examined in this Survey, with some originating in the state and others migrating from neighboring states. For instance, the Fulani in Nigeria have an extended history of migrating and building relationships with various sedentary farming populations in West Africa.³⁷ However, more recently, shifts in livelihoods and economic activities have increasingly undermined this ‘production symbiosis’, transforming the relationship between farmers and herders from a collaborative to a competitive one,³⁸ with self-sufficiency substituting symbiosis.

Among the most significant changes is the increasing sedentism of previously migrating communities. Settling herder communities often adopt some degree of agricultural labor that may include farming for a certain period of time and grazing of livestock. There are numerous causes behind the increasing rates of sedentism, including the loss of rangeland as governments close off pasture for commercial farming or industrial interests, the privatization of public lands, the inability

30 Pe arson, Nakia & Niaufre, Camille (2013). Desertification and drought related migrations in the Sahel – The case of Mali and Burkina Faso, *The State of Environmental Migration*, p. 82.

31 Ibid.

32 Idris, Iffat (2018). *Livestock and Conflict in South Sudan*. Knowledge, Evidence and Learning for Development, p.5.

33 Jean-Richard, Crump, and others (2015). Estimating population and livestock density of mobile pastoralists and sedentary settlements in the south-eastern Lake Chad area.

34 Jean-Richard, Crump, and others (2015), (2015), p. 9.

35 Young, Helen et al, (2005), p. 66.

36 Ayantunde, Augustine, et al, (2010), p. 31-33.

37 United Nations Environment Programme (2018). Environmental cooperation as a pathway to resolve Nigeria’s deadly farmer-herder conflicts.

38 OXFAM (2014). *We No Longer Share the Land: Agricultural change, land and violence in Darfur*. p. 8.



to earn a livelihood with shrinking resources, increasing access to economic opportunity and access to services. These behaviors can strain relationships with farming communities who are already settled in the area and concerned about available resources.

Economic changes to agricultural livelihoods in Darfur are emblematic of these developments and underscore the potential for tension and conflict. Relations changed as the availability of agrochemicals “replaced manure in irrigated agriculture,” while farmers replaced herders’ pack animals with “cart animals and, increasingly, trucks.”³⁹ Farmers began to fence off their land and preserved crop residues such as stalks for their own herds or for sale as building materials. Existing collaborative relationships withered and were replaced by “competitive interaction filled with mistrust, tensions, and grievances, with an increasing likelihood of conflict between resource users.”⁴⁰

3.1.3. Changing cultural patterns

Paradoxically, as boundaries between specific occupation groups and their ethnic, religious and cultural identities begin to blur, long-established and, increasingly, recently settled groups start to resent new waves of herders moving into more sedentary livelihoods, triggering xenophobia fuelled by political manipulation. Narratives of settling herders being the spearhead of foreign armed groups, bringing diseases and imposing their beliefs are frequent in community relations in regions south of the Sahel.

In Nigeria, recent research⁴¹ has highlighted how much violence has been triggered by perceptions, primarily among Christian farmers of varying ethnicities, that Muslim Fulani herders are imposing their culture and religion in the area and country at large. Such notions have encouraged the mobilization of militias and other armed groups along ethnic and religious lines, thus creating an atmosphere of crisis and insecurity.

In Mali, a 2018 study⁴² revealed that farmers and ‘settled herders’ believed that the growing number of transhumance herders was responsible for “a decline in availability of forage resources and water,” in addition to “a decline in species richness of the vegetation.”⁴³ Farmers also blamed transhumance herders for uncontrolled bush fires, cutting of trees, spread of invasive species and a decline in production. Herders denied this and instead blamed climate change, but this was not enough to shift negative perceptions. However, both farmers and transhumance herders acknowledged that “this conflict between communities was not the case two decades ago” and that “increasing competition for the scarce natural resources” has pitted the two against one another.⁴⁴

While herders are organized to varying degrees, social cohesion is considered high, often reflecting the need for strong connections and support networks in herding. In certain instances, herders are organized in unions, cooperatives, and trade groups, although the migratory lifestyle is a hindrance to cohesive organization. In the past decade,

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Foreign Affairs (2019). The Deadliest Conflict You’ve Never Heard of Nigeria’s Cattle Herders and Farmers Wage a Resource War International Crisis Group (2019). Stopping Nigeria’s Spiralling farmer-herder Violence.

Understanding the herder- farmer conflict in Nigeria.

New York Times (2018). Nigerian Herders Face Threat from Farmers Competing for Land.

Los Angeles Times (2019). Guns, religion and climate change intensify Nigeria’s deadly farmer-herder clashes

42 Umotini, Clarisse & Ayantunde, Augustine Abioye,(2018). Perceived effects of transhumant practices on natural resource management in southern Mali.

43 Umotini, Clarisse & Ayantunde, Augustine Abioye, (2018). p. 9.

44 Umotini, Clarisse & Ayantunde, Augustine Abioye, (2018), p. 10.



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one of the most dangerous trends has been the militarization of herder livelihoods in key parts of Africa, partially due to porous and unguarded borders. Insurgencies in one country oftentimes do spill across borders, as was the case when conflict spread from north to central Mali, and into north and eastern Burkina Faso and south-western Niger. Political marginalization of herder communities has diminished livelihood options and led to social exclusion for many which has, in turn, lured many to serve as foot soldiers in Sahel's numerous interlocking conflicts.⁴⁵

For many herders, farmers who live primarily on traditional transhumance routes are the obvious 'antagonists'. Most of the current tension and violence between farmers and herders is new, suggesting a greater ability

to coexist in previous decades. Although farmer-herder conflicts are principally caused by competition over resources, many have acquired an ethnic or religious character, as farmers and herders often hail from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Owing to their sedentary lifestyle, farmers are often perceived to have better relationships with municipal or federal governments, leaving herders skeptical of agreements brokered by these stakeholders.

3.2. Climate change

Contemporary literature regards climate change as one of the factors that influences conflict and security. However, the direct impact of environmental factors themselves is somewhat unclear. A 2010 OECD study

45 Muggah, R. & Cabrera, J.L Relief Web (2019). The Sahel is engulfed by violence, climate change, food insecurity and extremists are largely to blame.

on conflict in the Sahel concluded that “no deterministic relation has been identified between environmental and security dynamics” and that “environmental variables combine with a host of socio-political variables” to foment conflict. Subsequent studies and research support the notion that environmental factors must be analyzed in conjunction with other local variables. A 2018 study focusing on East Africa and Sudan, concurred that there may be “indirect linkages between climate change and the risk of conflict,” adding that “local conflicts around natural resources may be triggered or exacerbated by climate-related factors.”⁴⁶ The report identified five related factors: “(1) deteriorating livelihoods, (2) increased migration, (3) changing mobility patterns among herders, (4) tactical considerations among armed groups, (5) elite exploitation of local grievances.”⁴⁷ Environmental degradation alone is not sufficient to incite herder-famer conflict, though the perception of exploitation or misbehavior due to shrinking natural resources by one of the groups is a powerful catalyst in heightening tensions.⁴⁸

The evidence that climate change has diminished available resources is manifested in more ways than direct conflict over resources, such as water or land. Reflecting heightened levels of drought and displacement in Chad, “herders now migrate earlier and sometimes reach agricultural areas in the south of the country at harvest time,” which can precipitate tensions among farmers.⁴⁹ In Mali, the desertification of previously fertile lands, coupled with decreasing rainfall and expansion of cultivated land, has increased competition as “more herders now move to the Inner Delta during the dry season.”⁵⁰ Additionally,

“as the demands on natural resources have increased, available pasture has decreased and conflicts over land and political authority have ensued.”⁵¹ Adjustments to climate pressures may prove permanent: while the drought of 1973/74 caused one group of herders in Niger to move to Benin and Nigeria instead of their usual Mali, they did not return to their original route once the drought abated and instead continued to use this new route.⁵²

Many coping measures adopted by herders and farmers to respond to certain consequences of climate change bear the risk of having ripple effects that further exacerbate tensions. One of the coping mechanisms is manifested through the increased deforestation carried out to free up land for farming or charcoal production to supplement household income. However, the reduction of trees leads to soil erosion and poor soil quality, leaving communities more vulnerable to dust storms and flash floods, two risks that are compounded by the meteorological consequences of climate change.⁵³

3.3. Increased instability and violence

3.3.1. Protracted regional conflicts, organized crime and extremism

Across West and Central Africa where pastoralism is a primary livelihood, insecurity and violence have been rising. In fact, over the past ten to twenty years, the primary countries and regions examined in this Survey have all experienced civil conflict with a direct impact on herders and disruption to traditional livelihoods and lifestyles. The rise of armed

46 Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) 2018. *The relationship between climate change and violent conflict*, p. 9.

47 SIDA, (2018), p. 10.

48 Umotini, Clarisse & Ayantunde, Augustine Abioye, (2018), p. 3.

49 ICG (2014). *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa*, p. 3.

50 UNOWAS, (2018). *Pastoralism and security in West Africa and the Sahel*, p. 45.

51 Ibid.

52 Ayantunde, Augustine, et al, (2010), p. 23.

53 USAID, (2014). *Climate change and conflict in the Sahel*, p.9.

groups, ranging from nationalist groups struggling for self-determination to ideological and extremist ones has worsened insecurity, jeopardized development gains, disrupted traditional social structures, displaced communities, and increased illicit activities.

In some cases, traditional transhumance routes have become corridors for criminal activity, such as weapons and drug trafficking, while others have become inaccessible due to protracted violent conflict. Rising insecurity has led some members of herder communities to take up arms in order to protect their families and herds. Some members join armed groups, which can promote a sense of insecurity among others in their proximity. As a result, crucial national and international stakeholders have started looking at these issues solely through a security lens, thus privileging security-oriented solutions.

The proliferation of Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) is a common feature to many peacekeeping settings, but these groups are not uniform and display a broad range of organizational structures, potency, motives, membership and varying relations to farming or herding communities. Some NSAGs are rebel groups opposed to government while others profess ideological militants. Additional groups emerge as self-defence groups or engage in banditry out of economic opportunism.

NSAG hostile activity can block traditional transhumance routes and force herders to change paths, potentially bringing them in contact with farmers with whom they have no pre-existing relationships. Food insecurity and undermined livelihoods, to which they contribute, is exploited by NSAGs to draw in new members to their group while using natural resources, especially water, either as a weapon, or to finance their actions.⁵⁴ Local

militia often prey on herders on the move who are more vulnerable and either force them to pay informal taxes or kill livestock to terrorize them.

The proliferation of small and light weapons has encouraged the establishment of armed groups, allowing a handful of militants to magnify their power. Insecure circumstances have also encouraged civilians to carry weapons for personal protection and made the identification of legitimate armed groups more difficult. Armed groups' ability to operate with impunity can diminish the power of traditional institutions to make peace or broker agreements to promote peaceful coexistence.

These armed groups oftentimes portray themselves, or actually intervene, to support interests of farmer or herder communities by agreeing to protect their livestock, or even by providing justice mechanisms for aggrieved farmers or herders. These alliances often follow the same fault lines as the conflict, further exacerbating the association of one community or the other to NSAG along ethnic, religious or other cultural identity patterns. The Janjaweed in Darfur are an example of armed groups that were instrumentalized by the Sudanese government to commit various atrocities against mostly farming communities.⁵⁵

3.3.2. Small arms proliferation

The rise in the availability and presence of small arms in herder and farming communities is one of the largest contributors to increased tensions and violence surrounding transhumance as well as a rising number of casualties. The proliferation of conflicts across Africa has increased the flow of weapons across the continent and made them more

54 SIDA (2018). The relationship between climate change and violent conflict, p. 15.
55 <https://www.cfr.org/backgroundunder/darfur-crisis-continues>, <https://slate.com/news-and-politics/2004/07/who-are-the-janjaweed>.html, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2004/05/06/darfur-destroyed/ethnic-cleansing-government-and-militia-forces-western-sudan>.



