UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

INSTITUTE OF DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES (IDIS)

EFFECT OF ETHNIC CONFLICT ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN MOUNT ELGON REGION (2008-2012)

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DECLARATION

I, Benedetta Margaret Kikechi, hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Signed…………………………………… Date…………………………..

Benedetta Margaret Kikechi

R47/8904/2017

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University Supervisor;

Signed……………………………….. Date…………………………….

M/S Nancy Wanjala

Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved Dad, the Late Joseph Kikechi ,my Mum, Mama Petronillah Nafula Kikechi and my Late brother, Cleophas Wekesa Kikechi for their guidance ever since my childhood which became a strong base that propelled me to undertake this academic journey. My success is built on the foundation they gave me.

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I wish to thank God for the gift of life given unto me throughout this course. Secondly, I wish to pay special tribute to my son Joseph Kikech, my sisters and brothers for their understanding, sacrifice, perseverance, patience and moral support given to me during the course. I pledge to dedicate more time to them in the future.

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My intellectual acknowledgement goes to all my lecturers, entire staff of Institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS) and Defence Staff College (DSC) Karen, my fellow students and colleagues for their intellectual encouragement and support extended to me throughout my course.

Lastly, my grateful thanks go to the Kenya Defence Forces (Kenya Air Force) for according me the opportunity to undertake this course.

You have all been there for me.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AGLI - African Great Lakes Initiative

AIDS – Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AVP - Alternative to Violence Program

CMR - Civil-Military Relations

FCPT - Friends Church Peace Teams

HIV - Human Immuno Deficiency Virus

HROC – Rebuilding our Communities

IDP - Internally Displaced Persons

KDF – Kenya Defence Forces

KNCHR – Kenya National Commission on Human Rights

MDF - Moorland Defence Force

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

PEV - Post-Election Violence

PTN - Peace Tree Network

SLDF - Sabaot Land Defense Forces

STD - Sexually Transmitted Disease

UNHCR – United Nation High Commission for Refugees

UNICEF – United Nations Children's Fund

UNSCR - United Nations Security Council Resolution

ABSTRACT

The existence of land disputes and related issues of unequal access and distribution of resources in Mount Elgon is the catalyst to the conflict under study. The conflict is further complicated by the recurring history of sustained violence in Mount Elgon, politics as well as limited local economic prospects. As stated elsewhere, the conflict in Mount Elgon has had tremendous effects on women and children more than any other group, with widespread attacks always leaving them deeply scared by the violence witnessed and the sexual assaults committed. It is in this mindset that the objective of the study was to establish the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012). Three objectives guided the study related to; gendered effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012), effect of the military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012) and key strategies for resolving the future conflicts on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012). The study concluded that gender analysis in armed conflict highlights the difference between women and men in terms of their gendered roles and activities, their needs, their power and control of resources and their access to decision making processes even in post conflict situations. The study concluded that the conflict in Mt.Elgon had tremendous effects on women and children. The study concluded that there are four peace building strategies that may be helpful in prevention of recurrence of conflicts. They include trauma healing; community dialogue; resettlement and capacity development. The study recommended that to overcome the gendered effects on women and children, capacity building should be undertaken on the vulnerable women by creating their capacity and awareness on the ways of seeking assistance during conflicts. The study recommended that in order to overcome the injurious effects associated with military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon, affected women should be accorded legal redress that will involve reciprocated compensation by the government based on the negative effects suffered. Finally, the study recommended that women should be in forefront as peace builders. Women should have shared forums where they come together to point out the issues and challenges with potential of triggering future conflicts. The women should also engage in dialogue involving genuine interaction, listening at each other to overcome the conflict-related traumas. The study on effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012), should further be escalated to cover the period 2012-2017 that has witnessed further conflicts.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Ethnic conflicts have persisted over the years in Kenya and usually escalate every five years whenever there are elections. The conflicts are more concentrated in some parts of the country such as the Rift Valley.[1] Ethnically instigated violence has a heavy toll on women and children representing a serious and persistent issue in Kenya. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) reported that in Kenya, the level of violence against women and children reached totally unacceptable levels, in particular as regards sexual violence during the post-election violence in 2008. The already vulnerable situation of women and children in Kenya was exacerbated by the post-elections crisis.[2] On 25 January 2008, IRIN emphasizing that sexual violence had increased especially in camps set up for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), where girls and women exchanged sex for biscuits, or for other services. Indeed, IDPs women were constantly exposed to violence.

The onset of the post-election violence witnessed the flight of women and girls from their homes to the IDP camps to seek sanctuary where they were exposed to and experienced all forms of sexual abuse. A report by the Rapid Assessment of Gender Based Violence during the 2008 Post-Election Violence(PEV) found that the encamped women repeatedly expressed fears of sexual violence as a result of makeshift sleeping arrangements in the IDP camps where males and

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[1] Nasongo, B.M., & Muola, J.M. (2011). The Effect of Inter-tribal Post-Election Violence Conflict Trauma on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Mt. Elgon District, Kenya. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal, 5* (6), 249-248.

[2] Musoga, S. (2008). *Violence against women and children in Kenya: An alternative report to the Committee against Torture November 2008.* World Organization against Torture, Geneva.

female (not of the same family), were forced to sleep together under one tent.[3] Concerns were repeatedly expressed over the lack of regulations at the camp that allowed men from outside to enter the camp unchecked. Sexual exploitation was also a concern as women and girls were coerced into exchanging sex for basic resources such as food, sanitary supplies and transport.[4]

Mount Elgon district is an administrative unit in the former Western Province with headquarters in Kapsokwony town. The district is located on the South East slopes of Mount Elgon with a population of about 135,033 people in an area of 944 square kilometres according to the 1999 census. The dominant communities are the Sabaot, Iteso and the Luyha (Bukusu sub tribe). It is also home to the Bagisu, Sabiny and Ogiek communities.[5]

The root cause of the Mount Elgon conflict is the existence of disputable land and issues of unequal access and distribution of resources. The existence of these factors together with a history of violence in the region, politics and limited local economic prospects complicate the situation further. The presence of multiple grievances contributed to the geographic reach and duration of the conflict. The Mount Elgon conflicts affected the women and the children more than any other group, where attacks left them deeply scared by the violence witnessed and the sexual assaults committed.[6]

An initial government response, which focused on dialogue and adopted a flexible approach, did not bring much result. Following the failure of this strategy, the government deployed the army, a quick and successful intervention in terms of apprehending militia and recovering arms.

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[3] Gender Based Violence Sub cluster, (2008). *Rapid Assessment of gender based violence during the post-election violence in Kenya.*
[4] Musoga, S. (2008). *Violence against women and children in Kenya: An alternative report to the Committee against Torture November 2008.* World Organization against Torture, Geneva.
[5] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors.* UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.
[6] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: *The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. Journal l46* (4), 606

However, it was not long after the deployment that the violent incidents against women started picking up once more.[7]

This resulted in increased numbers of pregnancies and higher levels of contraction of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Parallel, the army`s invasion led to accusations of human rights abuses and undermined the confidence of the local population. Aggressive militia responses and excessive use of force to settle the conflict created even more female-headed households, deteriorating further the position of women in the area.[8]

Conflicts within the district of Mount Elgon resulted in IDPs, the majority of which were women and children. Families were separated and women who were intermarried with other tribes were affected. Mothers saw their children taken into custody never to return. Peace-building within the region has been an ongoing process where many actors have combined their efforts towards sustainable peace in Mount Elgon. These efforts have helped in restoring order in the region; still more needs to be done to realize sustainable peace in Mount Elgon.[9]

Peace efforts have been rocked by challenges; challenges, which have been hampering the peace building and women's empowerment process in the region. Some of the challenges include: lack of sufficient financial resources to deal with the underlying causes of violence as well as reach to all the affected areas; political interference; leaders who are objecting to women's empowerment and the peace building processes; historical and more recent land disputes.[10]

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[7] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.
[8] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: *The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*. *Journal l46* (4), 606
[9] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.
[10] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: *The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*. *Journal l46* (4), 606

The above challenges can be dealt with if the international community and the local population are both committed to address the underlying issues of conflict openly. All actors should be willing to realize the importance of including women in the peace building efforts and incorporating in all their structures the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1325). For the first time the role of women in conflict is recognized-not as victims but as actors in the prevention and resolution of conflict and in equal participation in peace building and decision-making.[11]

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In essence, the conflict in Mount Elgon has always revolved on land ownership, although the gender dimension and inequalities are exacerbated during periods of armed conflicts and continue during post conflict.[12] The existence of disputable land and issues of unequal access and distribution of resources is the catalyst to the conflict. Additionally, the history of violence in the Mount Elgon, politics and limited local economic prospects complicate the situation further. Generally, the ever presence of multiple grievances has continuously contributed to the geographic reach and duration of the conflict.[13] This conflict has mostly affected the women and children more than any other group, where attacks have always left them deeply scared by the violence witnessed and the sexual assaults committed. To mitigate the conflict, the government sent the defence forces and administration police in March, 2008 after the rise of a militia group

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[11] Nasongo, B.M., & Muola, J.M. (2011). The Effect of Inter-tribal Post-Election Violence Conflict Trauma on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Mt. Elgon District, Kenya. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal, 5* (6), 249-248.

