

“...tulichukuliwa wanaume wote kwa kijiji na watu wa Matakwei pia na tukafungua kamba kwa sehemu zetu nyeti na kuvurutwa na kuteswa” (26th April, 2014)

Meaning that all men in his village were taken by the SLDF men and tortured by tying their private parts with ropes and pulling them. Most men are now impotent, which also has affected their reproductive and productive roles at the household level.

There was also the general violation of rights experienced at the household level. When SLDF was active, they used to selectively target some household members mainly men. They would forcefully pick them into the forest to go and fight. They would kill them. They would cut their body parts especially ears and arms as part of punishment. Therefore, killing, torture, mutilation and sexual violence characterized most of the household members during conflict and after conflict period. According to one of the informants, even the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) reported that a part from the SLDF, the General Service Unit (GSU) and the police also tortured, unlawfully detained, killed, and sexually assaulted the residents during the 2008 security operation that was called Operation Okoa Maisha.

Socially, the conflicts also led to displacement of over 66,000 households. This grossly interrupted with the households' daily-life operations. Education of children was interrupted as children were displaced while their schools were burnt down e.g.: including Chepkurkur, Kaboriot, Kaptoom and Korng'otuny Primary schools. Households' socialization process was also interfered with by the displacement. This was especially because members of the family were separated while in other cases, merged with the rest of the displaced members of the society where discipline, order, authority and values were replaced by the drive to survive and making ends meet in a harsh social environment that made parental control almost impossible. This is why sexual pervasion and criminal acts are on the rise. During the interview a discussant observed that

“...nidhamu ya watoto imeenda chini sana.Siku hizi wasichana sasa ndio wanatafuta wanaume na mavazi yao pia yamebadilika.(26th April, 2014)

Meaning that the discipline and morals have gone down to an extent that it is girls now seducing men, while the girls are now dressed in trousers that they did not before. Because of displacement of families, social roles were also interfered with. Women have become household heads and sole breadwinners. This also happened for children that were orphaned and displaced during the conflicts. That is why almost 40% of the household heads interviewed were female. This number was quite high compared to what is ideally expected in a normal life experience in the same society where only a few women would be household heads.

Members of the Mosop and Soy clans have also continued to express mistrust and fear for each other because of the conflicts. This has resulted into a social tension between the two clans. During visits in the study area, the researcher observed that the settlement patterns take the clan criteria where there is little mixing because people do not trust

members of the other clan this evidenced in phase three where majority who have settled there are from the soy. Even in the market places, the types of roles played in business enterprises were also restricted for example in areas dominated by the soy the Mosop do not own any businesses and *vis versa*.

In general, the households were the melting pots during the conflicts. This is where the action was taking place in terms of the target of the conflicts and impact of the same. In fact, the living arrangements, the social life and economic activities that people engaged in at the household level is a reflection of how they were affected by the incidences of conflicts in the study area. For instance, because of displacement, people have concentrated their settlement at market centres, while engaging in business and transport activities to earn a living.

When discussing conflicts, the authors went to the field with an open mind to capture both the positive and negative effects of conflicts on the households. The above discussion has been biased towards the negative effects of conflicts. However, the study also recorded various positive results. One of them was the aspect of capacity building. The conflicts attract a lot on national and international attention. Many non-governmental organizations including the Red Cross, Christian Reformed Relief, Women Link, NCKK, ICM ACT Kenya, and FPFK (Free Pentecostal Fellowship of Kenya) have engaged in massive civic education for the residents. As a result, various seminars and workshops have been organized on conflict management and resolution, and attitude change especially targeting the young people. This included among other activities, taking youths to Rwanda to learn from the genocide scenes. According to one Red Cross official, in as much as the area seems to be having some underlying social tensions, it was these kinds of capacity building initiatives have reduced the chances of such tensions escalating into full-blown violence.

In terms of infrastructure, the authors observed that schools that had been burnt down during the conflicts were made of temporary structures. However, when rebuilding the school, they have been replaced by permanent structures and most people now prefer boarding schools for their children as was observed at Cheptikit Academy. Roads like Masaek – Kipsigon and Kopsiro – Chepyuk were constructed by army and have now improved it by putting murrum.

Similarly, houses being built are made of iron sheets as opposed to pre-conflict period. There was also a water tank build by ACT Kenya for the whole community, which has solved water challenges that used to affect the residents. Also, those people that ran away from the conflicts have come back but with new ideas for development e.g. building of Village Polytechnic is now on the pipe line, high altitude training centre for the athletes and water springs. All these are positive effects of the conflicts. However, the way the benefits came about should be critically examined: the society must not lose life for it to get water, schools, and permanent roads, among other benefits. The Table below summarizes some of the effects highlighted by the respondents.