Photo credit: © UN Photo/Tim McKulka

affordable. Herder and farming communities have begun to acquire weapons as a means of self-defence, heightening perceptions of insecurity and leading to textbook security dilemmas. The greater presence of small arms has several implications. Fundamentally, it has made traditional conflict, particularly cattle raiding, deadlier. This new type of ultra-lethal violence produces a more disruptive effect on communities and invites heightened retaliation, thus increasing the possibility of an irreversible spiral towards conflict.

The expansion of weapon use has reduced the level of organization necessary to carry out violent acts. Armed with a few automatic weapons, a small group of fighters can now operate independently. Linked to this is the greater independence of violent actors that undermine the influence of traditional institutions. These actors, who previously

exercised broad control over members of their communities and were recognized as credible mediators in reaching arrangements with other groups, have had their authority eroded, ultimately limiting the opportunities to mitigate tensions or resolve conflict.

Containing the proliferation of weaponry is challenging for peace operations. Some armed actors do not belong to any large armed group, but rather are individuals attempting to protect the livelihoods of their community. Consequently, conducting operations against these individuals can become problematic. Perceptions of partiality towards a particular group or resentments over the killing of protectors or members of society can be devastating for the ability of a mission to maintain legitimacy and built trust with communities. The correct course of action in such situations is difficult to discern as, by not



acting, missions may be perceived as neglecting transhumance-related issues, whereas, by taking action, they may be perceived as deliberately damaging and disrupting coexistence and inflaming violence.

3.4. Breakdown of formal and informal regulating mechanisms

3.4.1. State fragility and failure

Both a symptom and a cause of insecurity and conflict, state fragility is a typical feature of countries considered in this Survey. Central and regional authorities alike have little influence on people and affairs outside their areas of control. As a result, many national policies and regional agreements related to transhumance are often not enforced at the local level or, when they are, highlight the discrepancies between aspirational policies and the realities on the ground.⁵⁶ Additionally, the relationship between the state and herder communities is not uniform across the continent. Historical records, dating back to colonial times when there was an explicit effort to settle nomadic communities to better control them, suggest

that, deliberately or unwittingly, state institutions and politics tended to side with farmers and landholders, although this is not the only possible scenario.

In some cases, the state has taken sides against both. A common example is state seizure of land following the discovery of natural resources or the identification of economic potential; a move that displaces or infringes upon the livelihoods of farmers and herders alike. Legislation in Sudan, primarily the 2010 Agriculture and Animal Producers Legislative Act, gives the State full authority to “use any land with proven natural resources of national significance (oil, minerals, gas, forests, or agriculture).”⁵⁷ Between 2003 and 2014, Sudan transferred “nearly four million hectares of land to foreign private investors,” and “as a result, smallholders and herders have been evicted from land and denied access to natural resources in favor of private investors, land speculators, military personnel, and elites.”⁵⁸ Such transfers have displaced thousands of herders and farmers, without distinction. In South Sudan, home to the country’s oil fields in Unity State, herders claim that they have not been sufficiently compensated for

56 Luizza, M (2019). *Urban Elites' Livestock Exacerbate Herder-Farmer Tensions in Africa's Sudano-Sahel*.

57 UNECA, (2017). p. 24.

58 Sudan Democracy First Group (2016). *Land Use, Ownership and Allocation in Sudan: The challenge of corruption and lack of transparency*, p. 2.

the confiscation of grazing lands and related environmental damage.⁵⁹

Transhumance herders and farmers often find themselves under the purview of a range of government actors spread across different tiers of governance. Agricultural and herder activities are managed by a range of ministries across different countries, including ministries of Livestock, Agriculture, Animal Resources, Veterinary Resources, Fisheries, Forestry, Environment, Food and Development. While ministries and civil servants are often responsible for implementing transhumance policies, certain key challenges exist. One of these is the presence, or rather absence, of these figures in concerned areas. In certain contexts, such as Mali or the CAR, civil servants are completely absent from the relevant territorial areas or, reflecting conditions of insecurity, cannot operate outside regional capitals or bases.

Another key challenge is the inability of institutions confined to a single state to address issues of people whose livelihood stretches across national borders. States are unable to deliver services to a mobile community. This has been particularly challenging for education ministries, which have struggled to provide educational services to children. As a result, children and adolescents of herding communities often exhibit lower literacy or numeracy skills than their non-migratory counterparts, which can lead to diminished economic opportunities.

A third challenge relates to the intentions of ministerial actors and civil servants, many of whom may hold outdated or antagonistic attitudes related to transhumance or herder activities. Common examples include agricultural ministries that have attempted to enclose and privatize land for the ranching or sedentism of herders, as well as those who

intend to confiscate grazing land for mineral extraction.

3.4.2. Weakening traditional dispute resolution mechanisms

In many instances, communities that pursue transhumance livelihoods have 'traditional' leaders, including tribal chiefs, heads of clans, elders, and people of religious or spiritual significance who exercise some degree of influence and/or authority over fellow community members. These individuals or groups are often tasked with functions critical for agricultural and herder livelihoods, such as allocating land and resource rights, enforcing community norms and levying punishments for violators, as well as interacting with other communities in order to reach agreements. However, many traditional institutions have seen their authority wane in recent decades; both a potential symptom and cause of conflict.

Oftentimes, modern laws strongly contradict traditional law. In Somalia, for example, the social role of elders is no longer a prerogative of age. Roles can be undertaken by young men, especially if they are wealthy or hold positions of political clout such as chief or councilor.⁶⁰ Seeing as these positions are appointed politically as opposed to by communities, they suffer from a legitimacy deficit; a clear example of this is Darfur's Native Administration.⁶¹ The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has also adversely influenced traditional authorities, as their control over members within their community has eroded. Easily available weaponry allows a smaller group of disaffected or resentful individuals to operate independently and diminishes the ability of traditional leaders to act as credible interlocutors with other communities and guarantee the behavior of their followers.

59 Cormack, Zoe & Young, Helen (2012). *Pastoralism in the New Borderlands: Cross-border Migrations, Conflict and Peacebuilding*, p. 6.

60 Gakuria, A (2013). *Natural Resource Based Conflict Among Pastoralist Communities in Kenya*, p. 48.

61 Tubiana J., Tanner V., & Abdul Jalil, M (2012). *Traditional Authorities' Peacemaking Role in Darfur*, p. 12.



Box 3: The traditional role of customary authorities in conflict resolution in Darfur

Historically, tribal conflicts in Darfur were resolved through traditional mechanisms by the Ajaweed (elders or notables from a family, clan, or tribe not involved in the dispute).⁶²

Government officials and judicial officers can serve through the Judiya (this is the main reconciliation and justice mechanism) process. Over the last three decades, the Government has progressively put in place a hybrid/parallel mechanism composed of its affiliates and dominated by elites which has politicized the system. This, along with other factors, has resulted in the gradual weakening of the Native Administration and compromised its ability to effectively implement agreements reached by the disputing parties.

Land in Darfur is associated with the traditional administrative authority, which decides on issues related to the use and management of land. The Fur, the original occupants of the region, had in the past allocated lands to other groups (mostly nomadic herders) to use and manage as they migrated across the region. However, over the years, these secondary and to some extent tertiary beneficiaries sought to establish themselves as the new owners of the land and even instituted their own parallel administrative authority. The issue was further complicated by political manipulations wherein the Government has unilaterally made appointments into this traditional leadership from among the latter groups in a bid to legitimize their ownership.

Military conflict has also enabled new elites to emerge; a reflection of either their power or ability to protect the interests of the community. In other instances, where state institutions have some presence, parties may go to the police or other authorities for resolution, in effect 'shopping' for assistance for the best outcome. As a result, circumstances have become more anarchic as self-interested groups are able to act independently and with impunity, generating an atmosphere of insecurity and militancy.

On the other hand, as traditional mechanisms struggle to remain an effective interlocutor for conflict mediation and resolution, increased levels of civic engagement within communities, propelled by evolving lifestyles and increased exposure to different sources of information, have created more opportunities for civil society actors to become a platform for herders to voice their concerns to governmental agencies and can assist government agencies or international actors to come in contact with herder communities.

3.4.3. Inadequate policies and enforcement

One of the key challenges to better regulate regional transhumance patterns is the growing gulf between the aspirations and the actual capacity of states to enforce provisions adopted under regulatory frameworks. This translates into an irregular and unpredictable application of norms that make herder and farmer communities apprehensive in honoring them, privileging instead an opportunistic stance. For instance, the ECOWAS Decision A/DEC.5/10/98 is possibly the most comprehensive attempt to regulate cross-border transhumance. However, its implementation is lacking as herders continue to use traditional routes as opposed to officially designated ones, while local authorities exercise their own jurisdiction, often in contravention of stated policies of the central government.

62 Tubiana J., Tanner V., & Abdul Jalil, M (2012). *Traditional Authorities' Peace-making Role in Darfur*, p. 15.

In another example, the CAR and Chad used the pre-existing Commission Mixte Tchado-Centrafricaine to handle transhumance-related issues, including the security concerns generated by the crossing of armed Chadian transhumant herders into the CAR where they are confronted by the Zaraguinas (loosely organized crime gangs⁶³), and other self-defence groups. This resulted in a bilateral agreement signed in N'djamena in October 2012, bringing the two countries together to sign an agreement which had little relevance to, or impact on, the reality on the ground as its ambitions were disproportionate to the means available. Neither country had the infrastructure required to apply some of its provisions. This is the case with a particular codicil of the agreement that required cross-border herders to “obtain visas and an international certificate indicating their identity, the livestock owner’s identity, the composition of the herd and the transhumance route.”⁶⁴ The ever-deteriorating security situation in the CAR has sealed its fate.⁶⁵

In Mali, the main policy on transhumance is the Pastoral Charter (Charte Pastorale) of 2001 which was followed by the “Degree defining the modalities of transhumance in Mali” (2010) and the 2017 Agricultural Land Law which provide a relatively comprehensive legal system for regulating transhumance, such as providing “some safeguards to pastoralists such as the protection of stock routes and grants them “priority use rights” in their areas of origin. The Agricultural Land Law gives farmers full land rights after 20 years of continuous cultivation of a plot of land, but there is little state capacity and political will to effectively implement the regulations, and the 2012 insurgency made matters worse.⁶⁶

3.5. The politics of transhumance

3.5.1. *The political and economic agenda of elites*

The key to solving local problems is the implementation of local solutions as they are often more sustainable. However, local conflicts do not occur in isolation from the broader national, regional and global setting. Often, the collapse of political and peace processes at the national and regional level intensify local conflicts. Seeing as local conflicts are intertwined with the national, regional, and global contexts, it is common for influential political leaders at the national or even regional levels to serve their agendas by manipulating existing local-level tensions such as those between herders and farmers, or exploiting struggles between customary authorities.⁶⁷

In West Africa and the Sahel, there is a long history of urban elite investment in cattle during economic or political upheaval that is based on a system of entrustment and reciprocity with professional herders, such as the Fulani. Political figures at the national (e.g. members of parliament) or regional (e.g. governors) level can serve as patrons to clients in local contexts and exert influence. Their support can be critical in supporting a peace process or undermining it. In other instances, political figures are directly engaged in transhumance livelihoods, such as through owning large cattle herds and commanding armed groups. Political figures may use transhumance as a means of enriching themselves or combatting their rivals. In Mali, land ownership has increasingly passed from small-scale farmers and pastoralists to local elites composed of former government officials

63 Humans Rights Watch (2009). Central African Republic (CAR).

64 ICG, (2014b), The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa, p. 16.

65 MINUSCA Transhumance Evaluation 2015-2017.

66 International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2017). Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region.

67 United Nations Peacekeeping. The Role of United Nations Peacekeeping Operations in Addressing Local Conflicts (2017) Pg. 4.

and wealthy traders who have the resources and connections needed to take advantage of the situation and legal loopholes.⁶⁸ In fact, there are key changes to the composition and ownership of livestock herds that exacerbate tension.