[12] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: *The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. Journal l46* (4), 606

[13] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.

called Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF) to restore peace in Mt. Elgon between the warring clans.[14]

However, it was not long after the deployment of the defence forces that the violent incidents against women and children started picking up once more. There was an increase in numbers of pregnancies and higher levels of contraction of HIV/AIDS and other STDs especially among the women.[15] Similarly, the military invasion led to accusations of human rights abuses and undermined the confidence of the local population. Aggressive militia responses and use of force to settle the conflict created even more female-headed households, deteriorating further the position of women in the area. Conflicts within the district of Mount Elgon resulted in IDPs, the majority of which were women and children. Families were separated and women who were intermarried with other tribes were affected. Mothers saw their children taken into custody never to return.[16] The conflict also led to an estimated 613 people killed either by the SLDF or during the encounter between the government forces and the militia group where 118 people were abducted, 33 maimed with 23 documented missing without trace.[17]

Peace building within the region has been an ongoing process where many actors have combined their efforts towards sustainable peace in Mount Elgon. These efforts have helped in restoring order in the region; still more needs to be done to realize sustainable peace in Mount Elgon. Peace efforts have been rocked by challenges which have been hampering the peace building and women's empowerment process in the region. Some of the challenges include: lack of sufficient

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[14] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.

[15] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.

[16] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.

[17] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: *The Case of Land Based Conflict in The Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*. Journal, Volume 46 Issue 4 .pp 606

financial resources to deal with the underlying causes of violence as well as reach to all the affected areas; political interference; leaders who are objecting to women's empowerment and the peace building processes; historical and more recent land disputes.[18]

Although several studies have been conducted exploring the effect of the conflict on women and children (Kimkung, 2012; Lawrence, 2008; Simiyu, 2008), most of these studies chiefly focused on the short term effects. This study aims at bridging this academic gap by highlighting the long term effects of Mount Elgon conflict.

1.3 Research Questions

The research questions were:

1. Which are the gendered effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012)?

2. What is the effect of the military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012)?

3. Which are the key strategies for resolving the future conflicts on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012)?

1.4 General Objective

The objective of the study is to establish the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012).

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[18] Kyril, K. (2012). Achievements, Challenges and Opportunities for Women in the Conflict Zones of Kenya's Uasin Gishu, Trans Nzoia & Mount Elgon: *A Dissection of the UN SCR 1325 & Kenya's New Constitution.*

1.5 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives were:

1. To identify the gendered effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012).

2. To assess the effect of the military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012).

3. To identify the key strategies for resolving the future conflicts on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012).

1.6 Literature Review

1.6.1 Gendered effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region

In every society, war and conflict are common features that characterize their existence and heritage. Whether the conflict is within the society itself or between the society and its neighbours, disputes are not strange occurrences. Men are generally the warriors, protectors and key defenders in most battles. Manliness is usually viewed as the unwillingness to shy away from danger and womanliness as that which is 'vulnerable to danger' and requiring protection. In most cases, women are often perceived as victims and not actors in conflict as they are often viewed as peaceful and less prone to warlike tendencies like the men.[19]

However, nowadays, women are no longer observers in war and they play varied roles in many conflicts. Women participate directly and indirectly in war through bearing arms and sheltering combatants. As such, women are combatants in most wars as denoted from historical events where women were direct participants. For example, the biblical analogies are full of women like

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[19] Nasongo, B.M., & Muola, J.M. (2011). The Effect of Inter-tribal Post-Election Violence Conflict Trauma on Academic Performance among Secondary School Students in Mt. Elgon District, Kenya. *An International Multidisciplinary Journal, 5* (6), 249-248.

Deborah who led the Israelites into battle against the Canaanites, Joan of Arc, fought to free France from British rule during the Renaissance period, the Tigrayan women took up arms in the struggle for the liberation of Eritrea from the Ethiopian government in the 1980s.[20]

In Mt. Elgon, land represents one of the most important heritage and a source of livelihood especially since majority of the population are agriculturalists, it is thus vital for their very survival. The population of Mt. Elgon comprises of a large portion of women, just like any normal population of people. The eviction of people in Phase III was characterized by suffering especially among the women population in Mt. Elgon. The women petitioned their men to petition the government for land which resulted in Phase III. The women bore the brunt of the eviction with disastrous results. This led to the Soy women to fully support their men directly by taking up the arms against the government.

As the women participated in the armed struggle that almost lasted for five years, they bore some of the disastrous consequences that wreaked havoc on their lives, disrupted their social and economic life. Most of the women had their families separated as their husbands and sons went to war leaving the women in abject poverty and unable to provide the basic needs to the families. The war disrupted the entire economic activities like farming that was very vital for the survival of the families leading to abject poverty and the eventual disillusionment and resentment of whole conflict situation. The women thus henceforth participated in the war in two manners; there were those who supported the SLDF and those who worked against it. Those who

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[20] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The Case of Land Based Conflict in The Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. *Journal of Conflict Management*. 46 (4), 606

supported the war campaign were those who feared of losing their land and were mostly the Soy women.[21]

Women supported the war campaign through incitement and encouragement of the combatants, just in the traditional days where women used to participate in singing war songs to encourage the warriors. Similarly, the Soy women with fear of losing their land rallied in support of the war and encouraged their sons and husbands to fight for their land. This was the birth of the SLDF, a militia aiming at defending their land from external occupation.[22]

In March 2008, the Kenya defence forces intervened and the Soy and Mosop women who were against the war acted as informants against the SLDF. They assisted the KDF through identification of SLDF militia members and revealing their hiding places. To these women, this war had taken a toll on the economic and social settings and was mostly harming rather than benefiting them. At this point, women from both communities were tired of a war which according to them had done more harm than good. To assists in the effort to restore peace and harmony back in society; these women assisted the KDF to capture the members of the SLDF.[23]

1.6.2 Effect of the military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon region

The effects of the war and the intervention by the KDF may be grouped as social, economic and political. In this war campaign, an estimated 600 people were killed; many cases of sexual violence including rape, torture and assault were reported. Additionally, around 600 men were reportedly castrated. violence accompanied by destruction of property, burning of houses and

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[21] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The Case of Land Based Conflict in The Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. *Journal of Conflict Management*. 46 (4), 606

[22] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.
[23] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. *Journal of Conflict Management*. 46 (4), 606

looting led to massive displacement of people was witnessed leading to many IDP camps), there was widespread violence and destruction of property. Cases were documented of threats to the IDPs from the SLDF militia.[24] There was massive disruption of agricultural and most of the economic activities of the people of Mt. Elgon as witnessed by skyrocketing prices of essential goods in the market. Cases of insecurity were rampant creating shortage of food to the local population which resulted in dependency on aid from relief agencies. Basic infrastructure like road was closed down affecting the delivery of essential services like hospitals, transport system and schools.[25]

The conflict in Mt. Elgon led to displacement of children. A number of cases were documented where youths between 9-19 years were kidnapped from school and forcefully made to kill family members to 'harden' their feelings. The youth were killing own community members indiscriminately. The old people were not spared in this conflict especially after being abandoned by fleeing family members. Few of the old people suffered death as a result of neglect (KNCHR, 2008).[26]

Sexual violence during war is witnessed where the men assume that they no longer possess the ability to protect and defend their women from the enemy. The men retaliate through exercising violent control over women at home.[27] The gendered formation of soldiers during war times rests on particular ideas of manhood. Soldiers then represent domination of the enemy in a gendered way, leading to use of specifically sexual violence not only against the enemy women, but also men who are dominated through male rape and castration. This is witnessed from the global

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[24] Simiyu, R. (2008). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The Case of Land Based Conflict in The Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. *Journal, 46* (4): 606.
[25] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.
[26] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.
[27] Wakabi, W.2008. Sexual Violence increasing in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *The Lancet, 371* (9606), 15-16

conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Peru and Rwanda where girls and women were singled out for rape, imprisonment, torture and execution. Rape is one of the most common and systematic form of torture and the most intrusive traumatic events in many armed conflicts including those in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Cyprus, Haiti, Liberia, Somalia and Uganda. Systematic rape is used as a war weapon in many conflicts.

The SLDF also kidnapped young girls and women to keep them as wives (sex slaves) and also to cook for them among other duties. Young school boys were forcefully recruited into outfit and were forced to kill their own kinsmen as a proof of their loyalty. Adult males and females who resisted had their ears or lips chopped off.[28]

1.6.2 Key Strategies for Resolving the Future Conflicts on Women and Children in Mount Elgon Region

Though men are basically the soldiers and aggressors in war times, women are usually the contributors of the largest number of civilian casualties. It is generally believed and accepted that during conflicts, women are usually left at home to support, nurse and provide other services to the family, while men go out to fight. However, it is generally documented that women's pay the consequences of war through their bodies which become under attack as a retaliation mechanism to intimidate the enemy and destroy or damage male honor, purity of lineage, kinship structures and ethnic identities. It is notable that the gendered impacts of armed conflict affect men, women and children differently.[29]

In order to understand how conflict affects women and children, it is important to gain knowledge on gender dimensions of conflict as a way to mitigate future occurrences of

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[28] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.
[29] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. *Journal of Conflict Management*. 46 (4), 606

conflicts.[30] There is need of creation of policies and programs emphasizing on the promotion of equitable gender roles and creation of the ability of the local community to mitigate disputes thus minimizing the need for military interventions on local conflicts. The local community should be empowered to streamline its ability for negotiations and peace building processes.[31]

There is need for an inclusive land resettlement programs for the Chebyuk settlement scheme with the Government and other key stakeholders ensuring that the already initiated resettlement program are properly supported to prevent future incidences of conflict. The government and other stakeholders should continuously monitor the situation in the resettlement schemes addressing any emerging grievances, fairly and equitably resettling any landless people, accounting for the existing historical injustices among other mitigation measures.

Although forest conservation is critical for environmental sustainability, sustainable livelihood is paramount to guaranteed security and peaceful co-existence. Therefore, the Government should hive off part of the forest in Mount Elgon to resettle the landless who should receive title deeds as a confirmation of ownership. Interventions should account for the diverse realities of women and men, since all may play different roles after the conflict, including perpetrators and victims. Intervention programs should take into account considerations of gender issues that exacerbate gender inequality; for instance in the disarmament demobilization of the militia groups if administered in gender blind ways it can exacerbate the existing inequalities.