6. Ranking Effects of Conflicts on the Household

| Causes of Conflicts (n=351) | Minimum (Strongly Disagree) | Maximum (Strongly Agree) | Mean | Rank |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|------|------|
| Reduced household income | 1 | 5 | 4.2 | 1 |
| Lost family land | 1 | 5 | 3.9 | 2 |
| Slept hungry/ate less preferred food | | | | |
| Investors have left the area | 1 | 5 | 3.8 | 3 |
| Displacement of families/people | 1 | 5 | 3.7 | 4 |
| Life is more difficult | 1 | 5 | 3.6 | 5 |
| Loss of job opportunities | 1 | 5 | 3.6 | 6 |
| There is balanced development | 1 | 5 | 2.9 | 7 |
| between Moson and Soy people | 1 | 5 | 2 | 8 |

The interpretation of the findings in the table above is that the nearer the mean mark is closer to the maximum (5), the more affirmative response is and *vice-versa*. The ranking shown above did not rich ten, but they scored up to eight most pressing effect of conflict on the household. Loss of household income was therefore, the most common effect. This was largely because most households lost their family land, ate less preferred food or even slept hungry, and many were displaced. What these mean is that most families were generally destabilized and experienced general loss of their sources of livelihood. The supremacy of household's level of income over other effects cannot be underscored. Income as already indicated is a major indicator of a household's socio-demographic status in the society. When income is enhanced, the living conditions of the household is hypothetically assumed to improve, but when it is deprived, the households would generally degenerate in many other aspects like food security where they would not be able to consume enough or even preferred foods since if they cannot produce it on their own farm, they may not also access [buy] it from the market since they lack the cash.

Findings in the table also show a generally deprived community as a result of conflicts. Households have lost land, are taking less preferred foods or even going hungry. Investors have left the area as more people are displaced and life made more difficult. At the end of it all, there is no balanced development among households from both communities.

One key finding from the field was that in spite of the fact that most of the families were displaced by conflicts in the study area, there were no camps for internally displaced persons. According to one of the key informants at Chepyuk Phase III, the Sabaot culture does not allow their members to live in dehumanizing conditions. One of the informants explained that,

“...mila na tamaduni yetu hairuhusu watu kuishi kwa hema. Kwa wale ambao wamefurushwa kwao, ni jukumu la wasabaot wenzao kuwapa makazi ya muda mpaka watakapojisitiri” (26th April, 2014)

Meaning that their customs and traditions do not allow their members to live in tents. In fact, for those displaced, it is the obligation of the fellow Sabaot members or relatives to accommodate them until the situation is sorted out. This was a response that he gave when asked by the researcher to

explain why people were not living in camps if they were truly displaced.

What this meant was that people of the same clan were accommodated by their kinsmen and women and allowed to share the same residential space as an extended family. This gave rise to a kind of informal settlement within market centres for security purposes and also to avoid exposing their member to the dehumanizing life in the tents. Thus, the Sabaot culture provided a fertile ground for members to cope with some of the effects of the intra-clan conflicts in the study area. This is partly one of the benefits that the authors accrued by staying in the community for one month because the key informants would reveal more information over time. In the next section, we explain the specific role of the stakeholders in the whole context of conflicts, conflict resolution and management in the study area.

7. The Role of Stakeholders in Mitigating Intra-clan Conflicts in Kopsiro Division

The third objective of the study was to analyze the role of stakeholders in mitigating conflicts in the study area. During data collection, the researcher found that there were several stakeholders that had played vital roles in mitigation of conflicts. These stakeholders operated either as a group or individual entities in implementation of their action plans. Out of the 351 respondents interviewed, 245(69.8%) mentioned the government at a stakeholder, 224(63.8%) the civil society/NGOs, 190 (54.1%) elders, 169(48.1%) community members, while all the 351(100%) mentioned the district officer (D.O) and church leaders. These results are summarized in the table below.

Stakeholders Involved in Resolving Conflicts

| Stakeholder | Frequency (n=351) | Percent |
|--------------------|-------------------|---------|
| Government | 245 | 69.8 |
| Civil society/NGOs | 224 | 63.8 |
| Elders | 190 | 54.1 |
| Community member | 169 | 48.1 |
| Total | 351 | 100 |

Analysis of the findings in the above table indicates that the government was recognized by over 69% of the respondents as having played a key role in conflict resolution in the study area. This was manifested in various ways. First and

foremost, the government has the social and political responsibility to provide security for its citizens against aggression. Thus, this was a major expectation of the people of Kopsiro. According to respondents, the then government took the responsibility by declaring war against the Sabaot Land Defense Force and further declared Mt. Elgon District a security operation zone in 2008. This was an operation called *Okoa maisha* meaning save life. The military operation led to the eventual killing of the leader of SLDF and destruction of the whole group activities in the area. This is what culminated in the end of the last major violent conflicts experienced in the area.