Box 4: Fulani herders

Fulani herders, whose primary occupation is raising livestock, are believed to be the largest semi-nomadic group in the world; a community of some 35 million people scattered across 15 countries mostly in the Sahel and semi-arid parts of West Africa. However, due to relatively recent changes in climate patterns, many herdsmen have moved further south into the savannah and tropical forest belt of West Africa. They are found in countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, and Cameroon. A few years ago, the Fulani, also called the Peul, pursued their ancient lifestyle largely unnoticed by the rest of the world. This is not the case anymore. Old conflicts have flared anew between herders and farmers in Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger. Thousands of people have died in a cycle of violence that jihadists have manipulated and inflamed. The economic impact is in the tens of billions of dollars.⁶⁹

'Neo-pastoralism' is a new form of absentee herd ownership, which often bypasses entrustment contracts with local herders in favor of hired drovers and armed protection to move cattle into frontier zones, often crossing national borders to graze with impunity.⁷⁰ This can intensify overgrazing and contribute to a herder 'invasion', all of which continues to undermine regional stabilization efforts and threatens the network of protected areas that are the last remaining hope for imperilled wildlife in Central Africa.⁷¹

Urban elites, including military and civil administration officials in cities such as N'Djamena (Chad), Khartoum (Sudan), Bangui (the Central African Republic), and Abuja (Nigeria) concentrate their wealth in larger herds (primarily cattle).⁷² In South Sudan, raids on cattle herds of opposing politicians is an increasingly common occurrence, as the size of a political and/or military figure's herd is directly proportional to their ability to exert influence. Since the infamous Lou Nuer 'White Army' involvement in the Bor Massacre of the early 1990s, in which Riek Machar mobilized local herders to mount a devastating attack against the heartland of Sudan People's Liberation Army Leader, John Garang, political leaders have strategically manipulated local conflicts to mobilize armed herders for their political movements.⁷³

68 International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2017). Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region. – If not specifically referencing a different page for this reference, IBID.

69 BBC, Mikailu (2016). Making sense of Nigeria's Fulani-farmer conflict. Wikipedia. Fulani Herdsmen. AFP (2019). The Fulani: An AFP Special Investigation.

70 Luizza, M. (2019). *Urban Elites' Livestock Exacerbate Herder-Farmer Tensions in Africa's Sudano-Sahel*.

71 Luizza, M. (2017). Division of International Conservation, Africa Branch: Transhumant Pastoralism in Central Africa: Emerging Impacts on Conservation and Security.

72 Luizza, M. (2019). *Urban Elites' Livestock Exacerbate Herder-Farmer Tensions in Africa's Sudano-Sahel*, p. 2.

73 International Organization for Migration (2017). Regional Policies and Response to Manage Pastoral Movements within the ECOWAS Region, p. 32.



Political leaders' systematic exploitation of customary raiding practices has heightened the current conflict. This trend is also observed among Chadian herders, many of which regularly migrate into the CAR. Influential Chadian figures have acquired sizable herds, for which they employ cattle drovers from outside the local communities, who migrate through villages in southern Chad and northern CAR. They commit serious infractions such as trampling farmland, disregarding traditions and agreements, and, in extreme cases, commit acts of violence against inhabitants. Entire villages in the CAR have been burned down, contributing to insecurity and inter-community resentment and reprisals.

In the absence of strong check and balance mechanisms, efforts by central governments to decentralize power and empower local municipalities with tasks such as border management and local taxation has resulted in herders, who cross multiple boundaries in the migration season, now having to provide documentation and pay tax revenue to multiple local authorities.

Finally, the interests of large companies in the private sector often run contrary to the interests and needs of transhumant pastoralism. In countries where sedentary crop production is seen as preferable to livestock production, rangeland (especially areas with rivers on which herders depend during the dry season) is taken over by private companies for commercial agricultural use. Government policies often favor the appropriation of herder rangelands, further displacing and impoverishing herders. Additionally, herders are alienated from wildlife conservation areas (formally traditional rangelands) and are also displaced owing to large-scale irrigation schemes. For example, the commercialized herder areas of Somalia and Sudan with the gradual transfer of livestock from smaller scale or impoverished herders to larger or richer ones. Similarly, wealthier and more politically connected herders create private enclosures on rangelands, further limiting the growth of poorer or smaller herds and contribute to herder destitution and out-migration.⁷⁴

74 African Union (AU) (2010), Policy Framework for Pastoralism in Africa: Securing, Protecting and Improving the Lives, Livelihoods and Rights of Pastoralist Communities, p. 26.

4. Preventing, mitigating and resolving transhumance-related conflict

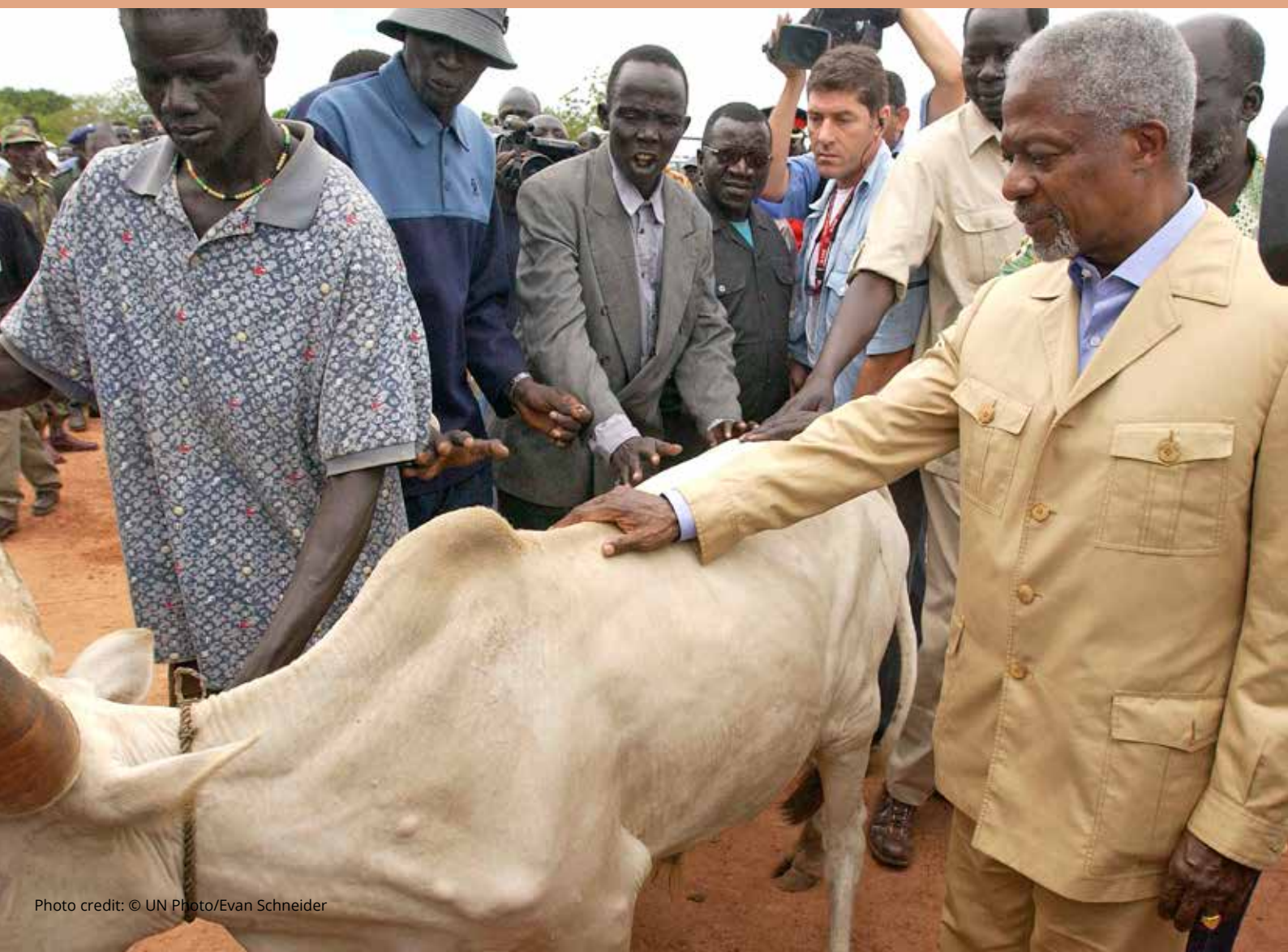




Photo credit: © UN Photo/Patricia Esteve

4. Preventing, mitigating and resolving transhumance-related conflict

Peacekeeping operations in the CAR, DRC, Sudan, South Sudan and Mali have all been mandated in one form or another to support efforts to address inter-communal tensions. In many cases, this entails addressing transhumance-related tensions and violence. Addressing transhumance-related local conflicts is not only closely aligned with the mandate priority that missions have to protect civilians, but also with the strategies that they adopt to implement POC mandates. These strategies follow a three-pronged approach that is focused on prevention, violence mitigation and longer-term efforts to address root causes through conflict resolution, reconciliation and promotion of social cohesion. However, it is important to note that while these distinctions are made for ease of conceptual clarity, the concepts are, in reality, closely intertwined.

The next sections will illustrate some of the current peacekeeping practices under each of these three approaches. It is worth noting that most of the examples will focus on the prevention aspect, given that it is particularly well suited to be applied to transhumance due to its regular and largely predictable patterns. The smallest incident can have incendiary consequences and it is therefore paramount that the efforts of missions, along with those of national and local stakeholders, as well as of other international actors, focus on preventing incidents from occurring in the first place.

It is also important to recall that while the present Survey focuses on the role played by peacekeeping in addressing transhumance-related conflicts, UN missions do not operate alone. Interventions have actually been fertile ground for effective and successful integrated approaches among different UN entities, such as the FAO, IOM, and PBF, with a strong focus on the longer-term goal of sustaining peace and leveraging the respective comparative advantages.

Box 5 Broader UN efforts to address transhumance-related violence in conflict affected settings

For example, the **FAO's** corporate framework to support sustainable peace in the Context of Agenda 2030 is rooted in the FAO's mandate and informed by the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.⁷⁵ Through its work, the FAO fosters social cohesion, identifies ways to minimize, avoid, positively transform and resolve conflict where food, agriculture or natural resources are (or have the potential to be) conflict drivers. These conflict drivers include those driven by competition over land, water and other natural resources, the multiple dimensions of food insecurity, government neglect of marginalized areas, and environmental mismanagement.

IOM efforts to prevent and manage agro-pastoral conflicts include working with local herder associations, national and local authorities and regional bodies in order to support efforts aimed at reducing and preventing violence between herders and farmers. For example, as part of its efforts to support the Government of Chad to improve border management and resolve conflicts linked to transhumance, the IOM is currently implementing a project entitled *The restoration of peace and dialogue between communities affected by trans-boundary*

transhumance which aims to strengthen dialogue and peace through data collection of pastoral mobility.⁷⁶ The project is funded by the PBF and is jointly implemented by the IOM and FAO. Together with the FAO, the IOM works on a two-prong approach by ensuring that not only is early warning provided in relation to herder and farmer conflict, but also that livelihood options are presented to communities.

By providing catalytic funding to entities such as the IOM and FAO to address transhumance-related challenges, the PBF has also been instrumental in this area. For example, over the past two years in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, the PBF has invested over US\$ 18 million in 7 projects addressing farmer and herder conflicts and transhumance (Liptako Gourma, Nigeria, Niger, Chad-Niger, Chad-CAR, Mauritania, Mali). These projects have been developed in close partnership with UNOWAS and UNOCA and are currently implemented by the FAO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women and WFP. The PBF's investments are in line with the 'Plan d'Investissement Prioritaire' (Investment Priority Plan) of the G5 Sahel. Its priority is resilient pastoralism and the implementation of the UN Strategy for the Sahel.



Photo credit: © UN Photo/Isaac Billy

75 United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organisation (2018). *FAO's contribution to sustaining peace*.