Since women are the main victims of war either directly as fatalities and casualties or indirectly through breakdown of family and community structures, there is a need to mainstream gender

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[30] Theisen, D. (2009) .Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The case of Land based conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya. *Journal of Peace Research, 46* (4), 606-606.
[31] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.

awareness into the structures that govern armed conflict. One way is by involving women's organization at the decision making level in the formation of political and legal structures. At the same time, the Government should create conditions necessary for diversification of the economy instead of sole reliance on land. Alternative means of livelihood and youth employment will ensure that youths are not idle and therefore will not be easy targets for recruitment by the militia.

1.7 Research Gaps

Women and children throughout the world continuously bear the consequences in conflicts. In Kenya, the suffering of women and children at the hands of the SLDF attest to this reality. Although several studies have been conducted exploring the effect of the conflict on women and children in Mt. Elgon (Kimkung, 2012; Lawrence, 2008; Simiyu, 2008), most of these studies chiefly focused on the short term effects and did not fully focus on the effects on women and children. This study aimed at bridging this academic gap by highlighting the long term effects on women and children of Mount Elgon conflict.

1.8 Hypotheses of the Study

H01: Gendered effects have no significant effect on ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region.

H02: Military interventions have no significant effect on women and children in Mount Elgon region.

H03: Strategies for resolving conflict has no significant effect on the future conflicts on women and children in Mount Elgon region.

1.9 Justification of the Study

The government of Kenya

The study was significant to the governments of Kenya in highlighting the need for permanent and sustainable peace building process within Mount Elgon region. This went far in guaranteeing permanent resolution of the conflict leading to civil development in the region.

Security organs

The findings of the study informed the heads of security organs in Mount Elgon and Kenya at large on the need to change the tactics of dealing with future conflicts to reduce the suffering levels of the targeted population.

Future scholars

The study created a bases for future scholars to extend the scholarly discourse on the issue of conflict in Mount Elgon with further future research.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that ethnic conflict in Mt. Elgon has effects on women and children. The study also assumed that the respondents will freely and honestly cooperate in provision of information that the study sought.

1.11 Scope of the study

This study focused on the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012). Both desktop and books reviews were used in collection of information about the study area. The study covered the period 2008-2012.

1.12 Limitations of the study

The study was limited by non-authentication of the full information used from journals and such articles. However the researcher assured the authenticity through referencing and citing the sources of information obtained appropriately.

1.13 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical approach laying the foundation of the study the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region is the Conflict Theory.

1.13.1 Conflict Theory

Conflict is endemic in society and it is therefore important to learn how to manage it properly since it has been conceptualized by World Bank (2005) as "development in reverse." The analysis of conflict in this study is done according to local constructions of ethnic conflicts and the implication on women and children. This aims at reducing or brings to an end the endemic ethnic conflicts. With that perspective in mind, the researcher based the study on conflict theories. Burton[32] has explored the link between inter group conflict and the realm of basic human needs, identity, recognition, and survival. He argues that conflict is deeply rooted in unmet or inadequately fulfilled basic human needs of the parties and their individual members.

According to Azar[33], protracted social conflicts represents prolonged and often violent struggle by communal groups for basic needs such as security, recognition, acceptance, fair access to political institutions and economic participation. In Mt. Elgon, the region has been prone to armed conflict due to prolonged struggle for land. He stresses that many multi-ethnic society states emerge which are dominated by a single communal group. This group (or a coalition of

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[32] Burton,]. (1990). Conflict. *Human Needs Theory.* Macmillan: London.
[33] Azar, E. (1990). *The Management of Protracted Social Conflict: Theory and Cases.* Aldershot: Dortmouth.

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groups) ignores the needs of other communal groups thereby breeding exasperation and polarization. Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNCHR)[34] points out that internal conflict build around identity groups living in close proximity. They often erupt as expressions of accumulated pain with marked emotional and psychological patterns of institutionalized hatred and division. The conflicts are characterized by deep-rooted intense animosity, fear and severe stereotyping.

[35]KNCHR further states that conflict in Mt Elgon caused division among groups based on fear of survival, victimization, divisive political rhetoric, myths of differences and boundaries. An "us" versus 'them' dichotomy develops along ethnic lines. These dynamics, driven by real life experiences and subjective perspectives and emotions, render national and mechanical processes and solutions aimed at conflict transformation not only ineffective but also irrelevant and offensive. The theory is relevant to the study because politics, competition for resources, ethnic rivalries and unfulfilled needs are some of the root causes of ethnic conflicts in Mount Elgon in Kenya resulting in suffering of women and children.

1.14 Methodology of the Research

This study applied the ex-post facto design which involves studying the relationship between variables that cannot be manipulated by the researcher because their manifestation has already occurred.[36] The study endevoured to investigate the effect of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region in 2008-2012.

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[34] KNCHR, (2012). *On the Brink of Precipice:* A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post 2007 Election Violence. Accessed 2nd July at http://www.kncgr.orgdmdocuments knchr

[35] KNCHR, (2012). *On the Brink of Precipice:* A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post 2007 Election Violence. Accessed 2nd July at http://www.kncgr.orgdmdocuments knchr

[36] Franknel, J. & Wallen, N. (2000). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (4th Ed.) New York: McGraw Hill.

1.15 Research Design

This study used an exploratory research design. This type of research design is undertaken to inquire where the aims of the research are to find out the extent of a given situation, problem, or behavior. The intention of using this design was to ensure that issues related to establish the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region are fully analyzed and interpreted. The research design was based on both qualitative and quantitative data.

1.16 Population of the study

A population is the larger group from which the sample of the study population is collected.[37] The population in this study was the community members from Mt. Elgon region who have had a first-hand effect of the ethnic conflicts. The target population comprised of members of the community leaving in Mt. Elgon region and who were affected by the SLDF versus the Kenya army conflict.

1.17 Data Collection
The study used secondary sources for analysis of its data.

1.17.1 Secondary Sources

Secondary data was obtained from published works and researches on ethnic conflict on women and children, articles and reports on effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Kenya and beyond.

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[37] Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2009). *Research methods for business, a skill building approach* (5th Edit). Chichester, West Sussex, John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

1.17.2 Data Analysis

The study used qualitative data analysis methods to analyze the responses of the respondents. Content analysis was conducted due to the fact that the study involved generating respondents' views on the problem. The method was not limiting acquisition of information hence it was suitable for the study

1.18 Chapter Outline

Chapter one introduces the topic of our research study, by first setting the broad context of our research study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, literature review, hypotheses, justification, theoretical framework, and the methodology of the study. Chapter two provides the background on the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Africa. Chapter three discusses the ethnic conflicts on women and children in in Mt. Elgon. Chapter four analyzes the data collected in the previous chapter in the light of the hypotheses and theoretical framework already stated. Chapter five discusses the findings of the data analyzed conclusions and recommendations and provide suggestions on areas for further study.

1.19 Chapter Summary

The chapter reviewed literature on the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon. The literature has advanced the interpretation and analysis of key issues leading to ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon. Thereafter, the study gap has need identified.

CHAPTER TWO

CAUSES OF ETHNIC CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter establishes the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region through three broad categories. These are literature on causes of ethnic conflicts, role of gender in ethnic conflict and conflicts on women and children.

2.2 Causes of Ethnic Conflicts

The root cause of the ethnic conflict ranges from the existence of disputable land and issues of unequal access and distribution of resources. The existence of these factors together with a history of violence, socio-economic factors, politics, cultural conflicts and limited local economic prospects complicate the situation of ethnic conflicts. Ethnic conflicts affect the entire population though their effects on women and the children is more than in any other group.[38]

Issues of ethnic conflicts in Africa have been expounded by many scholars with some explaining it in terms of Africa's pre-colonial history. Eboe asserted that ethnic violence has been a permanent aspect of the African history. He attributes the occurrence of such conflicts to the essence related to compulsory recruitment of labour in the endevour to build the great empires in Africa like Songhai, Mwene Mutapa, Meroe, Aksum, Egyptian pyramids, Ghana and Mali.[39]

Rodney (2009) viewed the ethnic conflicts in Africa as resulting from colonialism. He suggested that the aspect of colonial manipulation caused the re-definition of the boundaries of the conquered pre-colonial ethnic groups leading to the polarization of the affected population along ethnic lines. The consequence was the arousing of ethnic consciousness leading to ethnic

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[38] Kimkung, R. (2012). Militarization of Resources Conflicts: *The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*. *Journal l46* (4), 606
[39] Eboe Hutchful (2009). *Security, Law and Order*. Dakar: Codesria.

conflicts. He is against the ethnic boundaries drawn by the colonialists in the 19th and 20th century that were aimed at facilitating European control and imperialism with little regard for the difference and animosity that existed among the ethnic groups.

Mugambi highlighted the fact that all the African countries are ethnically pluralistic except Lesotho and Swaziland which are ethnically homogenous.[40] This is due to the fact that the national borders drawn by the colonialists were arbitrary and cut across diverse ethnic groups recklessly. Adedeji suggests that majority of the colonial designed countries are nothing more than mere geographical expressions.[41] These studies however fail to integrate the gender dimension of ethnic conflicts which forms the interest of this study.

