

- The Horn of Africa region is characterized by an erosion of the monopoly of force of states unable to provide effective security. Non-state actors are increasingly involved in contesting and using means of violence. The proliferation of non-state security providers has become a source of insecurity in the region. Reestablishing a functional monopoly of force by building states' security capacity is therefore an absolute necessity.

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**

The Horn of Africa is one of the most unstable and highly militarized regions in Africa.¹ The region has been ravaged for decades by interstate and intra-state conflicts posing serious security challenges. Somalia is in turmoil and South Sudan has been dealing with regular outbreaks of violence since its independence in 2011. Ethiopia and Eritrea have been unable to end their deadlocked border conflict. Sudan is contending with armed rebellions in its peripheries. Conflicts in the region are interlinked, often dragging one or more states into a vicious circle of instability. Supporting subversive groups in neighboring states has been a common trend. The unresolved border tension between Sudan and South Sudan has often translated into proxy warfare destabilizing both states and threatening the region's wider security. The region is also facing emergent transnational security threats including terrorism.

Security and security oversight institutions in most states are too weak to deal with traditional and emergent security threats in the region. Most of the states here exercise only tenuous control over the means of violence. In other words, they lack »the ability to centralize military power and prevent the use of violence by other parties on their territory.«² This, in turn, led to the proliferation of non-state security actors acting beyond the effective control of states, including armed militias, insurgent movements, paramilitary and terrorist groups. The control of states over »the ownership, allocation and movement of the means of violence« has also deeply eroded. As a result, the region is awash with small arms and light weapons, leading to a growing militarization of civilians. These factors have become a source of persistent insecurity undermining the capacity of states to provide public safety, enforce internal security, and protect their borders and citizens from external aggression.³

1 The Horn of Africa region comprises Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan. These states share common historical and cultural ties. The region is inhabited by over 200 million people, more than half of whom live below the poverty line. See Berouk Mesfin, 2011. »The Horn of Africa Security Complex,« in Roba Sharamo and Berouk Mesfin (eds.), *Regional Security in the Post-Cold War Horn of Africa*. Addis Ababa: Institute for Security Studies.

2 Naim, Moises 2013.*The End of Power: From Boardrooms To Battlefields And Churches To States, Why Being In Charge Isn't What It Used To Be*. New York: Basic Books, p.115.

3 Public safety means »the capacity of the state or community to prevent crime or

The ability of states to regulate and control the means of violence varies across the region. In some states of the Horn of Africa it is deeply eroded, while in others the monopoly of force is contested. The region also includes states whose security institutions are used as an instrument to perpetrate insecurity.

STATES' LACK OF A MONOPOLY OF FORCE

States like Somalia and South Sudan have no control over the means of violence. Two decades after they collapsed in 1991, the Somali state and its security institutions are still struggling to consolidate power and restore their monopoly of force. The Horn of Africa's newest state, South Sudan, is not currently able to provide basic security. Both Somalia and South Sudan are characterized by widespread instability. The conflict in South Sudan has claimed 50,000 lives and displaced over a million people within one year.⁴

In the absence of a state monopoly of force, the security vacuum in both Somalia and South Sudan has been filled by non-state security providers. Traditional authorities, armed militias, warlords, private security providers, pirates, and terrorist group have proliferated in Somalia. Al-Shabbab, an Islamist extremist group, controls territories in south-central Somalia. The group has well-armed and trained fighters and the ability to launch deadly attacks within and outside the country.⁵ Clan militias have also established administrative structures in some localities. Jubaland in south-central Somalia is administered by the Ras-Kanboni militia, which is not yet integrated into the national army. Until quite recently, pirates operating off the coasts of Somalia endangered international trade.

There are dozens of non-state armed groups and rebel movements vying for power and political representations in South Sudan too. A heavily

activities that will disturb public peace. Internal stability is ensured when the state rather than the community has the coercive means, and if possible the monopoly of those means, to suppress any breach of public safety or destabilization of the state at all levels.« See Williams, Ishola, 2007. »The Challenges of Security Sector Reform in West Africa« in Le Roux Len and Yemane Kidane (eds.) *Challenges to Security Sector Reform in the Horn of Africa*, ISS Monograph Series No.135, p.41.