76 International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2019). *IOM Presents Guide on Safe Management of Transhumance Flows in Chad*.

4.1. Prevention: Setting the scene for incident-free transhumance movements

4.1.1. Pre- and post-migration conferences

Pre-and post-migration conferences jointly organized by peacekeeping missions, local authorities and key stakeholders are critical tools for managing transhumance activities and relations between the communities involved. Representatives of these communities gather to agree on ground rules, such as migration dates, migration routes, sharing of resources, trading relationships, management of weaponry, and other issues of concern. Participants commonly come from both traditional and formal institutions, the latter often including governors of regions or districts where cross-border activities will occur. The conferences may establish mechanisms or new bodies to monitor compliance or follow up on issues as they occur. Missions represent some of the most important partners in these undertakings.

It is often the mission that provides the catalyst and neutral political space that enable consultations to take place. The mission may even provide the funding for travel, transportation and the venue. For example, UNAMID started conducting integrated patrols in Jebel Marra after having identified the most sensitive migration routes through a series of separate and joint meetings with farmers, herders and local authorities. These lengthy discussions are also critical to identify common needs and can provide the basis for projects that address infrastructural requirements for more sustainable migratory routes.

Often, though not always, pre-migration conferences are followed by post-migration conferences, conducted after the transhumance season. These conferences ideally involve the same participants as the pre-migration one. This enables reflection on

the outcome of agreements and the migration season overall. They also serve to identify successes, challenges, lessons learned, and means to move forward. They are effective as a means of sustaining the bonds between parties whose relationships are often tense. However, challenges exist in achieving desired results. One of the main problems is the need to disseminate provisions agreed upon in order to ensure compliance, as well as finding a way to address spoilers who deliberately violate provisions. Due to the pervasive climate of mistrust, it can also take weeks, and sometimes months, to get all participants to agree on priorities.

Another major problem is the limited inclusivity in conferences and traditional conflict resolution mechanisms that are heavily reliant on traditional roles. For example, women and youth are the most affected by transhumance related conflicts and they should have a role in preventing and mitigating them yet, because of cultural and religious norms, women tend to be marginalized while youth are stigmatized as perpetrators of violence. During a conflict resolution workshop for women facilitated by UNMISS in May 2018, a women participant pleaded with other women that “women keep communities alive as they take care of their children and do the same work as men. That is why your participation in peace and conflict management is very important. Women both individually and through women groups have a crucial role to play in peacebuilding”.⁷⁷

The organization of these pre- and post-migration conferences are carried out to capitalize on local capacities, traditional mechanisms with the specific intent of incentivize local ownership and long-term sustainability. They also help to reactivate mechanisms such as local peace committees to address challenges when they occur and set foundations for upcoming seasons by identifying successes, reviewing past agreements and amending them as needed.

Box 6 The Marial Bai Agreement in South Sudan⁷⁸

The Marial Bai Agreement, signed in November 2016, stipulates rules on resolving migration-related conflicts, procedures for seeking permission to move cattle and what compensation should be paid for crops eaten and cattle killed. The agreement came about against the backdrop of perennial conflicts as cattle herders in the Tonj and Gogrial regions in South Sudan moved their animals to greener pastures near Wau. The main provisions of the agreement have been implemented rather smoothly, contributing to the curbing of violence. However, a number of outstanding issues (i.e. disarmament, education, provision of basic goods and services provided to communities to dissuade them from cattle raiding, etc.) remain unaddressed and hinder the agreement.

As such, UNMISS - in close coordination with the UNDP and FAO and with the financial support of the PBF - continues to play a critical role in supporting the dissemination and strengthening of the agreement by facilitating meetings and conferences to complement the agreement by addressing outstanding conflict drivers amongst the communities. For example, UNMISS and the Food and Agriculture Development Agency (FADA), a local NGO, facilitated a dissemination conference in January 2017, where over 300 herders from Tonj and Gogrial agreed to adhere to the Marial Bai Agreement. Moreover, in 2018, UNMISS, in partnership with CARDO (Community Aid for Relief and Development Organization), supported the Inter-state Coordination Committee on Migration-led campaign to review the implementation of the Marial Bai Agreement during the 2018 migration season. In July 2019, following the Tri-State Peace Conference on Migration, the States of Wau, Tonj and Gogrial signed an agreement to end inter-communal conflict.

It is worth noting that the supporting role of the mission does not stop at providing good offices and facilitating the organization of conferences and community dialogue workshops. It also ensures that



Photo credit: © UN Photo/Albert González Farran

agreements are drawn in accordance with the laws of South Sudan and supports the smooth interoperability between the statutory and traditional justice systems, especially with the support of UNMISS Rule of Law. It also ensures that there is no overstepping of jurisdiction by the traditional courts (i.e. chiefs can issue fines but shouldn't be able to sentence people to death).

4.1.2. Demarcation of migration routes and pastoral infrastructures

Transhumance is distinct from nomadic migration because of its pre-established routes that have typically been travelled for decades or even centuries. However, as illustrated above, these are subject to change due to the varying climate, political and security conditions. Demarcating traditional routes or improvised new corridors for cattle migration is crucial for managing relationships between herding and farming communities. Demarcation is normally undertaken by respective governments or local authorities in advance of the migration season and accomplished through representatives of herding and farming communities. However, in a context characterized by state fragility and a volatile security landscape, support from external actors is often critical when trying to maintain communication and coordination channels open.

Peacekeeping operations can play an important role and leverage their presence in the field by partnering with organizations such as the FAO and IOM and by taking advantage of financial opportunities offered by the PBF and other trust funds or bilateral interventions. Such collaborations allow missions to pool expertise and conflict-resolution knowledge and maximize their presence on the ground. For example, in the context of the Chad-CAR cross border joint project, the IOM, in collaboration with MINUSCA, developed a detailed map of pastoral infrastructures along the Kabo-Batangafo-Kaga Bandoro and the Golongosso-Ndele axes in order to identify transhumance hotspots.

However, demarcating migration routes in conflict-affected settings is often met with challenges caused by land encroachment by expanding urbanization, economic development prioritizing more rentable farming activities, and the occupation of land

that resulted from massive displacement triggered by aggression and violence. Furthermore, the expansion of herds has made traditional corridors inadequate to accommodate the larger cattle populations, thus exacerbating pressure on the remaining grazeland.

In 2018, in South Darfur, following extensive consultations through focus group discussions, observation and interviews with various stakeholders including state authorities, local administrations, farmers and herders as well as youth and women, causes and drivers of recurrent inter-communal conflicts that threaten peace and security were identified. With this information, UNAMID and the FAO, in close collaboration with state governments and local communities, identified measures to prevent and mitigate recurrent seasonal conflicts between the two occupational groups. These measures included the demarcation of 225km of migratory routes in nine hotspot areas and the establishment of four veterinary clinics and two haffirs (manmade rainwater reservoirs) along those routes. The initiative was to be implemented by the FAO and UNAMID and funded by the UN China Peace and Security Fund. However, funding for the initiative has still not materialized due to disagreements on administrative overheads.⁷⁹

4.1.1. Joint patrols/missions

An obvious contribution that peacekeeping missions can make to prevent transhumance-related clashes is by patrolling the areas where tensions are most likely to escalate. This is most effective when conducted jointly by uniformed and civilian components, enabling effective engagement with communities, including mitigating measures that the mission and authorities could assist in setting up in order to reduce frictions. Such patrols also present opportunities for dialogue and mediation when tension has already begun

to escalate. Regardless of limited time, careful planning based on sound analysis and effective early warning mechanisms can go a long way in avoiding instances of violence.

However, conducting such patrols is not always easy due to limited access to hotspots, whether due to distance, impracticable roads/terrain, or the overall limited number of air assets at the disposal of a mission. Limited accessibility and shortage of adequate logistic assets is often an even greater challenge for the security forces of the host country, thus making the issue of sustainability often problematic.

Photo credit: © UN Photo/Martine Perret



Box 7 Conducting patrols along migration routes

Joint patrols are a significant activity for UNISFA in Abyei and are believed to be an important contributor to creating an atmosphere of security. These patrols are conducted in areas identified as conflict-prone or hotspots. One of the most important areas in which UNISFA conducts patrols is the Amiet Common Market, considered the only location where Misseriya and Ngok Dinka communities co-exist. The joint patrols are also an important means of enhancing operational coherence across the UN presence in the field – mainly through a committee established by UNISFA that bring together the different mission components and UNCT present in the area - resulting in decreased rates of cattle rustling, which is one of the leading causes of tension and violence in Abyei.

In the CAR, MINUSCA has been conducting regular patrols in areas such as the Berberati region, identified to be prone to transhumance-related incidents through the elaboration of a local transhumance by local communities. These patrols are conducted on routes known to be travelled by herder migrants and have been credited with a decrease in confrontations.

In South Sudan, UNMISS conducts patrols with the same deterrent intention and Civil Affairs Officers are systematically assigned to participate in community engagement, advocacy, and the promotion of dialogue, reconciliation, and social cohesion.



Photo credit: © UN Photo/Olivier Chassot

4.1.2. Infrastructure rehabilitation

In many instances, the absence or inadequate presence of infrastructure and services such as water sources, veterinary parks or clinics, border management facilities, police facilities, and marketplaces becomes an aggravating factor in transhumance-related conflicts. This may reflect the absence or neglect of state authorities, but it is also frequently a direct result of the destructive consequences of conflict.

Here, peacekeeping operations have an opportunity to partner with other UN Agencies and international actors, such as the European Union, in order to develop or refurbish infrastructures that reduce pressure on strained resources and decrease tensions. For example, to reduce tensions between farmers and herders in the Liptako-Gourma region, MINUSMA, the IOM and UNDP - with funding from the PBF - are implementing a number of infrastructure projects across the Malian-Nigerian and Burkinabe borders, including the demarcation of 31 transhumance corridors, 6 water points, 4 vaccination parks and 2 rest areas. MINUSMA facilitated access

to the communities in remote border areas and provided operational and logistical support to the areas where projects were being implemented.

In December 2015, UNAMID rehabilitated 100 *rihoods* (natural water catchments or points) across Darfur in order to increase access to and availability of existing water resources for herder communities and prevent them from infringing on farmlands and other community water resources. A review of this initiative in 2018 confirmed its benefits with a significant reduction in the number of incidents of crop destruction and the provision of better grazing opportunities for herders. This led to improved communal relations and security across the state, manifested by growing numbers of voluntary returns. An example of this is the Abu-Naema village in the Azerni locality, a hotspot for farmer and herder conflicts. The improved security situation resulted in the return of 500 households. An Omda remarked that since the rehabilitation of the *rihoods*, no major security incidents had occurred and most minor incidents are quickly addressed by community leaders.

Box 8 Using QIPs to improve infrastructures for transhumance

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) constitute a critical facet of UNISFA's work in supporting transhumance in Abyei. As the main problem in transhumance-related issues is competition over scarce resources, most UNISFA projects focus on increasing the availability of these resources during the migration period. Along the three primary migration routes in the territory – Western, Central, and Eastern, – UNISFA has been using QIPs to drill boreholes to provide sufficient water for migrating herds. Pre-migration conferences are used by the Mission as a forum where participants agree on borehole locations and other similar initiatives that contribute to building confidence amongst the different groups.

A similar approach is followed by UNAMID who, with the Nomadic Development Council, is rehabilitating some one hundred rihoods (natural water reservoirs) along migration routes. The rehabilitation is supervised by a joint management structure that ensures amicable use of shared natural resources. The rehabilitation of the rihoods has been credited with a decrease in farmer-herder violence, since herders now graze their herds away from farms and the sense of competition over water has waned down.