Scholars such as Mamdani and Bayart) studied on the ethnic conflicts in Africa specifically on the crisis of the post-colonial African states. He argued that the contexts of the post-colonial era ethnic conflicts resulted from the privatization of public authority as well as inability to cultivate the sense of patriotism between the ruling regime and the people being governed.[42] He equates power sharing as central to ethnic conflicts since the parties excluded from such deals feels excluded resulting into ethnic conflicts to fight against the exclusion. Bayart further intimates that ethnicity in contemporary African states exist as a tool for amassing wealth and political power. To him ethnicity and ethnic conflict is a consequence of criminalization of state and state power.[43]

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[40] Mugambi J.N.K., (2010). Principles and Traditions of Peace-making in Africa in Mary Getu and Wasye Musyoni *Overcoming Violence: A Faith Based Response*. Nairobi: NCCK. P. 1-15.

[41] Adedeji A. (2005). Comprehending African Conflicts, in Adebayo Adedeji (ed.) *Comprehending and Mastering Africa Conflicts* London: Zed Books.

[42] Mamdani, M. (2008). „Making Sense of Political Violence in Postcolonial Africa" *Identity, Culture and Politics Vol. 3, No, 2. Pp.1-50.*

[43] Bayart, J.F. (2007). *The State in Africa: The Politics of the Belly*. New York: Longman.

On the other hand, ethnic is a result of contest over scarce resources amongst members of unequal ethnic communities. The study heap the blame of ethnic conflict on the existing state actors and policies which exacerbate the feeling of economic, political and social inequalities among ethnic communities. Whenever one ethnic group mobilizes its resources in the endevour to access state power and resources, the emotive feelings of ethnic consciousness is heightened amongst competing groups leading the possibility of ethnic conflicts.[44]

Earlier scholars like Goldschmidt had linked ethnic conflict with the traditional forms of ethnic conflicts and rites of passage that formed the fabric of communal power ladder.[45] Additionally, Vlassenroot had intimated that initiation rites were crucial to the initial conversion of *Mayi-Mayi* militias- an ethnic Tutsi living in South Kivu province in Eastern Congo, into a protector of the community.[46] Adedeji on a similar argument had intimated that the manipulation and intervention of the African community's internal affairs by the great powers has greatly contributed to the emergence of ethnic conflicts in Yugoslavia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia, Rwanda and in Burundi.[47]

Callahan had also referred to the case of external aggression into the affairs of local communities from the case of the intervention of Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi in the overthrow of Mobutu regime that eventually led to ethnic conflict in DRC. He has also noted the botched intervention

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[44] Anyang'N.P. (2005). *Arms and Daggers in the Heart of Africa Studies on Internal Conflicts.* Nairobi: Nairobi Academy Science Publishers.
[45] Goldschmidt, W. (1976). *Culture and Behaviour of the Sebei: A Study in Continuity and Adaptation*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
[46] Vlassenroot, K. (2009). A Societal View on Violence and War Conflict & Militia Formation in Eastern Congo in Preben Kaarsolm (ed.) (2006) *Violence, Political Culture & Development in Africa.* Oxford: James Currey p.49 -65 p.
[47] Adedeji A. (2005). Comprehending African Conflicts" in Adebayo Adedeji (ed.) *Comprehending and Mastering Africa Conflicts* London: Zed Books.

and halting of a rebellion by Angola, Zimbabwe, Central African Republic and Chad in support of the DRC government.[48]

Adedeji further equates ethnic conflicts as a consequence of violent reactions of communities resulting from denial of basic rights by the ruling class. These are lack of democracy, denial of basic human rights and total disregard of the sovereignty, lack of empowerment and accountability, bad governance and contest for scarce resources. He despises the argument that ethnicity and tribalism are the cause of intrastate conflicts.[49]

Yengo on the other hand, categorized the causes of conflicts into two: domestic (ideology, personality, internal power struggles and mistreatment of ethnic minorities), and external (decolonization, territorial disputes, external interference and refugee problems).[50] He disagrees with the observation that all internal conflicts in Africa could be labeled ethnic in character citing cases of class conflicts, caste, occupational conflicts, regional antagonisms, just to mention a few. The gist of his argument is that all forms of identity exist ranging from class, nationality, religious, occupational, regional and linguistic groups. Still, he argues that ethnicity is a dynamic concept that may possess both an ethnic and class character. In fact, he postulates on the possibility of class and ethnic conflicts being simultaneously waged.[51]

2.3 The Role of Gender in Ethnic Conflicts

The gendered relations are characterized by unequal access to resources and power. Gender analysis in armed conflict highlights the difference between women and men in terms of their gendered roles and activities, their needs, their power and control of resources and their access to

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[48] Callahan, D. (2008). *Unwinnable Wars: American Power and Ethnic Conflict*. New York: Hill and Wang.
[49] Adedeji A. (2005). Comprehending African Conflicts" in Adebayo Adedeji (ed.) *Comprehending and Mastering Africa Conflicts* London: Zed Books.
[50] Yengo, P. (2009). Globalization, New War Order and Perpetuation of Conflicts in Africa. *Codesria Nos. 3& 4 Pp. 49-59.*
[51] El-Bushra, J. (2012). Gender and Forced Migration: Editorial', Forced Migration Review, No 9220

decision making processes even in post conflict situations (UNDP 2013). Women still suffer discriminations even in the absence of conflict especially in regard to resource allocation. Men too who have no financial means to own land are equally unjustly treated. These tensions are exacerbated in times of conflict.[52]

During this period, women are forcefully mobilized to participate for instance when they provide services like cooking, cleaning and sex to the militia. Because of the social construction of their identities and gendered roles as mothers and guardians of culture women are perceived to be weak and need protection. This protection has failed in many instances as is in the case of Mount Elgon where the military was accused of sexually abusing women while on a peace keeping mission. Even in situations where women are seen as aggressors and active combatants or in direct support of the armed conflict, they still experience discrimination due to the unequal power structures that govern their relationships with men. Men too are forcefully recruitment into the army by the rebels and many times are forced to kill their own relatives.[53]

Scholars such as Jalloh and Corrin observed that in terms of biology, one is either man or woman corresponding to one's sex but a whole set of gender expectations are mapped onto this primary sex distinction.[54] Therefore, gender is an analytical category to draw a line of demarcation between biological sex differences and the way these are used to inform behaviors and competences which are assigned as either masculine or feminine.[55]

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[52] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.
[53] Wachira, K., Muluka, B., & Wepundi, M. (2010). *Mt. Elgon conflict: a rapid assessment of the underpinning socio-economic, governance and security factors*. UNDP, Nairobi, Kenya.
[54] Jalloh, S. (2011). Conflicts, Resources and Social Instability in Sub Sahara Africa: The Sierra Leone Case in Internationasles Afrikaforum, 37. Jg Germany, Pages 166-180.
[55] Corrin, C. (2010). *Gender Audit of Reconstruction Programmes in South Eastern Europe*, Fairfax and New York: Urgent Action Fund and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.

Studies have shown that most forms of oppression, marginalization and violence originate from the way African societies are themselves socially, economically, and politically organized. For example, Yengo underscores the fact that the presentation of ethnic homogeneity, and the presupposition that roles ascribed to men and women within ethnic groups is acknowledged and unproblematic may not be the case.[56] Gordon showed that the domination of women operates through the collusion of ethnic groups and kinships.[57] Ethnic groups evoke customs and traditions in order to preserve the domination of one gender over the other.

Ferris points out that male dominance and patriarchy engenders a culture of violence in which women and children are victims. This is because men exercise some kind of monopoly of the means of violence and are equipped by their physical nature and psychology to be aggressive while women are less prone to violence because they are inherently prepared for motherhood (reproduction and nurturing roles) thus requiring protection. However, she also notes that scholars have used the Uganda and Ethiopia experiences to debunk the myth that women are by nature incapable for war or less cruel.[58]

Gendered inequalities are exacerbated during periods of armed conflict and continue even during post conflict reconstruction. Both women and men suffer war, abuses and traumas as well as disruption of their lives and loss of resources. The impact of these losses is experienced in different ways and are often disproportionate, reflecting gender inequalities Although war is fought among groups with dissenting views, it is obvious that it has no limits in what is done to

[56] Yengo P. (2009). Globalization, „New War Order and Perpetuation of Conflicts in Africa. *Codesria Nos. 3& 4 Pp. 49-59.*
[57] Gordon April (2006). *Transforming Capitalism Gender and Development in Africa* Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
[58] Ferris, E., (2012). *Women, War and Peace,* Research Report No. 14, Life and Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden.

undermine or destroy the "enemy" and in this contexts, the rights of women, children and other vulnerable groups are grossly violated.[59]

2.4 Conflicts on Women and Children

Systematic forms of human rights violations, mental, physical, emotional and other forms of widespread harassment are some of the challenges that women and children encounter during armed conflicts. Women are illegally detained, forcefully removed from homes and families, subjected into forced disappearances, raped, forcefully married, tortured, amputated and mutilated, forced recruitment into fighting forces and groups, slavery, increased exposure to HIV/AIDS, enforced pregnancy, forced prostitution among many other violations. According to Jalloh, the violations experienced by girls and young women subjected to forced marriages are often severe and long-lasting and encompass a number of psychological, emotional, physical, social, economic and cultural elements.[60]

Women are made to child-bearing and the raising of children born of rape in societies where those children are often rejected and physically abused including the withholding of food and medicines by extended family members and community members. These young mothers report that because they are often cut out of family and social networks, they struggle to provide education, food and health care to their children born due to forced marriage.[61] Many of these young mothers have lost many years of education and lack the skills needed to pursue productive livelihoods, which are exacerbated due to the stigma they face from their past experiences and their exclusion from social networks. Ferris argues that the violence and harms suffered by

[59] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.
[60] Jalloh, S. (2011). Conflicts, Resources and Social Instability in Sub Sahara Africa: The Sierra Leone Case in Internationasles Afrikaforum, 37. Jg Germany, Pages 166-180.
[61] El-Bushra, J. (2012). Gender and Forced Migration: Editorial', Forced Migration Review, No 9220

women and children in contexts of armed conflict and political repression are many and are often interlinked.[62]

The links create destructive synergies of loss and suffering: violence inflicted on women harms women; some harms expose women to further violence and additional harms; and serious, even life-altering or life-threatening harms result from forms and violence and repression in which women are not the primary targets of conflict yet are decisively affected by it.[63] The specific experience of women and children in armed conflicts greatly depends upon their status in societies before armed conflict breaks out. This is not to suggest a simple continuum of violence, in which the gendered and structural violence of everyday life is somehow only more magnified during armed conflict.[64]

According to Kavuma where cultures of violence and discrimination against women and children exist prior to conflict, they are likely to be exacerbated during conflict. Similarly, if women are not allowed to partake in the decision-making structures of a society before conflict, it is usually difficult for them to become involved in decisions around the conflict itself or the peace process and transitional period. Thus, gender relations as intersected and shaped by ethnicity, class, caste, and age in pre-conflict situations often set the stage for women's, girls', men's, and boys' experiences and options during armed conflict.[65] The studies on the effect of armed conflict were traditionally tended to incorporate women in the general category of civilians and have hence failed to highlight the different ways in which men and women experience armed conflict.