4 ICG, 2015. »Sudan and South Sudan's Merging Conflicts,« Africa Report No. 223, p.i; For more see UNMISS, 2014. »Conflict in South Sudan: A Human Rights Report,« Available at <https://unmiss.unmiss-ions.org/Portals/unmiss/Human%20Rights%20Reports/UNMISS%20Conflict%20in%20South%20Sudan%20-%20A%20Human%20Rights%20Report.pdf>.

5 Life and Peace Institute, 2014. Alternatives for Conflict Transformation in Somalia: A Snapshot and Analysis of Key Political Actors' Views and Strategies. Available at <http://www.life-peace.org/wp-content/uploads/The-ACTS-Report.pdf>

armed Sudan People's Liberation Army In Opposition (SPLA-IO) has been launching deadly armed attacks on government forces. In response to the state's inability to provide security, local communities have been mobilizing self-defense mechanisms. Mass recruitment of youth militias is taking place within the Nuer, Dinka, Murle and Shilluk communities.⁶ The Nuer armed youth militia, the White Army, is operating actively and widely in the Greater Upper Nile area.

The failure of these two states to regulate the means of violence and provide security has also led to a series of military and peacekeeping interventions by regional states and the international community. The UN has deployed 12,000 peacekeeping forces in South Sudan and 22,000 African Union peacekeeping forces drawn from regional states are fighting Al-Shabbab in Somalia.⁷ The European Union, the United States, China, and other international actors have deployed naval vessels to combat piracy off the coasts of Somalia.

The role of non-state security providers varies depending on their objectives and the local context. Traditional authorities have, for instance, been important security actors in both Somalia and South Sudan, and have played an important role in maintaining order and resolving disputes in the absence of a state presence.⁸ »80% of Somalis turn to traditional authorities for justice« and customary law is widely practiced.⁹ Traditional justice and security, however, have its own limitations. First and foremost, their role and scope are limited to their respective localities; they rarely deal with conflicts at the national level (Somaliland being an exception).¹⁰ And the militarization of local communities deepens violence. In Somalia, incessant clan rivalries over resources, ports, land, and grazing have led to violent conflicts over the past two decades, displacing hundreds of thousands and creating a

6 Human Security Baseline Assessment, 2012. »Reaching for the Gun: Arms Flows and Holding in South Sudan,« Sudan Issue Brief. For more see South Sudan Protection Cluster, 2014. Macro Analysis of Conflict in South Sudan. Available at <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Macro%20Analysis%20of%20Conflict%20in%20South%20Sudan%20SSPC%20August%202014.pdf>

7 The AU mobilized peacekeeping troops from Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Burundi and Djibouti.

8 Willems, Rens and Hans Rouw, 2011 »Security Promotion Seen from Below: Experiences from South Sudan,« Peace, Security and Development Network Report; For more see Daniel, Kebede, 2014. The Hybridization of Security Sector Governance for Peace-building and State-building in Somalia. Willson Center Africa Programme Brief no.8.

9 Gundel, Joakim and Ahmed Omar 'Dharbaxo, 2006. »The Predicament of the 'Oday': The Role of Traditional Structures in Security, Rights, Law and Development in Somalia,« Danish Refugee Council and Oxfam Novib, p.4.

10Höhne, Markus, 2006. Traditional Authorities in Northern Somalia: Transformation of Positions and Powers. Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology.

humanitarian catastrophe.¹¹

Different armed militias have committed a series of atrocities in South Sudan. The White Army, Nuer tribal militia, was allegedly behind the killings of Dinka civilians in Bor, Malakal, and Bentiu, in revenge for a massacre of Nuer in Juba allegedly by forces informally recruited from the Dinka ethnic group of Baher-Gazal.¹² The militarization and political mobilization of communities based on their ethnic affiliation groups is causing deadly conflicts. Intercommunity conflict in Jongle state claimed more than 3000 lives in 2012.¹³ Some armed militias and rebel groups have been engaged in looting, arms smuggling, and cattle rustling. Demobilization and decentralization are sensitive topics due to the deep mistrust between various ethnic groups in South Sudan.