However, access to water is not the only way to diffuse tension and MINUSCA has, among other things, used QIP funding to rehabilitate a dilapidated and poorly located slaughterhouse in Bangui. The slaughterhouse is now used by local herders and is lending a hand in improving their economic opportunities. It is also used as a venue to facilitate exchanges between communities at odds with each other. Given the importance of cattle in the social economy of the Central African Republic, slaughterhouses play a critical role, both from an economic development perspective and a social cohesion one.⁸⁰

4.2. Mitigation measures: Diffusing tensions when incidents occur

4.2.1. Tension diffusion mechanisms

Local and traditional authorities and other local bodies are closely involved with the issues and may have a genuine interest in resolving tensions, particularly given that their authority and credibility may be undermined by rising tensions. Traditionally, when situations deteriorated, local authorities or informal institutions diffused tensions and sought a peaceful resolution to the conflict. However, local actors operate in a context of eroded legitimacy, contested authority, and evolving cultural patterns that require new tools and skills to support conflict mediation and resolution.

In order to build the capacity of local actors to effectively address tensions, missions have supported mediation, conflict management training and establishment or strengthening of local dispute resolution mechanisms. For instance, UNISFA facilitates weekly Joint Peace Committees (JPCs) at a neutral venue on the critical role played by traditional justice mechanisms in adjudicating cases related to dispute, murder, cattle rustling and theft. The Mission also assists in managing conflict triggers through traditionally accepted restorative justice mechanisms, such as the payment of blood money. Currently, the JPCs are the only concrete forum where inter-community conflicts are addressed, and decisions taken. However, one of its key shortcomings is the lack of inclusiveness of other grass-roots actors such as youth and women.

In 2017, MINUSCA, the FAO and the South African NGO ACCORD worked with local authorities in the CAR to establish and empower sub-prefectural and municipal committees for the prevention and peaceful settlement of transhumance-related conflicts in

80 United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organisation (2016). Pastoralism platform promotes peace in conflict prone Central African Republic.



prominent hotspots. Eleven committees were established in Bossangoa and members were trained in dialogue facilitation and mediation. As a result, local committees in Benzambe and Bowara intervened to discourage youths and anti-Balaka elements from taking retaliatory action after crops were destroyed by cattle in Kaboro and Bowara.⁸¹

Migration across state borders is recognized by UNMISS as one of the most important issues in managing transhumance. From 2017 to 2019, the Mission, in cooperation with partners such as USAID, UNDP, UNHCR, Finn Church Aid and the FAO and Judiciary of South Sudan, worked with representatives from the States of Amadi, Terekeka, Gok, Eastern and Western Lakes in order to establish a body that could manage cross-border transhumance activities. A total of 6 workshops/consultation meetings and 2 pre- and post-migration conferences were held, which resulted in the establishment of a Joint Border Peace Committee (JBPC), an agreement to manage cattle migration within parameters established by the five-state JBPC and the inclusion of women in border committees. During a post-migration conference, participants reported that “the existence of the JBPC prevented escalation of violence and provided a readily accessible platform to redress grievances.”⁸² Due to the JBPC’s success, the Mission and its partners intend to replicate similar frameworks between other states in South Sudan.

4.2.2. Early warning mechanisms

Effective early warning is critical in diffusing tensions before small and confined isolated incidents escalate into open conflict. In peacekeeping settings, this is largely achieved by regularly engaging with communities, traditional leaders, IDPs and other vulnerable segments of the population as well as state and

local authorities. Missions also support early warning mechanisms such as the Community Alert Networks (CANs) that have been set up in the DRC and CAR to allow communities to alert security forces when under threat. Another common practice across different peacekeeping operations is the facilitation or support of local protection committees where emerging threats and security issues are discussed and where information on the planning of field monitoring/humanitarian assessment missions and targeted patrols is shared. All of these channels are obviously relevant to transhumance-related incidents.

However, focusing on the specificities of cattle migration, actor mapping has proven to be particularly relevant in addressing transhumance-related issues and conflict. For instance, MONUSCO maps all key stakeholders, inter-communal tensions around natural resource, cattle owners, and markets to better identify the stakeholders that the Mission needs to engage with. Efforts are underway to map transhumance grazing areas and routes. MONUSCO has also developed a specific inter-provincial strategy for the Maniema and Tanganyika provinces to secure a larger involvement of the Congolese authorities at a provincial and local level and mitigate the negative effects of transhumance.

Early warning systems constitute a significant part of MINUSCA’s operations. Through the use of CANs located in most of the Permanent and Temporary Operating Bases across CAR and composed of community volunteers, state officials, municipal employees, religious authorities, traditional authorities (particularly sultans), respected elders, traders, school headmasters, youth and women, leaders play a role in preventing violence. In 2018-2019, MINUSCA conducted 47 early warning trainings with 2,198 local volunteers and 300 government authorities. In June 2019, the

81 MINUSCA Transhumance Evaluation Report 2015-2017.

82 DPPA/PMD/MSU South Sudan Case Study (2009): *The Development of a National Framework for Pastoralist Migration*. Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs /Policy Mediation Divisions /Meditation Support Unit.

establishment of 52 CANs contributed to preventing violent incidents in hotspot areas for transhumance-related conflicts of Zemio, Bocaranga, Bria, Bangassou and Bossangoa.

The increase of integration between varying UN entities leverages respective comparative advantages. MINUSCA's joint implementation of a PBF-funded project in partnership with the IOM and FAO capitalizes on the IOM's Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT)⁸³ in order to follow herders' movement and provide conflict mediation and community stabilization support. The FAO focuses on livelihood options that are necessary and crucial to prevent but also mitigate conflict.

In another example, MINUSCA used the local transhumance and anti-cattle theft action plan in Bouar to map transhumance corridors and veterinary stations for the impending transhumance season. These were complemented by awareness campaigns on peaceful transhumance and in particular on the role that peace committees can play to resolve disputes. As a result, herders and farmers settled their grievances by agreeing on compensation for the destruction of resources.

4.3. Addressing root causes and promoting reconciliation

4.3.1. Joint commissions

Many of the conflict drivers that affect relations between herders and farmers span across national borders and require the constant engagement of national and regional authorities that must adapt to

evolving circumstances. A joint field report on the situation of transhumance following the 2013–2014 crisis in the CAR by the Catholic Relief Services, Danish Refugee Council and FAO recommended that: "at the supranational level, a sub-regional network of farmers' organizations should be established to facilitate the circulation of information on transhumance, and restore joint commissions with neighboring countries to discuss the issues and their impact at a regional level and develop cooperation between the various authorities."⁸⁴ An ECOWAS study reached a similar conclusion, stating better coordination among countries concerned by transhumance is needed and that "such discussions should take place both at inter-state level (for example high-level joint commissions) and in the framework of networks of professional herders' organizations."⁸⁵ So far, there has been limited scope for UN peacekeeping operations to play a role in supporting the establishment or the regular functioning of such commissions.

4.3.2. Community dialogue, confidence-building measures and good offices

Although peacekeeping operations are not best placed to engage in long-term initiatives that address the root causes of conflict, they do play a critical role in working with local and national stakeholders, as well as other UN and international partners. Operations lay the groundwork for initiatives that promote dialogue and build confidence in the peaceful resolution of disputes. In this regard, one of the key activities conducted by missions is the organization and/or facilitation of dialogue forums between farmers and herders and

83 IOM's Transhumance Tracking Tool (TTT) provides reliable and consistent data on the movements of herders and their cattle. This tool is being used in Mauritania, Burkina Faso and Cameroon. In addition to mapping the herders' environment (roads, water and grazing lands, ongoing tensions/incidents) for herders to take informed-decision about their itinerary, data and knowledge gathered from the TTT is used to mobilize the local authorities, line ministries and herders themselves to ensure smooth crossing of borders or stations prior to the arrival of a herd in areas where tensions are likely.

84 United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organization (2015). Joint field report CRS/DRC/FAO on the situation of transhumance following the 2013-2014 crisis in the Central African Republic.

85 Mulumba, J.B.K, Jacques, S., Yacouba, S., Hamade, K. Livestock and regional market in the Sahel and West Africa Potentials and challenge, p. 67.



a sustained engagement with all relevant stakeholders, including local and traditional authorities, not only to identify stopgap measures in the short term, but also to foster opportunities to address the underlying causes of tension between different groups.

For example, in Darfur, following frequent disputes between farmers and herders and consultations with communities and local authorities in Saraf Omra in North Darfur, the Governance and Community Stabilization Section of UNAMID held a series of dialogue forums to mitigate tensions. The forums were preceded by constant engagement with representatives of farming and herding communities, local authorities, and representatives from the Native Administration, which eased tensions sufficiently for the forums to be held. The

forums were convened to give farmers and herders a common space to discuss their respective concerns and promote peaceful coexistence. A total of 430 people (including 230 women) from the Native Administration, Agricultural Protection Committee, Peaceful Coexistence Committee, civil society groups, herder and farmer communities, and IDP groups participated. Participants discussed issues including early and unauthorized grazing, blocking of migration routes, mutual communication channels (and the lack thereof), the politicization of institutions resulting in their ineffectiveness, the spread of weaponry, and youth unemployment. After the event, participants requested that UNAMID continue to support community dialogue forums and conduct farm patrols. They also noted that strong measures to maintain law and order by authorities were necessary to sustain and preserve this new spirit.

In the CAR, MINUSCA regularly conducts confidence building measures; many of which are undertaken after an inflammatory event that could incite violent retaliation. In reaction to reports of cattle theft by Fulani herders, the Mission worked with CLAs and the Force and focused on finding peaceful settlements.⁸⁶ This helped contain the violence and enabled humanitarian actors to address the needs of the vulnerable when, in 2017, the Berberarti field office facilitated at least 10 dialogue and awareness-raising meetings that contributed to the return of about 4,000 herders in 4 villages in the area.⁸⁷

In South Sudan, UNMISS has brokered peace agreements among national and regional actors. These negotiations and subsequent agreements have focused on matters such as providing security guarantees and guaranteeing freedom of movement across states, a vital right for transhumant herders. In December 2015, UNMISS brokered an agreement between government and opposition figures of Southern Unity,

86 United Nations Security Council (2020). Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic, p. 6-8.

87 MINUSCA. Transhumance Evaluation Report 2015-2017.

guaranteeing freedom of movement for herders in areas controlled by the opposition and the government.

Another example is the Wangkei Agreement, between the Leek Nuer and Bul Neur ethnic groups of the former Unity State signed in March 2017 with the critical support of Civil Affairs. The agreement included a significant provision on the return of stolen cattle and 'blood' compensation (a payment made by a community to compensate for murder) for past violent acts. The practice of 'blood money' sanctions places value on the loss of life and is a traditional means of peacefully resolving disputes that could easily be deadly. The agreement has proven effective in stopping the bloodshed though its legal and moral grounds are disputable, seeing as the State Legislative Assembly has declined to ratify it, given that in extreme cases the agreement foresaw the employment of capital punishment.⁸⁸ The Wangkei Agreement is a great example of the dilemmas faced by UN peacekeepers while seeking to mitigate the risks of violence and at the same time contending with mechanisms that are not aligned with its principles and values.

It is important to note here, that the specific contribution made by peacekeeping in these examples goes beyond the provision of logistic and financial support or even the provision of technical expertise, which in many cases rests with existing local capacities and mechanisms, but is rather represented by its convening capacity. The ability to provide some credibility and confidence to processes that have been taunted by mistrust and mutual suspicion is where peacekeeping makes a unique contribution. This role needs to be exceptional in nature and it is important that the sustainability of such supported dispute resolution mechanisms and confidence-building processes is factored in from the start when designing such interventions.

Box 9: Conflict resolution in the territory of Fizi, DRC.

To promote inclusive dialogue in conflict resolution, MONUSCO has facilitated a series of inter-communal forums in South Kivu to address longstanding tensions between the Banyamulenge herders and the Babembe farmers in the territory of Fizi over grazing rights that resulted in mutual mistrust and intolerance, killings and cattle theft that were further exacerbated by the involvement of armed groups in the area.