[62] Ferris, E., (2012). *Women, War and Peace,* Research Report No. 14, Life and Peace Institute, Uppsala, Sweden.
[63] Alexandra, S. (2012). Mass Rape: The War against Women in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press.
[64] Corrin, C. (2010). *Gender Audit of Reconstruction Programmes in South Eastern Europe*, Fairfax and New York: Urgent Action Fund and the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children.
[65] Jeannie, H. (2011). Civil War, Reintegration, and Gender in Northern Uganda. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*,000(00), 1-32. oi:10.1177/0022002711408013

ETHNIC CONFLICT IN MOUNT ELGON

3.1 History and Causes of Ethnic Conflicts in Mount Elgon

The former Mt. Elgon district is currently located in Kenya at the border to Uganda in what is now Bungoma County. At the time of the conflict in 2008-2012, it had a population of around 170 000, of which 56% fell below the poverty line.[66] Mt. Elgon experienced several rounds of violence, first when Kenya gained independence in 1963, then at the return to multi-party politics in 1991, and, more recently, from 2006 to 2008.[67] In the first two episodes of violence, the Sabaot ethnic tribe, belonging to the larger Kalenjin tribe, fought the Luhya ethnic tribe.

However, in the 2008-2012 episode of violence, Sabaot language speakers fought against other Sabaot language speakers as the Soy sub-group of the Sabaot fought the Mosop sub-group (also called the Ndorobo).[68] The roots of the 2008-2012 clashes lie in controversies around a government resettlement scheme, with the conflict arising about the question of how land would be distributed among the people from the Mosop and people from the Soy.[69] This process was started already 1970s when the government started to relocate the Mosop in order to protect the region they came from, the Moorland, which constitutes a precious water catchment area higher up on Mount Elgon. Until 2006, three big resettlement plans were initiated in three different areas (Chebyuk Phases I, II and III). Problems arose in all three resettlement phases that the

[66] UNDP. (2010). *The Mt. Elgon Conflict: A Rapid Assessment of the underpinning socio-economic governance and security factors*. Nairobi, Kenya.

[67] Lynch, G. (2011). The Wars of Who Belongs Where: The Unstable Politics of Autochthony on Kenya's Mt Elgon. *Ethnopolitics*, *10*(3-4), 391–410. http://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.596671

[68] Lynch, G. (2011). The Wars of Who Belongs Where: The Unstable Politics of Autochthony on Kenya's Mt Elgon. *Ethnopolitics*, *10*(3-4), 391–410. http://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.596671

[69] Kanyinga, K. (2009b). The legacy of the white highlands: Land rights, ethnicity and the post-2007 election violence in Kenya. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *27*(3), 325–344. http://doi.org/10.1080/02589000903154834

government initiated.[70]

Allegations of nepotism and corruption arose as for who would be the beneficiaries of land distributed by the government. The Mosop were the main target of the resettlement program. However, members of the Soy community claimed that they were from the same community, and even more numerous and therefore deserved more plots, especially given that many already had settled on the land in Chebyuk III that was to be redistributed anew.[71] Many had been living in the area of Chebyuk III for decades as squatters or had been born there and had developed a sense of ownership to the area.[72] A massive increase in population numbers made it even more difficult to resettle people as originally planned. Of 7500 applicants for phase III only 1753 were on the list of beneficiaries published in April 2006, half of them from the Soy and half from the Mosop. The unsuccessful applicants that had been settling in the Chebyuk III area were evicted in 2006.[73]

The SLDF was formed with conscripts from the people who were evicted from the land for resettlement in Chebyuk phase III. The SLDF's stated aim was to defend the interests of the lowland Sabaot against the Mosop and 'resist government attempts to evict squatters in the Chebyuk areas of Mt Elgon District'.[74] It had transformed from a small militia calling named "Janjaweed" and grew quickly to a massive militia in possession of heavy arms.[75]

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[70] Von Uexkull, N., & Pettersson, T. (2013). What they are fighting for: Conflict Issues in African Non-state Armed Conflicts 1989-2011. In *Paper presented at the Meeting of the European Network of Conflict Research (EnCoRe), 24-26 April*. Amsterdam.
[71] Von Uexkull, N., & Pettersson, T. (2013). What they are fighting for: Conflict Issues in African Non-state Armed Conflicts 1989-2011. In *Paper presented at the Meeting of the European Network of Conflict Research (EnCoRe), 24-26 April*. Amsterdam.
[72] Lynch, G. (2011). The Wars of Who Belongs Where: The Unstable Politics of Autochthony on Kenya's Mt Elgon. *Ethnopolitics*, *10*(3-4), 391–410. http://doi.org/10.1080/17449057.2011.596671
[73] TJRC. (2013). *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission* (Vol. 3). Nairobi, Kenya.

There was an important political dimension in this dispute, as given the lack of land titles to those settling in the Chebyuk area, politicians exploited the situation. One candidate in the 2007 election to the parliament, Fred Kapondi, allegedly promised the SLDF support in the land question if he got elected. Many pointed Kapondi out to be crucial for inciting the group and for making the conflict violent.[76]

The following violence can be described in three dimensions. First of all, the SLDF turned against the Mosop in the Chepyuk settlement areas, displaced most, and fought a low level communal conflict with those staying and defending their land. The Mosop side allegedly formed the Moorland Defence Force (MDF) in response.[4] Fighting resulted in 20 killed in total on the Mosop side.

The second type of violence occurred later and came to be the dominant form, when the SLDF had grown considerably and targeted civilians (mostly from the Soy) for supplying the group with food and money and assuring collaboration.[77] Over time the group built up a system of extortion, forcing people to pay tax for the supply of the own troops and enrichment of their leaders.[78] The final dimension was fighting against government security forces. In the beginning of the SLDF activity the police was totally overpowered. However, in March 2008, the KDF intervened and crushed the group.

The operation by the KDF resulted in the death of SLDF leader Matakwei in May 2008 and the imprisonment of other high-ranking SLDF commanders.[79] After the end of the conflict the

[76] Kanyinga, K. (2009b). The legacy of the white highlands: Land rights, ethnicity and the post-2007 election violence in Kenya. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, *27*(3), 325–344. http://doi.org/10.1080/02589000903154834
[77] Von Uexkull, N., & Pettersson, T. (2013). What they are fighting for: Conflict Issues in African Non-state Armed Conflicts 1989-2011. In *Paper presented at the Meeting of the European Network of Conflict Research (EnCoRe), 24-26 April*. Amsterdam.
[78] Human Rights Watch, (2012). *All the men have gone. War Crimes in Kenya's Mt. Elgon Conflict.* Human Rights Watch.
[79] HRW. (2012). *All the men have gone. War Crimes in Kenya's Mt. Elgon Conflict.* Human Rights Watch.

government started implementing the settlement of the 2006 list of beneficiaries to the Chebyuk III settlement area. Thus, the conflict did not achieve any change in the settlement policies and the conflict issue was not addressed following the conflict. Former SLDF fighters now rent land, or utilize farming land in the adjacent forest areas tolerated by the Kenyan Forest Department in the so-called Shamba system.[80]

3.2 Effect of the military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon

In March 2008, after the December 2007 election, the KDF was deployed to regain control of Mt.Elgon district, in a joint operation with the police called 'Operation Okoa Maisha' ('Save Lives' in Swahili).[81] In order to understand the negative effects of armed conflict, attention should be paid to the motive behind the atrocities committed and the stigma associated with them. Families that are highly patriachical may experience intense changes during and after conflict. The massive displacement may lead to family disintegration with some members ending up in IDP camps while others are killed in the process. This separation impacts on the family and existing social structures.[82]

New roles may emerge, for instance in Mt.Elgon, women whose husbands were either killed or fled, became heads of household leading to resentment especially from men and extended members of the family that may disrupt the existing social order. Further, the added responsibilities women have in productive, reproductive and community work are often

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[80] Von Uexkull, N., & Pettersson, T. (2013). What they are fighting for: Conflict Issues in African Non-state Armed Conflicts 1989-2011. In *Paper presented at the Meeting of the European Network of Conflict Research (EnCoRe), 24-26 April*. Amsterdam.

[81] Kisiangani, Emmanuel and Noor, Hawa. 2013. *Research Intern, Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis Divisio*. Institute for Security Studies. July.2013. (http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/a-new-solution-that-brings-new-problems-for-somalias-jubaland). Accessed: May.25-2014.