The proliferation of multiple non-state security actors is further undermining state building efforts in both Somalia and South Sudan and has complicated attempts to restore the state monopoly of force. Armed militias, warlords, and terrorist groups profiting from the collapse of states have been disrupting peacemaking efforts in Somalia. The federal government in Somalia has no control over the Somali National Army (SNA), which is composed of various armed militias loyal to their respective groups. Disarmament and demobilization are currently unthinkable because of the government's inability to deal with violent conflicts. Attempts to integrate armed militias into the national army failed due to deep-seated suspicion between different clans and the perceived dominance of a single clan group within the SNA. The federal government is dependent on the external actors (AMISOM) for its own security. Although the presence of external forces has boosted security in some parts of Somalia, this has not come not without a price. Kenya and Ethiopia have been providing support to armed groups that are not part of the SNA in efforts to promote their respective interests in Somalia.¹⁴

The government in South Sudan attempted to restore

some sort of monopoly of force by co-opting armed militias into the national army. This »big tent policy« did not lead to the creation of a »disciplined army under a single structure, [instead] the national army became a collection of separate armies.«¹⁵ Some armed militias remained loyal to their former commanders, while others maintained their militia structures while being bankrolled by the state.¹⁶ The national army has expanded to a point where it consumes the bulk of the national budget. The appointment of rebel commanders as senior army officers in exchange for »integrating« their forces into the national army creates a stumbling block to the establishment of a professional armed force. When the political crisis erupted in December 2013, the speed with which it spread into the national army underlines the government's lack of control over the national army. The national army is now highly fragmented and divided along ethnic lines. According to the ICG, »as much as 70 % of the Sudanese People Liberation Army (SPLA) defected.«¹⁷

In the absence a state capable of monopolizing force and regulating the means of violence, the security situation in both Somalia and South Sudan remains fragile, and its spillover effects are threatening regional security. Al-Shabbab has launched a series of terrorist attacks in Kenya, as well as targeting Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti.¹⁸

THE STATE AS AN INSTRUMENT OF OPPRESSION

The Horn of Africa also comprises states that are sources of insecurity, where security institutions are widely used as instruments of oppression. Eritrea exemplifies this type of situation. Eritrea is a highly militarized state with one of the biggest armies in sub-Saharan Africa. The government forcibly conscripts young people. »400,000 are estimated to remain in almost permanent military service inside Eritrea.«¹⁹ National service is indefinite and conscripts are subjected to forced labor. »National service is used as a source of free, forced labor for 'parastatal' farms or companies directly in the hands of individual generals.«²⁰ Those who desert

11 Mass appropriation of property (land, housing, pasture) and revenge killings between rival clans fostered mistrust and remains the biggest challenge to reconciliation and peace in Somalia. See Jutta, Bakonyi and Kirsti Stuvøy, 2005. »Violence and Social Order Beyond the State: Somalia and Angola,« *Review of African Political Economy*, No. 104/5, p.368. For more see Samson, Wasara, 2002. »Conflict and State Security in the Horn of Africa: Militarization of Civilian Groups« *African Association of Political Science*, vol 7, no 2.

12 African Union Commission of Inquiry on South Sudan (unpublished report), 2015.

13 Human Security Baseline Assessment, 2012: 9.

14 The Kenyan Defence Force is arming and training the Ras-Kanboni militia currently in charge of the Jubaland regional administration to serve as a buffer and prevent the infiltration of Islamist extremists into Kenyan territory.

15 ICG, 2014. »South Sudan: A Civil War by Any Other Name,« Africa Report No.217, p.6.

16 Rands, Richard, 2010. »In Need of Review: SPLA Transformation in 2006–10 and Beyond« Small Arms Survey working paper, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

17 ICG, 2014:8.

18 Williams Paul, 2014. »After Westgate: Opportunities and Challenges in the War Against Al-Shabbab,« *International Affairs*, 90(4): 907–923.