To promote peaceful coexistence and foster agreements on the rules that govern the farming and migrations seasons in the territory of Fizi, as well as in the highlands of Uvira and Itombwe, MONUSCO facilitated a two-day workshop for the two communities in Uvira in November 2016. About 100 participants, including local traditional leaders, chiefs of sectors, civil society actors, provincial parliamentarians from Uvira and Fizi, and provincial government officials attended. The workshop provided the communities with the opportunity to discuss issues of concern, and particularly the alleged involvement of the Banyamulenge with armed groups that had heightened insecurity in cattle grazing areas and the need to return to the 2010 agreement that the two communities had signed but failed to abide to. The workshop ended with the Babembe traditional leaders pledging to encourage their community to respect the agreement, showcasing how constant efforts need to be made to sustain the viability of some of these local agreements that risk losing momentum when no institutional actor plays a monitoring role.

88 Wilson, J (2014). Blood Money in Sudan and Beyond: Restorative Justice or Face-Saving Measure, p.1.

5. Opportunities and challenges for peacekeeping operations



5. Opportunities and challenges for peacekeeping operations

Peacekeeping operations can make a significant contribution to addressing transhumance-related local conflicts. They mitigate the ripple effects of violent incidents and promote the constructive and peaceful resolution of disputes and contribute to trust building and social cohesion. However, some of these interventions are disjointed from a broader political strategy and tend to focus on short-term responses. This is understandable given the time limits of peacekeeping mandates, but there are opportunities for strategic approaches that further contribute to the collective UN efforts to sustain peace.

Drawing on concrete examples of good practices on the ground, the following sections highlight areas in which peacekeeping operations can further explore to increase its impact and contribute to the sustainability of its interventions.

5.1. Supporting host-countries in regulating transhumance

The fact that regional actors have worked to develop a regulatory framework on transhumance represents an opportunity for relevant international actors to develop stronger partnerships to support host governments in addressing transhumance-related violence and encourage policy and operational measures that can facilitate their implementation.

Working with local state institutions and authorities is consistent with peacekeeping mandates and provides opportunities for peacekeeping operations to contribute. As the example below illustrates, it is important that decisions on who to engage with and how to do so are driven by practical considerations that are focused on strengthening the capacities of actors that are genuinely committed to working towards the ultimate objective of sustaining peace and promoting social cohesion.

While peacekeeping mandates may seem to limit the scope of peacekeeping missions to regional efforts, a stronger drive towards integrated analysis and planning across the UN System would be an opportunity for increased operational coherence in the field and improved synergy among UN entities by leveraging the respective comparative advantages as already illustrated in the cases of the FAO, IOM and PBF.

5.1.1. Coordinating and supporting the operationalization of local, national and regional pastoral migration frameworks

Although the ECOWAS Protocol on Transhumance is well-intended, its reach is limited by the superseding nature of the national and local laws of the countries affected by transhumance. It is further compounded by weak enforcement capacities and a misalignment among regional, national and local laws that result in a rigid legal landscape for the migration of herders in West Africa. This is particularly the case for the movement of undocumented herders across local and regional borders as well as the lack of consensus around the implications of 'free movement' across national borders.

Regardless, peacekeeping operations can contribute to addressing these challenges by leveraging their presence on the ground and by using their assets and expertise to work with local authorities and international partners towards the development of frameworks on pastoral migration and assisting operationalization efforts within the geographical boundaries of their mandate.

For example, MINUSCA works with the CAR government and FAO to draft national transhumance operational plans that regulate transhumance flows and support the establishment of local conflict management committees. Similar approaches were adopted by MONUSCO in support of national and local authorities that regulate transhumance from

Tanzania through the Maniema province and into South Kivu, as well as by UNAMID, which worked with local authorities and the UNCT in South Darfur to create a framework to regulate migration flow and set up conflict resolution mechanisms.

The case of South Sudan is of particular significance, as efforts to develop a pastoral framework did not start at the national level, but rather with a number of particularly affected regional states. Progressively, it expanded to include key States: Western Lakes, Eastern Lakes, Gok, Amadi and Terekeka. Through its Strategy on Communal Conflict Management, Reconciliation and Social Cohesion, UNMISS facilitated, supported and implemented a series of dialogues to support the annual pre- and post-migration conferences from September 2017 onwards. The Mission ensured a broad representation of stakeholders, including national ones whose political and war-economy agenda has more than once jeopardized local efforts to promote reconciliation and peaceful dispute resolution. The dialogues organized by UNMISS included stakeholders from each state, including herders, farmers, community leaders, government officials (State Governors and Ministers, County Commissioners, as well as representatives from the Transitional National Legislative Assembly), women and youth leaders.⁸⁹ This promoted the establishment of JBPC, an agreement to manage cattle migration within the parameters established by the 5-state JBPC and the inclusion of women in border committees.

Ensuring the direct connection of the executive decision-making of the Secretary General to leadership in the field remains a key part of the ongoing UN reforms. UN efforts on transhumance have resulted in several developments including an increase in the number of UNEC briefings focused on the Sahel. In July 2018, for example, the SRS of UNOWAS briefed the Security Council on the

depletion of Lake Chad and the impact of climate change on farmer and herder conflicts, among other issues. Following that briefing, UNOWAS has been invited to brief the Council on a regular basis.⁹⁰

To ensure coordination, information sharing, and lessons learned, in 2018 the SG's UNEC requested the UN System to strengthen regional and cross-border efforts, linking regional and country-level efforts through the engagement of Resident Coordinators. A Core Group appointed by the EC was established to implement the decision and support efforts to address the root causes of farmer-herder conflicts at all levels to complement ongoing efforts at regional levels like in the Sahel, where for example UNOWAS is working with UN partners and with ECOWAS on implementing several recommendations outlined in the 2018 UNOWAS study on pastoralism and security in West Africa and the Sahel. Additionally, The UNDP-DPPA-UNEP Climate Security Mechanism (CSM) was established in October 2018 to strengthen UN capacity to address the linkages between climate change, peace and security. The CSM is currently working on correlations between climate change, prevention and sustaining peace.

Global and regional focus on transhumance-related conflicts has steadily increased due to its negative impact on peace and livelihoods. The proliferation of transhumance-related interventions needs to be coordinated in order to prevent potential duplication of interventions, thereby building cross-border coordination mechanisms, information sharing, and lessons learned. The country-specific nature of peacekeeping mandates provides additional capacity for missions to leverage their presence in support of regional organizations' longer-term strategies to regulate transhumance-related violence, as well as to ensure a more seamless transition with the UNCT and enhance the sustainability of regional strategies.

89 DPPA/PMD/MSU South Sudan Case Study (2019). The Development of a National Framework for Pastoralist Migration. Day, Adam and Caus, Jessica (2019). Conflict Prevention in the Sahel. Emerging Practice Across the UN.



5.1.2. Working with traditional dispute resolution mechanism in support of transitional justice

The potential for informal mechanisms to manage local-level conflicts – particularly those related to transhumance – is high, seen as they have a comparative advantage as they are ingrained in the culture and values of their communities which is important in such contexts as people are often committed to their cultural values. Informal mechanisms are therefore relevant in building a sense of community and facilitating ownership of processes. The involvement of the government ensures that decisions are implemented. However, this is not to say that informal mechanisms have necessarily the capacity to address root causes as these require the engagement of multiple stakeholders at all levels. However, because informal mechanisms are more restorative and conciliatory than formal ones that emphasize the establishment of guilt and execution of retribution, they tend to focus more on compensation, restitution, reconciliation and reincorporation of the offender into the wider community.⁹¹

However, informal mechanisms also have their weaknesses: they can become politicized. In Darfur, the native administration was weakened through political manipulations where the Government unilaterally made appointments into the traditional leadership and created a sense of mistrust between the communities and traditional leaders. Additionally, women are not included in traditional mechanisms.

A 2019 study by the Justice and Correction Section in DPO⁹² noted informal mechanisms are favored in many conflict situations because the leadership, composed of religious

leaders, tribal chiefs and magistrates, among others, is perceived to be authentic and aligned with local customs and traditions. This perception, coupled with the fact that such mechanisms are far more inexpensive, is in direct contrast to many local communities' negative experiences and views of formal justice systems being exogenous, remote, unrelatable, impractical and expensive. While there are many operative links that connect state and informal justice providers and which offer collaborative means of conducting judicial services, such as division of labor and appeal procedures, efforts to integrate informal conflict resolution approaches into the formal justice system have had little success. In some instances, this is due to cases having underlying cultural issues that prevent the formal justice system from addressing them.

The above study noted that reviews of informal mechanisms found the capacity of formal justice systems to be seemingly lacking, with issues of corruption and incompetence among some actors in the formal justice system. On the other hand, success has been associated with informal justice systems. For example, in Mali, MINUSMA made progress in linking formal state and traditional justice mechanisms while raising awareness on the effectiveness and capacity of traditional justice systems. They achieved this through workshops in 2017 and 2018 that brought together traditional leaders and civil society from Kidal, Tessalit, Aguelhok, Timbuktu, Gao, and Mopti. Through a justice and reconciliation project piloted in 2018, they emphasized the importance of traditional justice mechanisms in Koro Cercle (Mopti region).

In Liberia, the constitution acknowledges the role of local traditional leaders and integrates their role into the Ministry of Internal Affairs.⁹³

91 ACCORD (2012). Integrating Traditional and Modern Conflict Resolution: Experiences from selected cases in Eastern and the Horn of Africa.

92 DPO/OROLSI/ JCS/ Policy team (2019): Extension of State Authority in the Areas of Justice and Corrections. United Nations Department of Peace Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions Justice and Corrections Service.

93 DPO/OROLSI/ JCS/ Policy team (2019): *Extension of State Authority in the Areas of Justice and Corrections*. United Nations Department of Peace Operations Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions Justice and Corrections Service.

However, despite the importance of the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, the Mission's support was limited to ad hoc consultations, studies or work on human rights sensitization. One of the main challenges was due to uncertainty on whether to employ traditional mechanisms when they have limited working knowledge on traditional justice mechanisms.

Both formal and informal mechanisms have weaknesses and advantages that can ensure sustainability and an integrated approach to address local conflicts. Ultimately, an effective integrated state-local approach to conflict resolution will promote the larger agenda of peace and security.⁹⁴ The key to ensuring that the two mechanisms work together is for formal state frameworks to recognize informal mechanisms and authorities without trying to capture them politically. For instance, in Burkina Faso Village, Development Councils (CVDs) play the main role in conflict mediation and resolution around land tenure disputes and are recognized as such by the 2004 Decentralization Code without perverting their community-based nature.⁹⁵ In other countries, such as Sudan and the DRC, traditional authorities have been coopted into the constitutional framework, while the government retains the authority to officially appoint individuals distorting their grass-root nature.

5.1.3. Strengthening the capacity of local officials to implement

Strengthening of local capacities has proven particularly effective, not only to provide skills and knowledge for local actors to pursue an agenda of peaceful resolution of local conflicts, but also as a means to sensitize communities, raise the visibility of such individuals and establish mechanisms to address



transhumance-related conflicts, ultimately contributing to more sustainable approaches.

Drawing on good practices already in place to manage pastoral migration in the 5 states of Amadi, Terekeka, Gok and Eastern and Western Lakes which established the JBPC in 2017, UNMISS expanded the framework to Jonglei State in 2019. UNMISS supported government authorities to organize the first 6-state migration conference in March 2019 in order to regulate cross-border migration among various bordering communities of the 6 states. The first of these conferences consisted of a training to familiarize participants with concepts and available tools to regulate migratory fluxes and manage disputes and tensions. The

94 ACCORD (2012). Integrating Traditional and Modern Conflict Resolution: Experiences from selected cases in Eastern and the Horn of Africa.

95 UNOWAS. Pastoralism and Security in West Africa; Towards Peaceful Coexistence (2019).

conference resulted with the establishment of a Joint Border Peace Court and a twelve-point resolution, signed by governors of all 6 states, including a commitment to support the implementation of the revitalized peace agreement.