[82] Simiyu, R. R., (2010). *Militarization of Resource Conflicts: The Case of Land-based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*, Pretoria: ISS.

transferred to younger girls and boys within the family.[83] In particular, young girls have to assume more responsibilities such as caring for children, the elderly and the sick, along with managing burdensome work. This shift of responsibility impacts on the welfare and future of female household members.[84]

One effect that is visible in the private or domestic sphere where women are likely to experience increased violence is not only at the hands of occupying or state forces but also by men in the household in the post conflict period. This is exacerbated when the women are rejected thus low production because of reduced labor force.[85] The inability to provide for their families may also exacerbate the frustrations leading to further hostility. Conflict and displacement may lead to increased poverty as a result of the destruction and loss of livelihood. This may heighten tensions among the household members. The raping of women may lead to the breaking up of families since men and communities are not willing to accept a woman who has been raped.[86]

The shunned women may seek refuge elsewhere and engage in prostitution in order to make a living. In Mt.Elgon, women who conceived after being raped were shunned and even those who were accepted had the rape children as constant reminders of their experiences.[87] With the arrival of "rape children" family lineages were disrupted. This drew resentment from extended family members who were not comfortable bring up "the enemy" children in their midst. Girls who

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[83] Boone, C. (2011). Politically allocated land rights and the geography of electoral violence: The case of Kenya in the 1990s. *Comparative Political Studies*, *44*(10), 1311-1342.

[84] Human Rights Watch, (2012). *All the men have gone. War Crimes in Kenya's Mt. Elgon Conflict.* Human Rights Watch.

[85] Khamala, G. (2009). *Gender Dimension of Ethnic Identities and Conflicts in Kenya: The Case of Bukusu and Sabaot Communities.* A Master thesis of Arts in Political Science of Kenyatta University.

[86] Simiyu R. R., (2010). *Militarization of Resource Conflicts: The Case of Land-based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*, Pretoria: ISS.

[87] Anderson, D., & Lochery, E. (2008). Violence and exodus in Kenya's Rift Valley, 2008: predictable and preventable?. *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, *2*(2), 328-343.

were sexually abused could not grow up as normal women, most of them dropped out of school, left home and ended up as prostitutes.[88]

Women who were raped in Mt.Elgon were not able to access health services because the law required that they get a special form known as P3 from the police. It was difficult for these women since the police were sometimes viewed as the perpetrators. At the same time, they could not afford to go to private hospitals which are very expensive. Most of them suffered physical and psychological trauma.[89] Many suffered depression. While sexual rape had obvious health and psychological effects, yet it effected on the family, community and wider society has far reaching consequences. The damage of rape was devastating because of a strong communal reaction to violence and pain stamped on an entire family and culture.[90]

During the Mount Elgon conflict, women were specifically targeted as victims and were subject to rape and sexual assault (KNCHR, 2008; MSF, 2008). Unsupported claims reported that many men in Mt.Elgon will not be able to have children because they were castrated while many women had infections that rendered them infertile thus affected negatively the capacity of the men and women to reproduce and the capacity of their ethnic groups and community to continue.[91] It was a double blow for women after they were raped and get infected with sexually Transmitted diseases. Both the military and the Sabaot Land Defense Force Militia were accused of sexual violence. In Mt.Elgon, rape was reportedly committed by the SLDF. According to

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[88] Kisiangani, E. & Noor, H. (2013). *Research Intern, Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis Divisio*. Institute for Security Studies. July.2013. (http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/a-new-solution-that-brings-new-problems-for-somalias-jubaland). Accessed: May.25-2014.

[89] Kisiangani, Emmanuel and Noor, Hawa. 2013. *Research Intern, Conflict Prevention and Risk Analysis Divisio*. Institute for Security Studies. July.2013. (http://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/a-new-solution-that-brings-new-problems-for-somalias-jubaland). Accessed: May.25-2014.

[90] Human Rights Watch, (2012). *All the men have gone. War Crimes in Kenya's Mt. Elgon Conflict.* Human Rights Watch.

[91] Lynch, G. (2011). The wars of who belongs where: The unstable politics of autochthony on Kenya's Mt Elgon. *Ethno-politics*, *10*(3-4), 391-410.

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reports, rape of men and women including gang rape by SLDF by witnesses account, were routine.[92]

Women were not only subjected to rape but other forms of torture. According to the police spokesperson, the SLDF, while carrying out their atrocities, would cut open a pregnant woman's stomach and spear through the fetus killing it instantly. They would then tell her that they had no intention of allowing an "enemy" to live. There were many cases of women who were raped and ended up contracting sexually transmitted diseases in Mount Elgon.[93]

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[92] Lynch, G. (2011). The wars of who belongs where: The unstable politics of autochthony on Kenya's Mt Elgon. *Ethno-politics*, *10*(3-4), 391-410.
[93] Human Rights Watch, (2012). *All the men have gone. War Crimes in Kenya's Mt. Elgon Conflict.* Human Rights Watch.

CHAPTER FOUR

STRATEGIES FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN MOUNT ELGON REGION

4.1 Introduction

The prolonged ethnic conflict in Mt Elgon which was catapulted by proliferation of inter-clan conflicts finally escalated to the level where the KDF had to be called in to restore peace. The effort of the military had sacrifices and repercussions on both the militia-SLDF and the civilian population. This chapter assesses the strategies and efforts of both the military and humanitarian agencies to restore peace through various peace initiatives. The chapter highlights the strategies of state and non-state actors before and after the military deployment in attempting to restore peace to prevent the continued suffering of women and children.

4.2 Peace Initiatives in Mt. Elgon

The occurrence of violent ethnic conflicts in Mt. Elgon region led to death, displacement and severe disruption of the social and economic lifestyles of the affected people. The aftermath of these conflicts witnessed several peace initiatives organized by several state and non-state actors aiming at pacifying the situation, calming the warring groups and assisting the victims to reorganize their life's and more so prevents the escalation of the ethnic conflicts in the future. To deal directly with the painful effects of the violent ethnic conflict peace initiatives were organized throughout the affected regions of Mt Elgon by government institutions, private groups as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).

The state and non-state actors recognized the fact that the youths were the ones involved directly in the land conflicts that spanned the ethnic conflicts in the entire region. Due to this fact, the

peace initiatives initially targeted the non-violent youth groups and such movements that had been mostly involved in the land conflicts to achieve the much needed reconciliation and peaceful coexistence among all the groups. These efforts mostly focused in the appeal consolidation of a democratic process of dealing with conflicts especially on the warring groups in the region through an informed and direct engagement of the youths.

Local NGOs like the Peace Tree Network (PTN) worked for peace in Mt. Elgon region especially through its youth network. It successfully created training forums for the youths involved in the conflict and the imprisoned youths. Awareness was created on the fact that conflicts were usually instigated by the politicians for their selfish gains but the resulting suffering directly affected the social and economic fabrics of the entire region and especially on the youths, women and children. Rehabilitated youth through the various peace initiatives were trained through the programmes organized by PTN with the mission of continuous efforts of engaging other youths especially those in prisons and the other in the bush fighting alongside the militia. The efforts were aimed at harnessing the need for peace and reconciliation. Football matches with peace and reconciliation tags were organized throughout the region especially along the ranks of the conflicting clans in an effort to harness peaceful coexistence in the region.

After the outbreak of the conflict in Mt. Elgon region, NGOs, especially the local ones started initiatives of sending peace workers to the field to assist in restoring peace among the conflicting clans. The attention was advocacy work specifically with peace efforts aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the youths and youth groups in Mt. Elgon region to actively participate in peace efforts to amicably resolve the conflict. One such group was the Pace Tree Network that aimed at enhancing the capabilities of the youths in resolving conflicts and especially the long standing

land disputes once and for all. However, the efforts were not fully successful since the violence continued in the region.

Other efforts involved the use of civic education to inculcate sufficient and effective skills among the youth, men and women groups with actions formulated and implemented as a way of enhancing unity among the warring groups and ensuring peaceful coexistence. Civic education also had the goal of creating unity among the youths in the region since they were the one targeted by the warlords to escalate the conflict. They were aimed at inculcating a united front among the youth to have the ability to participate non-violently in solving the land issue. One such initiative was undertaken by the Friends Church of Kenya.

4.2.1 Friends Church of Kenya Peace Initiatives in Mt. Elgon

The Friends Church of Kenya or the Quakers is widely spread with a strong presence in Western Kenya region. It has played a crucial role in ensuring peace and reconciliation prevails in Mt. Elgon region. The peace efforts of the Friends Church of Kenya were initially led by American Missionaries led by Daniel and Cathy who arrived in the region in 2007 at the heart of the ethnic conflicts. The missionaries managed to integrate the various peace initiatives spearheaded by the Friends Church and they managed to transverse the region engaging different communities in the peace efforts. They also widely worked with groups that had been facilitated by the church in peace initiatives such as Friends Church Peace Teams or Change Agents for Peace International, the main Quaker peace umbrella.

The Quaker's report on their encounter in Mt. Elgon, noted that the region was the scene of a brutal guerilla conflict for several years. Because of its history of violence, Mt. Elgon was one of the targets for very intensive work by Friends Church Peace Team, including a lot of Healing

and Rebuilding our Communities (HROC) workshops. HROC focused on healing from trauma, and typically brought fighting groups together from opposite sides of a conflict. As the violence escalated into violent chaos, the Friends Church Peace Teams (FCPT) which had been formed by Kenyan Quakers enhanced its periodic visits to IDP camps and assisted in distribution of relief items. The FCPT, in partnership with the African Great Lakes Initiative (AGLI) of Friends Church Peace Teams, visited the camps which housed many Mt. Elgon victims. The programs that AGLI/FCPT conducted since the outbreak of violence in the Mt. Elgon area was intended to help people recover from atrocities and to prevent re-emergence of violence.