The government also set up police posts including the one in Kapkateny, Kipsigon, and many other administration police (AP) camps like the ones in Chepchabai, Toiwondet, Chepyuk, Kapsambu, Kubra and Chebich AP camps. There is also a Military post at Panaan tega that has helped to heighten security through regular surveillance and intelligence activities.

In 2013, when the Jubilee government took power, they promised to settle most of the Kenyans that have been internally displaced out of the various causes. However, this did not work for the study area because the government was targeting people in IDP camps yet in the study area the culture does not encourage people living in camps. Meaning that the government may need to use other criteria in order to settle the many displaced residents in the area.

Most of the respondents also mentioned in their responses that the government was still expected to do more. The land allocation and boundary disputes, which were then politicized, remain unresolved. During visits to the study area, it was consistently mentioned by the respondents that none of them has got a title deed for the land on which they live, while other have letters of allotment yet they have no land on ground. During the previous government efforts to allocate the land, the respondents observed that there were no prior consultations with the locals and thus, was marred with a lot of complaints over corruption and political influence. For instance, the final list of residents prepared by the government did not tally with the list that the locals had prepared and expected to be given land. Therefore, it still calls for the government's mandate to amicably solve the land crisis in order to end the recurrent discontent among the various clans living in Kopsiro Division.

Two hundred and twenty four or 63% of the respondents mentioned civil societies/NGOs as having played a major role in management of the previous incidences of conflict. During data collection and visits to the four locations, the researcher encountered various social and economic activities that were ongoing, which were being funded by the civil societies. For instance, in Kopsiro centre, the International Christian Mission (ICM) has sponsored a theological college called African

Theological Seminary, which is offering open air prayers in the region during conflicts. They also held pulpit exchange programs for pastors from various churches that had earlier been separated by conflicts. They also preached peace throughout the area. There was also Mt. Elgon Pastors

forum, NCKK, and Catholic Peace and Justice Commission that Helped By conducting exchange pulpit programs for both clans.

The ICM through the African Theological Seminary also supported conflict victims in various ways. They helped rebuild their houses; each was given a cow; the elderly were given farm inputs and the organization leased land for them; 30 women were supported through farming on their behalf and each was further given a sheep; they also employed the local youths to be peace ambassadors; and currently, they sponsor over 200 orphans in their education at primary and secondary levels. Currently there are training pastors from various churches.

The Red Cross is another NGO whose activities were recognized by the respondents during data collection. According to the respondents, it is the Red Cross that has mainly been in charge of relief food and medical aid during conflict situations. One of the key informants also appreciated that: "...ni watu wa Red Cross ndio waliniokoa mimi na watoto wangu. Walitupea chakula, dawa na neti ya mbu." (26th April, 2014)

Meaning that it is the Red Cross people that saved her and her children. They gave her foodstuff, medication and a mosquito net. The researcher also found that Red Cross is offering medical assistance to Kopsiro Health Centre, the only health facility in Kopsiro Division. Christian Reformed Church gave 16 iron sheets to 200 households for reconstruction of their burnt houses.

Elders from the various clans in Kopsiro Division were also mentioned by 54% of the respondents that they have always played an important role during conflict situations. According to one of the administrators interviewed, elders play a big role in dispute resolution and particularly, in dialoguing and negotiation processes between parties. One of the respondents observed that "...hawa wazee ndio walisaidia kuongelesha watu wa ukoo mbalimbali ndio vita ikatulua. Lakini pia kuna wakati hawa wazee huwa wanatumiwa kuanzisha vita kwa kuwashauri na kuwabariki vijana wa ukoo zao." (26th April, 2014)

Meaning that the elders are the ones that talk to people of various clans so as to cool down the fight. But in some cases, the same elders are the ones that incite their youths and bless them to go to war with their rival clans. Therefore, the findings indicate that the elders may play two major roles: the one of conflict resolution as well as conflict ignition.