In 2018/19, MINUSMA and the Governmental *Equipes régionales d'appui à la réconciliation* (ERARs) conducted 60 community capacity strengthening forums for about 2,400 people in order to address local inter-communal conflicts in the regions of Kidal, Timbuktu, Taoudénit, Gao, Ménaka, and Mopti. The aim was to support the mediation and conflict management activities of the ERAR, thereby strengthening community engagement and enhancing social cohesion in Mali's northern and central regions. To enhance the ability of local authorities to address land-related disputes and conflict, the Mission launched a program to strengthen the capacity of 108 members of land commissions in the Mopti region. The inter-community forum and dialogues resulted in 5 local peace agreements covering ten villages.

Furthermore, in order to strengthen the capacity of local authorities to address inter-community conflicts in Central Mali where insecurity has escalated into tit-for-tat attacks

between ethnically organized self-defence groups of farmers (Dogon) and herders (Fulani), MINUSMA held 2 ten-day training workshops in June and December 2019. A total of 221 local authorities from the region attended and capacity development activities focused on planning and local development, code of conduct to uphold values of peace, tolerance, solidarity and respect, as well as land management tools from national policies allowing, inter alia, locally elected mayors to demarcate agricultural and pastoral lands.

In the CAR, MINUSCA facilitated the establishment of Sub-Prefectural Committees on transhumance. At the end of January 2017, the transhumance-working group met and assessed the situation in Ouham as part of a Bossangoa Field Office initiative to reduce transhumance-related conflicts. Civil Affairs, the FAO and ACCORD worked with local authorities to establish and empower Sub-Prefectural and Municipal Committees for the prevention and peaceful settlement of transhumance-related conflicts in main hotspots. A total of eleven committees, including three Sub-Prefectural Committees and 8 local committees were established in various hotspots of the prefecture between November 2016 and March 2017 and members of the committees were trained in dialogue



facilitation and mediation. As a result of these efforts, local committees in Benzambe and Bowara intervened to discourage youths and anti-Balaka elements from taking retaliatory action after crops were destroyed by cattle in Kaboro and Bowara.

5.1.4. Strengthening accountability between authorities and local constituencies

In certain contexts, state actors, or those vested with some degree of authority, may be resistant to attempts that promote the joint management of transhumance or conflict resolution. Actors' responses vary from an absence of interest to obstruction. In Darfur, the Crop Protection Committee, represented at the state, village and locality level, is one of the most important bodies in promoting peaceful transhumance. However, UNAMID has found that working with committees at the local level is the most effective means to promote peaceful coexistence due to their proximity to stakeholders and because they are widely recognized for their work and results. UNAMID prefers to work with committees at this level, often by providing financial and logistical assistance. Although the State High Crop Protection Committee insists on being the conduit for all engagement with committees at any level, it was observed that resources channeled at the state level for locality-level bodies rarely reached the intended purpose. UNAMID reinforced its monitoring processes by regularly liaising with the committees and intended beneficiaries to ensure that all resources provided to the Committee reach the intended beneficiaries at the local level.

In South Sudan, to strengthen accountability between authorities and local constituencies, UNMISS works to improve the relationship between the sub-national and the national by facilitating the transport of key leaders to remote communities. UNMISS facilitated the travel of over ten national assembly members, including members of parliament from Juba and Bor to Duk Payuel in December 2017, who met with community stakeholders and

encouraged them to live in peace. UNMISS also provided transportation for an influential national leader to visit Gok State and engage with Waat and Ayeil communities following their prolonged conflict.

5.2. Supporting the empowerment of local stakeholders

5.2.1. Connecting the dots: from local to national

In order to maximize financial resources and ensure the sustainability of links between local and national actors, there is a proven need to cement partnerships with UN agencies and other civil society organizations from the beginning of peacekeeping operations. It is also important to promote local ownership by ensuring that all meetings, whether at the national or community level, are community-led. In general, there is a strong interest in and potential for coexistence among local figures, and while improvements have been made in local peace mechanisms, challenges emanating from the national level often arise. For example, the interests of elites/political figures may hamper peace dealings due to their influence over armed actors who, in turn, may have control over local figures and communities. Engaging with national actors to link the local to the national is thus crucial in improving peace at the local level.

For example, in South Sudan, political conflict and cattle raiding have become increasingly intertwined in recent years, and such disputes over resources, abductions and cattle raiding affect all levels. While traditionally a symbol of prestige and an indication of status, as well as a means of providing income and dowry payment for the unbanked, the role of cattle has been increasingly exploited by warring political elites. Herd sizes have increased dramatically and become consolidated in the hands of a select few elites, thus hindering the ability of the unbanked to own cattle due to the subsequently inflated price. As a result, young men are often driven to join armed groups as they know they can obtain cattle through

conflict. Additionally, commanders may also give cattle to their soldiers so that they can pay marriage dowries; a transaction through which soldiers “[become] inextricably bound to their superiors”.⁹⁶

Consequently, customary means of resolving and deterring conflict based on cattle have become increasingly ineffective. While cattle would traditionally be given to resolve conflict, this method no longer has the same effect, meaning that they will continue to war with one another. Such conflicts have generated higher levels of civilian casualties than the national conflict.

Being well connected to local and national stakeholders, peace operations can influence national actors to become involved in local peace processes. UNMISS in South Sudan recognizes the need to address subnational conflict dynamics to advance mandate implementation, as they have a direct impact on civilian protection and the success of national-level peace processes. These efforts have included confidence-building activities at the subnational level between local government, opposition leaders and local communities.

The Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) in September 2018 revealed a clear appetite for peace at the grass-roots level, reflected in the 140 rapprochement and confidence building activities at the subnational level between local government and communities and opposition leaders. 51 were supported by UNMISS and other stakeholders.

To further strengthen the link between subnational and national actors in the peace process, UNMISS facilitated a series of ‘Our Peace Forums’ in the capital, Juba, in partnership with a ‘core group’ of actors including UNDP, South Sudanese intellectuals, civil society and international actors. The

forums were predicated on the assumption that full and sustainable implementation of the revitalized peace agreement is reliant upon grass-roots buy-in and ownership of the peace process. The aim was to raise awareness of grass-roots stakeholders’ aspirations and allow them to participate in political, peace, and security structures by providing a platform where they could engage with national government and international community members. The forums could also help to ensure that the peace process is informed by a nationwide vision with shared responsibilities rather than an elite-driven process.

Since August 2019, the Mission has facilitated 3 forums with civil society to discuss grass-roots participation in the peace process, their role in the implementation of the R-ARCSS, and themes relating to unity, inclusivity and peace. Typically, 60 subnational stakeholders are invited to Juba for each forum, including traditional leaders, local authorities, religious leaders, IDPs, women, youth, private sector representatives, and civil society actors with significant influence in their communities. While in Juba, they engaged in a 3-day dialogue with national actors, senior members of the signatories of the peace agreement, representatives of the national implementation mechanisms, and international monitoring bodies of the peace agreement. Participants adopted public statements to raise awareness about the importance of grass-roots participation in the peace process and share local communities’ desire for peace with national political leaders. The subnational participants also identified a set of actions to promote unity, inclusivity and peace through a variety of platforms such as radio talk shows, churches and mosques, workshops, meetings and communal ceremonies. The forums have gained traction at the national and subnational levels and are widely recognized by national and international peace actors. In addition, national print and electronic media has extensively covered the initiative.

96 Pinaud, Clement (2014). South Sudan: Civil War, Predation and the Making of a Military Aristocracy.



5.2.2. Giving agency to young people

Despite the powerful counter-narrative formulated in 2015 with UN Security Council Resolution 2250 on Youth, Peace, and Security, there are still widespread misconceptions around the role that young people play in peace and security dynamics and this is a stigma that young herders carry in particular. The lack of economic opportunities and low levels of education are often highlighted as causes of young people engaging in criminal or radical activities. However, a significant body of research has stressed how young people sliding into violent activities do so for more complex reasons including the disgruntlement arising from rigid intergenerational social structures⁹⁷ that frustrate their aspirations to social and economic mobility and instead perpetuate inequity, political exclusion and a diminished social status.⁹⁸ Empowering youth is therefore crucial for preventing violence and peacebuilding efforts as clearly acknowledged in Resolution 2250 by highlighting the youths' vital and positive contribution towards maintaining and promoting peace and security.

In the context of transhumance-related conflicts, young herders have few options to settle and focus on empowering themselves through education, vocational skills, or trade to generate income for themselves. Other than tending to the herds, they are often idle. Armed fighters can therefore have a powerful appeal to youth without economic prospects or living on the margins of society, meaning that youth are an easy target for recruitment into drug cartels, armed gangs, and other criminal activities. Income-generating activities for youth should be prioritized in order to discourage participation in cattle raiding and similar activities.

However, youth empowerment does not stop at economic opportunities and actually only becomes meaningful when avenues for participation in shaping solutions to current problems are made available, and which in conflict-affected terms boils down to actively participating in peacebuilding. Youths' unique approach to peacebuilding sets them apart due to their range of experiences of violence and injustice which extends far beyond traditional conflict and encompasses unconventional forms of exclusion and marginalization, including sexual and gender-based violence. Excluding youth from peacebuilding programming defies the vital contribution of a wide demographic that can positively transform dynamics.

In South Sudan, UNMISS facilitates several youth conferences and workshops before, during and after the farming and migration seasons. For example, from 10-12 December 2019, the Mission, in collaboration with UNDP and local authorities, organized a 3-day peace conference for youth from the Rubkona and Bentu areas of the Northern Liech State; an area that is prone to incidents of cattle raids, revenge killings, SGBV and competition over access to grazing land. 99 participants (35.5% women) attended the conference and discussed the importance of peaceful coexistence, community development and the role of youth in conflict management. During the conference, the youth participants agreed on a number of actions to improve collaboration to build sustainable peace in greater Unity State. They mapped significant communal conflicts and devised plans to address them. The conference concluded with the signing of a resolution and action plan for addressing the proliferation of arms, cattle raids and SGBV.

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98 Idris, I. 2016. *Youth Unemployment and Violence: Rapid Literature Review*. Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham.





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5.3. Strengthening missions' ability to prevent violence

5.3.1. Mapping of migratory routes and tracing of cattle movements

The knowledge and information gathered by peace operations should be able to lend a hand in handling rapid changes and allow for proactive responses. Particularly emblematic is the need for modern mapping and identification tools. For MINUSMA, knowledge of the migratory routes and the changes that potentially affect them is critical for effective intervention with policy support to develop legislature and regulations, as is support to land commissions in executing their responsibilities. For centuries, transhumance herders have travelled these routes and are familiar with them. But for MINUSMA, a comprehensive mapping of all routes with GPS coordinates is critical for fast reaction, as is knowing which routes will be blocked and which will be used by travelling herds. For MONUSCO, mapping of grazing areas and routes is considered important, as is identifying

individual herders and cows, especially those coming from outside the DRC. Most herds cross in the bush at night, out of sight of authorities, a concern shared with MINUSCA, requiring the development of a means by which herds can be identified and tracked, using innovative technologies such as geo-tagging and UAVs. To that end, missions such as MONUSCO use UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones) as information gathering tools that is shared with relevant sections for analysis and development of interventions.

5.3.2. Strengthening local, culturally sensitive, conflict analysis

With much of the analytical capacities of UN peacekeeping operations focused on threat analysis, security and political developments, there is a shortage of overarching analysis of local conflict dynamics to support missions and especially Field Offices. These include design approaches that are sensitive and adapted to local cultural realities. Although the presence of national staff in many of the substantive civilian

sections in multidimensional peacekeeping can facilitate a sophisticated understanding of local dynamics, these are often segmented along specific thematic focuses of these sections (i.e. justice and correction, police, civil affairs, human rights, etc.). There is rarely a comprehensive and shared vision of what the underlying conflict drivers are. Moreover, despite the recommendations made in various review reports – including the HIPPO – missions rarely have the resources or simply the flexibility to recruit local experts or anthropologists to help design interventions adapted to the local context. Interventions should be designed with potential dilemmas the UN may face when supporting local solutions in mind, and should not undermine local capacities for peace, create a relationship of dependency, or support informal dispute resolution mechanisms that do not operate within the norms and values of the UN System.