The Quaker program adapted to the immediate needs of Mt. Elgon residents. It adopted the approach of alternatives to Violence method. This was done through workshops conducted by AGLI/FCPT that taught participants non-violent means of resolving conflicts. It involved three levels basic, advanced, and training for facilitators. The Alternative to Violence Program (AVP) workshops used the shared experience of participants, interactive exercises, games and role-plays to examine the ways in which people respond to situations where injustice, prejudice, frustration, and anger can lead to aggressive behavior and violence..

The Friends Church initiative also involved civic education on peace. Since the outbreak of violence, the church conducted civic education classes throughout the safer areas of Mt. Elgon. These sessions focused primarily on teaching the people of Mt. Elgon about peace. To monitor the security situation, the church recruited volunteers throughout the area to serve as citizen reporters. These individuals were asked to watch for circumstances of violence, precursors of violence, or illegal political activity in their communities, and to communicate such occurrences by SMS text message to a Call-in Center which was established so that it could alert appropriate agencies and/or encourage direct preventive action.

Efforts by the Church to rehabilitate former members of SLDF in Mt Elgon District stalled. The members of the Sabaot community also tried but in vain. The Kalenjin elders also began a series of peace meetings aimed at bringing the protagonists together urged the Government to participate in the peace process. The elders who met at Mabanga Farmers Training Centre in Bungoma County said most youth who were members of the SLDF were willing to be rehabilitated but feared arrest and social rejection. The elders urged for unity of, the two former MPs John Serut and Wilberforce Kisiero and requested them to join the elders and resolved to work together to promote peace.

However, they argued that the reconciliation efforts be done at the grassroots to involve locals. The church efforts were joined by the Kalenjin Council of Elders Chairman John Seii who announced that the elders will partner with the Church, Government and other non-governmental organizations to spearhead peace efforts. They requested for more funding of forums aimed at bringing peace and rehabilitation victims. They insisted that the people of Mt. Elgon needed to be given a chance for a fresh beginning. The Kalenjin elders joined hands in the three-day forum that brings together elders from the Sabiny, Koony, Bok, Somek, Bongomek and Ndorobo clans and the neighbouring Bukusu and listened to testimonies from 500 former SLDF members who had escaped from the group.

4.2.2   Peace Initiatives by Women in Mt. Elgon

Women often pay the ultimate price and face dire consequences of war through their bodies which become under attack as a retaliation mechanism to intimidate the enemy and destroy or damage male honor, purity of lineage, kinship structures and ethnic identities. It is notable that the gendered impacts of armed conflict affect men, women and children differently. One of the most affected groups in the Mt. Elgon ethnic conflict was women and children. Violence acts of

war were usually perpetrated on women who were often caught in the midst of the conflict. Women were raped, displaced, had their husbands abducted or killed and their entire social fabric was torn apart.

Due to the magnitude of suffering, women participated directly in the peace efforts in Mt. Elgon. Women often stood the ground in attempt to seek for amicable peaceful solutions whenever the warring sides in the ethnic violence were on the verge of renewed state of unleashing terror at each other. Women efforts were relentless, irresistible and they had a lot of determination to try and ensure there was peaceful coexistence among the warring communities. Women always attempted at assisting the victims of the conflict especially other women and children who were in distress perpetrated by the conflict. They viewed themselves as peace ambassadors who had the duty of protecting the vulnerable from the suffering inflicted by the conflict in Mt. Elgon region.

In the effort to propagate peace, the women often exposed themselves to dangers and risks of retribution by the militia or being direct victims of the violence. They often faced the consequences of death by coming into the direct confrontations with the combatants. The undeterred determination to reach and assist families directly affected by the conflict was thus an act of sacrifice and tremendous selflessness. The women often came across the horror of the conflict especially form other women who were victims. These women had been raped, lost their husbands and sons in the ethnic conflicts but the women peace builders often comforted, supported and cried with them.

Women and children were at the centre of the ethnic conflict in Mt Elgon right from 2005 when what began like a simple land dispute finally took a new turn and escalated throughout 2008-

2012. The conflict was fanned more by the influence of outside political forces and it later transformed into full scale war that left hundreds of people dead and many more displaced. Usually, women found themselves attempting to intervene through organizing and initiating mechanism aimed at bringing on board peace groups and stakeholders to mitigate the crisis. The buildup phase of the conflict witnessed many young men who were not willing to be sucked in the conflict and those who had fear of abduction or forceful recruitment by SLDF fleeing the region and abandoning their families and their wives were left to tend the farms.

In the midst of the conflict, reports emerged of cases of rape on women and girls perpetuated by both the SLDF militia and the military forces. This saw the women peace builders starting an initiative of registering over 600 women who had lost their husbands in the conflict in an initiative dubbed Rural Women Peace Link. This initiative comprised of women working for peaceful resolution of conflicts throughout Mt. Elgon region. The initiative was able to document the cases of women who had been raped, interacted with child-based families which had lost both parents to the conflict and supported the widowers who had lost their wives to the conflict.

One of the consequences of the conflict in Mt. Elgon region is that the government declared the region a closed operation area and prohibited any external group from accessing the region. It was out of this that the Multi-Sectoral Forum for Security of Women and children was formed. The forum coalesced the peace providers in the region together to attempt at addressing the issues afflicting women and children. All the state and non-state actors from the Ministry of Health, relief providers and other NGOs who made a commitment of rectifying the situation of suffering of women and children in Mt. Elgon region.

The women forum included the medial to cover the atrocities committed on women and children in the region. For the first time since the commencement of the ethnic conflict in the region, all the major media houses in Kenya broadcasted the stories about Mt Elgon for a full month. Even when the menfolk were fearful of their lives due to the worsening state of conflict in Mt. Elgon, and had stayed indoors, the women forum was determined to expose the happenings in the region to the outside world.

For the families that had been displaced by the conflict and were camped in churches and schools, the women forum attempted to minimize their suffering by distributing phone cards to communicate with loved ones. The women forum rallied local leaders to advocate for peaceful resolution of the conflict. They went ahead and organized the women who had suffered in the conflict into a social force, in an attempt to restore their dignity and confidence while facilitating for strategies of ending the conflict.

The women forum was able to rally stakeholders in the conflict such as the youth local politicians, government officials, the media, civil societies and the local and foreign NGOs operating in the region to create awareness of the conflict and attempt at saving lives in Mt. Elgon. The women forum was able to utilize their various contacts from the Rural Women Peace Link, inside and outside the IDPs camps where they were able to pass messages and contact the relevant stakeholders in the conflict. They were even able to create and maintain networks with security forces where information was shared on hot spots and many lives saved.

The women forum organized for places to bury the scattered bodies and assisted the victims to grief over the loss of loved ones using the links with the Rural Women Peace Link support. Counseling was done for the victims to assist them overcome the trauma of the loss of loved

ones. They were able to cater for the social and emotional welfare of the women and girls who narrated their ordeals of being misused and sexually abused by men in the IDP camps. Awareness was created through a radio programme organized by Rural Women Peace Link, where local people assisted each other through donations of basic needs people donated to affected families in the IDP camps. When the situation normalized, peace meetings were continued to help in forging an atmosphere of peaceful coexistence in all regions of Mt. Elgon.

4.3 Strategies for Preventing Future Conflicts

Naibei stated that there are four peace building strategies that may be helpful in prevention of recurrence of conflicts. They include trauma healing; community dialogue; resettlement and capacity development. These strategies are applied by different actors in promoting peace.

4.3.1 Strategy of Community dialogue

As a strategy for preventing future conflicts, dialogue involves a process of genuine interaction where the people in conflict result to listening at each other with enough intensity to gain change of behaviour from the context of the lessons learnt. Dialogue involves the ability to reason even when tendencies of disagreement exist. It calls for the understanding of the position of the other party and creating ultimate humility to listen and live with it.

The effort to promote dialogue in the society creates awareness of the fact that violence is not the only alternative of overcoming conflicts. The quality of the strengths of resulting to dialogue to overcome conflicts is inculcated where respect for the individual and community is restored. Individuals and communities are called upon to make efforts in overcoming their violent past, restoring justice, security and human rights for the welfare of the whole community. Promotion of interethnic, interethnic and intercommunity dialogues is one way of cultivating harmony in the

community. In turn, this forestalls any possibility of future conflicts and in the process help in building harmony in the ethnic communities living with each other. When efforts to create peace and promotion of reconciliation are emphasized through dialogue, harmony in the society is achieved and conflicts are avoided.

Through dialogue, the community is able to attain social cohesion where shared values, solution to common challenges and availability of social and economic opportunities by all the community members are emphasized. The community manages to achieve social cohesion and avoid conflicts when dialogue in resolving conflicts is integrated as a conflict resolution strategy where there is willingness to share resources, co-existence and mutual respect for community members where all people also abide by the rule of law.

The UNCHR Report emphasize on the importance of embracing dialogue as a strategy of combating and overcoming ethnic divisions that are a hindrance to social cohesion among communities. The report adds that for communities to coexist, dialogue among the leaders and followers is paramount. Visionary leadership that embraces dialogue is able to ensure good governance. This can be done through empowerment of communities where they participate in decision making processes. This is only achievable if a bottom up approach and consultation are followed. Activities that encourage dialogue and communication within the community should be encouraged. These activities can include activities like education as schools are socialization places where people of different cultures meet and exchange ideas and cultures as they continue with their everyday learning activities. It is through educational activities that involve consultative dialogue that members of Mt Elgon communities may engage and critique each other positively thus preventing recurrence of future conflicts.