19 ICG, 2013. »Eritrea: Scenarios for Future Transition.« Africa Report No.200, p.23.

20 ICG, 2014. »Eritrea: Ending the Exodus? Africa Briefing No.100,

risk being shot or arrested, and if they manage to escape, their parents bear the consequences. It is the state »with the highest number of political prisoners in Africa.«²¹

The regime has militarized society. Eritreans up to the age of 50 are part of the national service program and regional army commanders are in charge of administering provinces.²² The stalemate with Ethiopia is used as a justification to avoid demilitarization and demobilization. The entire state security apparatus (police, army, military, and intelligence) is geared to maintaining the survival of the regime, specifically the president. The state and its security apparatus is perceived as a threat by its people. Hundreds of thousands of Eritreans have fled violent repression perpetrated by the security apparatus of the state and its excessive interference in their daily lives. Eritrea is one of the world's top refugee-producing states. More than 300,000 Eritreans are estimated to have fled from Eritrea since 2002.²³ The number is worrying for a state of about six million people. The excessive state monopoly of force is not, therefore, a guarantee to ensuring security.

CONTESTED LEGITIMACY OF THE MONOPOLY OF FORCE

Effective security provision requires the means to control the security apparatus of states. A legitimate and accountable government »in which a state's security forces operate lawfully under a legitimate civilian authority...where actors conduct themselves in accordance with democratic norms and principles of good governance« is necessary for this function.²⁴

Almost all states in the Horn of Africa (with the exception of Kenya) are characterized by one-party rule, authoritarian tendencies and reduced political space. The Ethiopian ruling party dominates 99.6 percent of parliamentary seats, while Sudan's National

Congress Party (NCP) holds 90 percent. In Djibouti, the president amended the constitution to run for a third term. Civilian oversight over security institutions is limited and power is highly personalized. This has had an impact on states' ability to use force for legitimate purposes, as security interests and priorities are often defined narrowly by small elites with the short term objective of regime survival.²⁵ Such regimes often resort to military solutions in response to perceived or real security threats and political demands, which in turn perpetrate insecurity. States in the region are, therefore, not up to the task of exercising legitimate use of the monopoly of force.

In the absence of legitimate governments, groups challenging the monopoly of force of states are mushrooming in the region. Sudan is contending with armed insurgencies that have established a monopoly of force in parts of its territory, specifically Blue Nile, South Kordofan, and Darfur.²⁶ The state's attempts to counter these insurgencies using paramilitary and militia groups further exacerbate instability. That said, Sudan is relatively stable compared to Somalia and South Sudan because of the state's dominance of the means of violence. Yet, the lack of a truly legitimate government exposes Sudan's peripheries to violent armed rebellion which could lead to fragmentation of the state.

Ethiopia has emerged relatively stable over the past two decades, after years of protracted civil war. This is mainly attributed to the state's ability to strengthen its control of its peripheries. It has a very powerful security apparatus. Its military has the ability to neutralize internal and external threats and project power beyond its borders.²⁷ Yet, Ethiopia remains vulnerable to the threat posed by insurgent movements operating within its territory. The Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) and the Oromo Liberation (OLF) have been contesting the state's legitimacy and monopoly on the use of force by launching small-scale attacks. Although these armed insurgent groups have weakened, their mere presence exposes Ethiopia to internal and external threats. Externally, Ethiopia's arch-enemy Eritrea is

p.4; see Yosief, Gebrehiwot, 2010. Eritrea: Forced Peasant Conscripts that sustained the Eritrean Revolution. Available at <http://asmarino.com/articles/864-forced-peasant-conscripts-that-sustained-the-eritrean-revolution>. For more see Gaim, Kibreab, 2013. »The Negative Effects of the National Service and the Warsai-Yikealo Development Campaign and Forced Migration in Post-Independence Eritrea,« *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, vol. 7, no. 4.

21 Ogbazghi, Petros, 2011. »Personal Rule in Africa: The Case of Eritrea« *African Studies Quarterly*, vol.12, no 2, p.9.

22 Article 8, Proclamation No. 82/1995 states that »all Eritrean citizens from the age of 18 to 40 years have the compulsory duty of performing Active National Service.«

23 ICG, 2014:4

24 Bryden, Alan, et al, 2005. »Shaping a Security Governance Agenda in Post-Conflict Peace building,« Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Policy Paper No.11.

25 Fisher, Jonathan, 2013. »Mapping 'Regional Security' in the Greater Horn of Africa: Between National Interests and Regional Cooperation,« Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Horn of Africa Security Dialogue, pp.11-12.