To mitigate some of these risks, DPO has introduced a new analytical and planning tool – the Local Conflict Analysis and Planning tool (LCAP) – to support Field Offices to develop a shared understanding of local conflict dynamics across its different components, thus promoting stronger integration by focusing on shared priorities through joint interventions. LCAP has so far been piloted only in a few Field Offices in MONUSCO and MINUSMA but is planned to be implemented in all Field Offices by 2021.

5.3.3. Strengthening the links between local and national conflict dynamics

Despite the greater attention paid to local conflict dynamics and as a direct consequence of Security Council mandates explicitly tasking missions to support solutions to address inter-communal conflicts, local conflicts are still often seen as delinked from the larger national political landscape and therefore as an ancillary responsibility that should be largely managed at the Field Office level. However, as indicated throughout this report, local conflicts are inextricably linked to national and regional dynamics and this is particularly true for farmer-herder conflicts and transhumance patterns.

Improving the ability of missions to ‘connect the dots’ by mapping out the relationships among local and national stakeholders and their respective political and socio-economic agendas would provide a unique opportunity to strengthen coherent political strategies and develop synergies amongst peacekeeping components and across the UN System and other international partners, including those operating at the regional level. UNMISS is a good example of where it has become the norm for the Mission to analyze local conflicts through the lens of the changing dynamics of national politics. To further strengthen such linkages when addressing local conflicts, the Mission utilizes the role of national politicians to address issues from their own communities at the grass-roots level. In all these efforts, the SRSG plays an important role in strengthening these linkages.



6. Conclusions



6. Conclusions

Tensions between herder and farmer communities in large parts of the African continent are often a trigger for deadly inter-communal conflicts, but this is not an inevitable outcome. **Historically, pastoral and agricultural communities enjoyed a symbiotic relationship**, but as this report shows, the concomitant shift of socio-economic patterns, political and security dynamics exacerbated by the proliferation of small weapons and climate change have brewed an explosive cocktail, putting at odds these different livelihoods systems increasingly pitched against each other competing for the same dwindling resources.

Growing tensions between farming and herding communities are symptomatic of broader socio-economic, political and security patterns, but they also exemplify the **increasing social fragmentation** experienced by many countries where traditional narratives of statehood and citizenship are at odds with social realities of marginalization and exclusion. In this regard, it must be noted that most of the current efforts – especially by UN peacekeeping – are inevitably focused on **‘lubricating the points of friction’** during transhumance, by regulating migration corridors; improving community infrastructures to allow more equitable access to indispensable natural resources such as water; and by supporting regulatory frameworks, both formal or informal, that can help redress wrongs and diffuse tensions before they escalate into violence. There is obviously merit in these short-term measures both because they reduce casualties among the civilian population and also because they provide space to negotiate local political solutions.

However, current trends, characterized by growing demographic pressure on existing resources compounded by the worsening effects of climate change, means that resolving these conflicts does not only boil down to parceling resources and demarcating cattle routes: **it requires an open political space to renegotiate compromises that can best**

adapt to a constantly evolving situation as well as **strong and empowered local actors that can shape these negotiations** in ways that promote inclusion and participation. Local deals are important, but they will not stand against the pressure of national and regional political dynamics and as such, it is important that policies and agreements are supported by key stakeholders at all levels.

This is easier said than done, not only because of the prevailing state of conflict characterizing many of these countries, but also because in most cases **state fragility** has been both a cause and a consequence of such conflicts. As a result, it is more challenging to support state institutions and actors that should have the vocation to not only address inter-communal conflicts, regulate cattle migratory frameworks, but also devise conducive national and regional policies that can support viable and sustainable interrelation between pastoral and farming communities.

The role of **traditional authorities and dispute resolution mechanisms** emerges throughout the report as a critical vehicle for the prevention, mitigation, and resolution of conflict related to transhumance. Capitalizing on these capacities for peace is critical for any intervention aimed at reducing civilian casualties and establishing some form of rule of law, but these mechanisms should not be seen as a panacea. They come with their own flaws, often not inclusive or fully participatory, even though they are perceived to be more legitimate than state institutions by local communities and abiding by codes and traditions that are not always aligned with the protection of human rights. Nevertheless, there is scope to **encourage hybrid dispute resolution** systems, where the presence and legitimacy of grass-root and institutional capacities of local authorities are strengthened to work alongside and provide a more sustainable and normatively coherent framework in the long term. This becomes particularly important when considering, as done above, that local solutions alone are neither sufficient nor sustainable and the



involvement of other national and regional actors is indispensable for that purpose.

Against this backdrop, UN peacekeeping operations have been playing an important role in supporting the capacity of the host-state to become more effective as well as fostering local political solutions by working with traditional dispute resolution mechanisms and engaging directly with communities. These efforts aim to ensure a broader representation and participation of diverse constituencies, including women and youth who are differently affected by the violence generated by transhumance-related incidents and dynamics.

UN peacekeepers in Darfur, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, Mali and the Democratic Republic of Congo have shown initiative and ingenuity over recent years in navigating the difficult terrain of inter-communal conflicts and tensions between farmers and herders driven by the paramount necessity of reducing civilian casualties. In this regard, many of the tools used for the protection of civilians, such as conflict mapping and the use of Community Alert Networks (CANs) and Community Liaison Assistants

(CLAs) have proven particularly adapted and effective. But even more has been done to work with local stakeholders to support local peace initiatives and peace agreements of various nature contributing to reducing violence and destruction. Strengthening local capacities has gone hand-in-hand with building confidence among these actors and creating the conditions for local solutions.

Surely, more can be done to improve the analytical, planning, and implementation capacities of peacekeeping operations to prevent local conflicts; sustain local reconciliation and peacebuilding processes; and enhance local capacities for peace, both formal and informal, as suggested further down. However, the single most important effort required by the UN is to strengthen and support national and regional policies that tackle the underlying issues causing tensions between farmers and herders and link them to the local initiatives and processes. This is clearly not a role that UN peacekeeping can play on its own and a reason why further integration and collaboration across the UN System is needed.

6.1. Strengthening prevention

Because of its seasonal nature, transhumance usually follows predictable patterns, which also applies to the way tensions mount and incidents unfold. In this regard, it is particularly susceptible to prevention and peacekeeping missions and their partners increasingly take advantage of this and build on traditional (or even at times formal) mechanisms that had been weakened by the conflict. However, good practices stem not only for revitalizing defunct mechanisms, but also for improving them through new and innovative initiatives and practices. In particular, UN peacekeeping can further enhance its impact by:

- Focusing on mechanisms that are preventive, such as the **pre-migration conferences** held before transhumance periods to minimize the risks and agree on mitigating measures, as well as on the **post-migration conferences** that serve as an opportunity to learn lessons, adapt measures and renew ownership and commitment by all stakeholders.
- **Strengthening early warning mechanisms** to address insecurity and conflict promptly, using existing mechanisms to mitigate local disputes and link national and local actors to ensure respective governments are aware of what is happening on the ground to be able to intervene.
- Leveraging missions' assets and partner capacities to **accurately map cattle migration patterns and routes to facilitate the identification of viable corridors, and infrastructural requirements** to decrease the risk of tensions over natural resources. Accurate mapping is also critical to inform the **deployment of UN military patrols** that play an effective deterrent role when timed appropriately with the movement of cattle.
- Extending the **adoption of the local conflict analysis and planning tool (LCAP)** which is currently being rolled out in missions by DPET. LCAP is specifically designed to support field offices to analyze local conflict dynamics and develop prioritized and integrated interventions to improve operational coherence and effectiveness.
- Working with missions' resources (i.e. QIPs, programmatic funding, trust funds, etc.) as well as other UN resources and capacities (i.e. PBF) to **invest in critical community infrastructures** that can ease the regulation of transhumance (i.e. water sources; markets; supporting joint committees and commissions, etc.).



6.2. Supporting local capacities for peace

Sustainable solutions can only mature when they are agreed on and implemented by those that will have to live with their consequences and therefore UN peacekeeping operations can play an important role in strengthening local ownership. At times this requires supporting the development of specific technical expertise or the provision of resources, equipment and logistic support. However, what is needed most of the time is a conducive environment that can foster community dialogue, constructive engagement by authorities, and space for political solutions. To this effect, UN peacekeeping missions can further engage on:

- **Prioritizing a Do-No-Harm approach** that seriously ponders options and potential consequences when designing interventions to truly support local solutions without undermining local capacities for peace or generating short-term solutions that are reliant on the mission support or continued presence.
- Developing tools and capacities that can assist peacekeepers **better engage and support formal, informal and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms** based on a contextual analysis of their respective weaknesses and advantages to support sustainable solutions. In contexts where the state is unlikely, in the short or medium-term, to have the capacities, resources, or even the perceived legitimacy to resolve local disputes across its territory, a hybrid system should be regarded as better suited to address inter-communal conflicts. In this regard, UN peacekeeping can play an important role in supporting a symbiotic relationship between the formal and informal systems.
- **Leveraging the positive potential of youth in addressing peace building priorities** and becoming an agent of innovative approaches when it comes to ‘modernizing’ traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, making them more inclusive and responsive to human rights standards, and democratizing formal institutional approaches that can privilege political dialogue over coercive solutions.
- Supporting broader **local efforts and capacities to promote a culture of peace** by conducting sensitization campaigns through various broadcasting media, including social ones; monitoring and countering hate speech and the spread of malevolent rumors; generating public opportunities for dialogue among local groups and communities to diffuse tensions, question stereotypes and promote social cohesion.
- Working with national and international partners to provide **context-tailored capacity strengthening, training and mentoring** while simultaneously encouraging the inclusion of different social segments and, in particular, young people and women to ensure that proposed solutions address the specific concerns of these constituencies. This can result in supporting efforts to strengthen negotiation skills for influential community actors or in training local officials and authorities on conflict management and mediation techniques. But it also requires a deeper understanding of the peculiar needs and interests of the various constituencies that live on pastoralism and farming.

6.3. Linking local level dynamics with national and regional politics

Transhumance much like pastoralism is rarely a local affair. Problems spread across geographical areas and impact a broad range of stakeholders, and it is only natural that solutions also need to engage and involve diverse constituencies, interests and agendas. An increased focus on linking local dynamics to national and regional ones has become crucial to supporting sustainable solutions which has traditionally been a weak area for peacekeeping. However, there are more and more examples of missions investing efforts and energy in mapping out these interlinkages to increase their ability to influence them. Bridging the gap between local and national requires increased unity of purpose across mission components and its national and international partners, which can be increased by:

- Establishing opportunities to **exchange lessons learned and insights from conflict analysis, programmatic integrated responses, and evaluations on integrated programming on transhumance** across components and different localities and even country contexts. Of particular value here are efforts by missions to map out interlinkages between individuals, groups and their socio-economic and political interests at the local, national, and – ideally – regional level. This would require increased interaction between UN peacekeeping missions and UN regional offices and/or other relevant UN presence in the region, but also reliance on external expertise (i.e. anthropologists; political economy analysts; etc.) to support and sustain analytical efforts and policy design.
- Adopting integrated approaches and activities aimed at preventing and mitigating conflicts in **partnership with local authorities, civil society organizations, the UNCT, and other local and international partners** to not only prevent duplication of interventions but also maximize available funding and ensure as much widespread support as possible. An early collaboration with UNCT on issues related to transhumance and pastoralism is necessary to ensure a coherent joint approach that can then translate into a smooth transition process when the peacekeeping mission leaves.
- **Supporting the operationalization of local, national and regional pastoral migration frameworks** by leveraging their presence on the ground and by using their assets and expertise to work with local authorities and international partners to this end.



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