4.3.2 Strategy of Resettlement of Displaced Persons

Peace initiatives are usually related to internal displacement of people and the efforts to resettle the displaced individuals. The return of displaced persons to their homes is a critical factor in ensuring peace process and the revival of economic activities. Reintegration of the returning displaced persons after conflict is significant in guaranteeing future peace. Without putting the required effort in resettlement and reintegration of the displaced persons to former homes, realization of permanent peace is difficult to realize and violence may recur.

Klopp noted that killing or maiming of IDPs who are returnees have been documented in Kenya, when they have attempted to venture into their former homes and lands. This has been linked to persistent incidences of insecurity resulting from presence of mobilized youths, local communities and neighbours who enjoy immunity and impunity, and more so the general failure of security forces where peace efforts have not been initiated. Such incidences often endanger the resettlement and reintegration efforts making the existence of the displaced persons dangerous. The returning IDPs are viewed as a danger to those occupying their lands and homes and there is possibility of triggering more violence if peace initiatives, mediation and reconciliation are not properly cascaded to include all the sides in the conflict.

Without creating the necessary measures to ensure healing and reconstitution of local social fabrics linked to successful return and reintegration of IDPs, a community often moves toward more polarization and ethnic separation. Trauma and anger among IDPs, reinforced by the large concentration of victims with sad and horrific stories to tell means that new settlements of the displaced can easily become recruiting grounds for the next phase of violence. The displacements shatter cultural cohesion and undermine traditional practices used to mediate disputes, which often depend on the aggrieved meeting face-to-face where the wrongdoing

occurred. When violations of the law are left unaddressed locally as victims flee, impunity at the local level becomes entrenched.

Further, the entire process of displacement creates economic challenges, leading to economic destitution of the displaced persons. The consequence of violence is usually disruption of the local economy, which depends on interethnic cooperation for market access, labor, and transportation services. The loss of producers, small businesses and farmers, often worsens the prospects for local economic recovery where violence occurs. Where IDPs settle, either as integrated displaced or as impoverished settlers on marginal and unproductive lands and urban slums, they generate new challenges. Finally, for IDPs to peacefully settle to former lifestyles, it is important that economic empowerment and property restitution and compensation are given. This is often the most effective measures for remedying economic insecurity that results from an individual's displacement and loss of livelihood.

4.3.3   Strategy of Capacity Building

Mwaserrah stated that capacity building is the empowerment of communities to gain control of all aspects of their existence to have control over their entire lifestyle. Capacity building of communities involves an attempt at enhancing the capacity of the community through increasing the important attributes and capabilities. This enables the community to have enhanced capacities in all aspects of their lives i.e. social, spiritual, economic, cultural and political. In turn the community's capacities and confidence are developed and in the process creating unity and excluding the possibility of conflicts.

Empowerment through capacity development involves the engagement of the members of the community to participate in activities that enable them to gain confidence in the participation of

their activities. It also involves the community gaining control over their political, economic and social change. this endevour calls for activities empowerment of the community to have the capacity to adequately access power and influence while engaging with others and therefore avoiding the occurrences of future conflicts.

Developing capacity of the community through empowerment enables members of the community to make proper decisions from the range available both at an individual and communal level. Empowerment also encourages positive thinking which in turn encourages living in harmony without any conflicts. Communities can be developed in capacities in different capacities through empowerment; politically, economically, socially, legally and religiously. Political capacity building is where awareness is created in the community to enable them elect leaders with integrity so that they cannot easily be misled. Retrogressive cultures of incitement against one community will be done away with thus enabling people to live in harmony as the leaders chosen have the best interest of the community at heart.

4.3.4   Strategy of Trauma

The ending of a given phase of violence results into a lot of trauma for the victims and negative emotions that are usually traumatizing psychologically and emotionally interfere with the stability of an individual or community. Scars of fear, loss of loved ones, fear of the future, suspicion and all sorts of negative emotions are the aftermath of violent conflicts. The distress associated with violent conflict destroys the linkage which people view life with.

The aftermath of conflicts results in individuals and communities undergoing bouts of trauma in an effort to reconstruct their lives to the initial levels before the conflict. This effort is usually traumatizing due to the emotional, psychological and physical losses occasioned by conflicts.

Immense challenges and opportunities conflict the individual or society due to the demands and the need to rebuild the divided parties who have engaged in the protracted conflict which is usually overwhelming.

The necessity for social, emotional, psychological and economic transformation may be overwhelming given the numerous challenges of forging and maintenance of peace. This is due to the fact that peace building after negotiated conflicts is a long process that involves a wide range of activities occurring sequentially. The aftermath of conflict is pain and the subsequent return to normalcy is difficult. The physical, mental and emotional challenges are an important concern to those that seek to rebuild their life. Trauma healing and peace building can only be attained by inter-communal relationships, psychological repair of relationships scattered by the injustices committed.

Peace and cohesion in a community that has experienced trauma starts with reconciliation which is only possible if the victims who suffered during the conflict are healed psychologically from the trauma they experienced. This trauma is as a result of torture physical and emotional abuses together with indiscriminate killing which leads to lose of life and experiencing of emotions that are negative. The trauma experienced includes and is not limited to mental deprivation, loss of control and meaning of one's life among other negative emotions. The victims become vulnerable mentally as people experience loss of social support and loss of income. This therefore calls for helping of the victims to overcome trauma so as to regain their self-esteem.

Programs in the community need to be put in place a variety of victims such as; women sexually assaulted, people exposed to physical brutality and all those with psychological wounds. By helping the victims deal with these situations amicably a road map towards reconciliation and

cohesion will have been laid out. Reconciliation will play a great role in returning to normalcy especially when the needs of the people are integrated in the peace efforts. Apologizing, acceptance of apology offered and compassion are important aspects of reconciliation. Psychological rehabilitation and reintegration back to the society is therefore important this will lead to personal healing which will in turn to group harmony that is responsible for cohesion.

For the communities in Mt. Elgon there is necessity for the opportunity and space to dialogue on the trauma of rape, sexual violence, cut, lost and grief of the pain endured. This is through sharing of the pain among members of different ethnic groups and clans in the region. The sharing and encounter will create a foundation for enhancing the shared vision of the future and prevent recurrence of future conflicts.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

As stated in this study, the existence of land disputes and related issues of unequal access and distribution of resources in Mount Elgon is the catalyst to the conflict under study. The conflict is further complicated by the recurring history of sustained violence in Mount Elgon, politics as well as limited local economic prospects. As stated elsewhere, the conflict in Mount Elgon has had tremendous effects on women and children more than any other group, with widespread attacks always leaving them deeply scared by the violence witnessed and the sexual assaults committed. It is in this mindset that the objective of the study was to establish the effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012). Three research questions guided the study related to; gendered effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012), effect of the military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012) and key strategies for resolving the future conflicts on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012).

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the three research questions, the conclusion of the study was that gender analysis in armed conflict highlights the difference between women and men in terms of their gendered roles and activities, their needs, their power and control of resources and their access to decision making processes even in post conflict situations. Women still suffer discriminations even in the absence of conflict especially in regard to resource allocation. During ethnic conflicts, women are forcefully mobilized to participate for instance when they provide services like cooking,

cleaning and sex to the militia. Because of the social construction of their identities and gendered roles as mothers and guardians of culture women are perceived to be weak and need protection. This protection has failed in many instances as is in the case of Mount Elgon conflict.

The study concluded that the conflict in Mt.Elgon had tremendous effects on women and children. Women, whose husbands were either killed or fled, became heads of household leading to resentment especially from men and extended members of the family that may disrupt the existing social order. In Mt.Elgon, women who conceived after being raped were shunned and even those who were accepted had the rape children as constant reminders of their experiences. The study concluded that there are four peace building strategies that may be helpful in prevention of recurrence of conflicts. They include trauma healing; community dialogue; resettlement and capacity development.

Strategy of community dialogue involves a process of genuine interaction where the people in conflict result to listening at each other with enough intensity to gain change of behaviour from the context of the lessons learnt. Strategy of resettlement of displaced persons involves reintegration of the returning displaced persons after conflict as a significant recourse in guaranteeing future peace. Strategy of capacity building involves the empowerment of communities to gain control of all aspects of their existence to have control over their entire lifestyle. Strategy of overcoming trauma involves establishment of programmes to cater for a variety of victims such as; sexually assaulted women and girls, people exposed to physical brutality and all those with psychological wounds.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommended that to overcome the gendered effects on women and children, capacity building should be undertaken on the vulnerable women by creating their capacity and awareness

on the ways of seeking assistance during conflicts. Capacity building will increase their understanding on methods of keeping and preaching peace in their homesteads in order to prevent future conflicts in Mount Elgon. The study recommended that in order to overcome the injurious effects associated with military interventions on women and children in Mount Elgon, affected women should be accorded legal redress that will involve reciprocated compensation by the government based on the negative effects suffered. This will go a long way in soothing the pain suffered by the women and children in the conflict.

In order to prevent future conflicts, the study recommends that women should be in forefront as peace builders. Women should have shared forums where they come together to point out the issues and challenges with potential of triggering future conflicts. They should also create groups to discuss personal-related issue that causes trauma due to the scars of the conflict as a way of empowerment to overcome such challenges. The women should also engage in dialogue involving genuine interaction, listening at each other to overcome the conflict-related traumas.

5.4 Areas for further research

1. The study on effects of ethnic conflict on women and children in Mount Elgon region (2008-2012), should further be escalated to cover the period 2012-2017 that has witnessed further conflicts.

2. A study on the effects of ethnic conflict on men in Mount Elgon should be undertaken.

3. The study on effects of ethnic conflict on women and children may be generalized to other regions of Kenya that have witnessed such conflicts.

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