26 »Some 30,000 Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) troops and allied forces captured a large part of the Nuba Mountains Area in 2012.« See Gramizzi, Claudio and Jérôme Tubiana, 2013 »New War, Old Enemies: Conflict Dynamics in South Kordofan,« Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, p.9. For more see Young, John, 2012. *The Fate of Sudan: The origins and consequences of a flawed peace process*. London: Zed Books.

27 Kidist Mulugeta, 2014. »The Role of Regional Powers in the Field of Peace and Security: The Case of Ethiopia,« Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Horn of Africa Dialogue Series.

providing arms and training to these groups with the aim of undermining Ethiopia's internal stability. The absence of a viable political space has also led political opposition groups to resort to armed insurgency.²⁸ The incumbent regime is extremely dependent on the state security apparatus to stamp out threats to its power.

Kenya is hailed for its better democratic record. But security-wise, the public has no confidence in the state's security apparatus due to rampant corruption. Kenya has suffered from horrific terrorist attacks over the last two years and crime rates are on the rise, further threatening public safety and internal security.²⁹

allowed to encroach on the state's monopoly on the means of violence, as has been witnessed in Somalia and South Sudan. The international community should also continue to support peacekeeping operations, mainly with a mission to protect civilians. These are not, however, sufficient to secure sustainable peace and security in the region. If states in the region fail to establish a legitimate monopoly of force, sustainable security will remain elusive for the foreseeable future.

CONCLUSION

The general trend in the Horn of Africa indicates an increasing erosion of the monopoly of force of states, leaving the states of the region unable to provide effective security. Non-state actors are increasingly involved in contesting and using available means of violence. The decentralization of security is posing serious security challenges in the region. Reestablishing a functional monopoly of force by building states' security capacity is therefore an absolute necessity. This will not, however, suffice to deal with the security challenges in the region. Legitimizing the monopoly of force is critically needed. Partnering with oppressive regimes that advance the West's short-term interests (fighting terrorism) prolongs insecurity in the region. Promotion of good governance and democratization will be important to foster long-term peace and security in the Horn of Africa. Strengthening regional security cooperation is also needed to address transnational security threats beyond the capacity of individual states.

Fostering a legitimate and functional monopoly of force is not, however, going to be an easy task in a region characterized by the absence of viable state institutions, weak economic structures, and the excessive proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The fact that such a process takes a long time should be recognized, and short-term strategies need to be devised for specific local realities. Non-state security providers, specifically traditional authorities that constructively contribute to peacemaking need to be supported. These actors should not, however, be

²⁸Opposition political parties and their supporters are labeled as terrorists, causing a loss of legitimacy for the projection of state force.

²⁹Warah, Rasna, 2014. »Corruption is Costing Kenyans their Lives,« *the Guardian*, 9 December 2014. Available at <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/09/corruption-kenyans-fraud>. For more see, Williams Paul, 2014. »After Westgate: Opportunities and Challenges in the War Against Al-Shabbab,« *International Affairs*, vol90, no: 907–923.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kidist Mulugeta is presently serving as a consultant on Peace and Security Issues in the Horn of Africa. In this position, she has participated in projects and produced papers on security issues of the Horn of Africa, including on the role of regional powers, on the Ethio-Eritrean conflict, and on peacekeeping interventions. Prior to this, she was a consultant at the Governance and Public administration Section of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

She holds a Master of Arts in International Relations from Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia.

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The Reflection Group »Monopoly on the use of force 2.0?« is a global dialogue initiative to raise awareness and discuss policy options for the concept of the monopoly for the use of force. Far from being a merely academic concern, this concept, at least theoretically and legally remains at the heart of the current international security order. However it is faced with a variety of grave challenges and hardly seems to reflect realities on the ground in various regions around the globe anymore. For more information about the work of the reflection group and its members please visit: http://www.fes.de/GPol/en/security_policy.htm

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Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung | Global Policy and Development
Hiroshimastr. 28 | 10785 Berlin | Germany

Responsible
Bodo Schulze | Global Peace and Security Policy
Phone: +49-30-26935-7409
Fax: +49-30-269-35-9246
<http://www.fes.de/GPol/en>

Contact
Christiane Heun | Christiane.heun@fes.de

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