Community members were also identified by over 48% of the respondents as having played major role in conflict situations. During conflicts, it is the community members that engage each other in the violence that ensues. However, they are also the victims of the same violence. In Kopsiro Division, community members engaged in various activities during and after the conflicts. First and foremost, the respondents explained that community members were involved in reconciliation and provision of humanitarian aid to victims of the conflict that had erupted. Most of the

respondents provided shelter, water, food, and counseling to the victims. They also worked with elders to negotiate and reconcile the warring sides. Most important of them all, they are the ones hosting all the people that were internally displaced during the conflicts.

The District Officer (DO) and church leaders were the most mentioned as having played a key role during the conflicts. The DO being the main government figure on ground, he was highly remembered because, being the chairman of the security in the Division, he was seen all over the area moving up and down with police officers asking residents to stay in-door, to cease fire and to cooperate with the government agencies in providing information. The DO was thus, a symbol of the government's presence on the ground.

For the church leaders, they were so instrumental in provision of humanitarian support including tents, medication, counseling of victims and reunion of families, building of schools and sponsoring of orphaned children to pursue education. Generally, many Christian religious denominations have continued to play a major role in reconstructing life especially for those that were directly affected by the violence. For instance, the Free Pentecostal Fellowship in Kenya (FPFK) initiated programs on peace and rights that has been vital in bringing about reconciliation, harmony and healing among the people that were affected. The church leaders facilitated meetings that were held with elders from all the Sabaot clans. One of these meetings was held in Mabanga and officiated by the former Vice President Hon. Kalonzo Musyoka. The climax was a peace rally held at Kaptama area. In that rally, people were asked to forgive each other, ex-SLDF members were also forgiven and reunited with the community they had tortured, the ex-SLDF were also asked to form self-help group in each location and given Ksh.75,000 to start life, and about 600 of the ex-SLDF were taken through rehabilitation programs.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that various stakeholders at various levels played important roles in conflict resolution. One observation that the researcher made was the general need for the stakeholders to continue networking with each other since most of the conflict situations cannot be addressed by a single strategy. In conclusion to the chapter, it is clear that land and land-related issues that have been politically polarized have been the main causes of the recurrent conflicts that have affected the social and economic status of households in Kopsiro Division, while the government is the main stakeholder with the authority and mandate to address the land issues.

8. Conclusions

In attempt to understand the inter-clan conflicts and household livelihoods in Kopsiro division, collective action theory was used. According to the theory, historical information and present day society reveal occasional, intermitted or incessant, spontaneous and fluid actions by different groups. For example, there have been riots, mass demonstrations and pressure for social change. This was a typical example of what the researcher found out in the study area. That, members of the two clans act in solidarity. For instance, for the Mosop blame the Soy and the *verse*

versa, as the aggressors in the persistent conflicts. They also demonstrated solidarity in their settlement patterns and the way they accommodate those displaced by conflicts. As such, the proposition of the theory in this paper is that collective action originates from mal-distribution of resources. Hence, collective actions is relatively fluid, unstructured, unpredictable and sometimes violent. This was also observed in the Kopsiro Division particularly in addressing the first objective of the study, where land and land-related issues were the main causes of the conflicts. However, we argue that given the mitigation effort that the researcher highlighted, not all the members of the two clans were acting in solidarity with their clansmen/women. For instances, religious organizations brought together pastors and elders from both clans to preach peace and reconciliation for the two clans. Therefore, the act of being neutral actors was vital in mitigating violence and managing post-conflict situation.

Basing on the findings in objective one, we conclude that the persistent conflicts in Kopsiro Division are triggered mainly by factors from within the clans – particularly land-related issues, and partly, by factors beyond control of those clans, especially when the whole land issues is politicized and sides are taken. In regard to the second objective, we conclude that the intra-clan conflicts among the Sabaot people have had both positive and negative implications on the households in the study area. However, in terms of household's socio-economic development status, the conflicts have compromised the household's livelihood opportunities for majority of the residents. The authors basing on the findings of the third objective conclude that conflicts cannot be resolved by one major stakeholder. It is a team and all-inclusive process that involves the participation of various actors. However, given its mandate, the government must lead the talk and action for the rest to be successful in their efforts especially in the case of Kopsiro Division.

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Author Profile



Dr. Benard Sorre is a senior lecturer of Moi University, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Department of Anthropology & Human Ecology. He has specialized in applied/development anthropology with bias in food security, nutrition, poverty, HIV/AIDS, street children and livelihood researches/studies.



Dr. Erick Kiprono Bor is a lecturer of Egerton University, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in the Department of Peace, Security and Social Studies. He is the chair of Department. He has also acted in various capacities in the faculty's board of post graduates studies.



Mrs. Milka Toromo Psiwa is an MA student in Egerton University, Kenya, pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Sociology (community development and project management). She has experience in community service, accounts, and social interventions.