

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

**Expedient Humanitarianism in Kenya? The Case of Islamic Relief Worldwide in Garissa  
County, 2007-2017**

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**DECLARATION**

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University or Institution.

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This project is submitted for examination with our approval as the University supervisors.

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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved parents; and to all the lovers of humanity.

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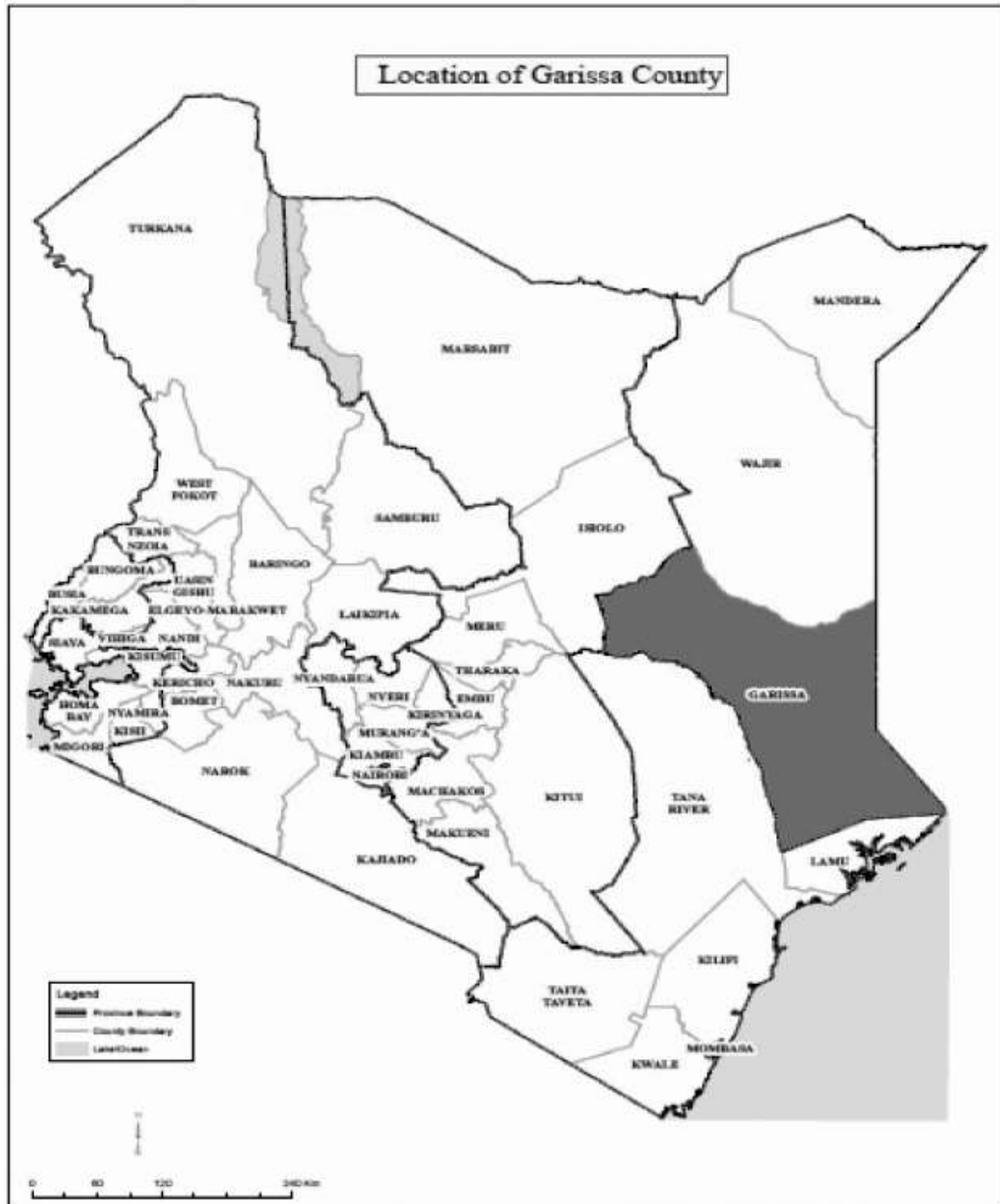
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## **ABSTRACT**

This project paper is about the humanitarian activities of the Islamic Relief Worldwide in Garissa County of Kenya from 2007 to 2017. It uses that case study to understand whether humanitarian organizations remain humanitarian in practice or not, and to illuminate the significance of humanitarian principles in the contemporary era. With the beginning of the Cold War, humanitarianism started its gradual change of spirit, moving astray from Henry Dunant's idealistic identification of humanitarian action and more towards a political or ideological use of this type of aid. The stakeholders of humanitarian aid, be it the activists, donors and governments, to a large degree, accepted that in order to make humanitarian aid work effectively, there need to practice flexibility and compromise. Despite the purely altruistic actions by the humanitarian organizations and their positive impacts on peoples' lives, the mentioned change of approach opened the horizons of instrumentalization of humanitarian aid, or in other terms, expedient humanitarianism. This paper shows that the demographic and political traits attributed to Garissa could pave way for the Islamic Relief Kenya (IRK) to make a partial (religious, clannist, political) use of humanitarian aid. A historical introduction of Garissa is offered to prepare the reader about the context of this study.

Map 1: Location of Garissa County



<sup>1</sup> Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, *Location of Garissa County*, available from [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Garissa-County-Kenya-Source-Kenya-National-Bureau-of-Statistics-2013\\_fig1\\_260129995](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Map-of-Garissa-County-Kenya-Source-Kenya-National-Bureau-of-Statistics-2013_fig1_260129995) accessed 16th November 2019.



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

The provision of aid particularly that of humanitarian nature, is a common aspect of human's existence.<sup>2</sup> Human beings naturally tend to wish goodness for other humans as well as the natural environment which secures human's livelihood. Hence, it becomes humanity's moral obligation to help the weak.<sup>3</sup> The latter is important because it led to establishment of humanitarian organizations aimed at putting human's willingness to help into organizational and disciplined frameworks.<sup>4</sup> In order to develop a universal understanding of humanitarianism, the international community agreed that an ideal and effective humanitarian work is that which is provided based upon the four fundamental codes of impartiality, independence, neutrality and humanity.<sup>5</sup> An agreement that remained more visible on paper than on practical stages.<sup>6</sup>

One cannot deny the fact that if the agencies involved in humanitarianism remained true to the universal humanitarian principles, and if they operated within law-abiding social and political environments that stand by those principles, poor populations in conflicts would not need a big deal of time to be rescued from misery.<sup>7</sup> However, humanitarian agencies often use the name as a brand for formal procedures and recognition, and became subjects of misconduct in one way or another, and that appears to be the main cause of inefficiency and ineffectiveness of humanitarian action.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Sphere Standards, *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response* (2011), 78.

<sup>3</sup> Mark Bowden, *The Humanitarian decade: Challenges for Humanitarian Assistance in the Last Decade and into the Future* (New York, The United Nations OCHA, 2004), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Roberta Arnold and Noelle Quenivet., *International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights Law: Towards a New Merger in International Law* (Martinus Nijhoff, 2008), 1-13.

<sup>5</sup> Jan Egeland and Adele Harmer, *To Stay and Deliver: Good Practice for Humanitarians in Complex Security Environments*, (OCHA, 2011), 4.

<sup>6</sup> Mathew Easton, *Leaving no one Behind: Humanitarian Effectiveness in the Age of the Sustainable Development Goals*, (OCHA, 2016), 26-28.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Kurt Mills, *Neo-Humanitarianism: the Role of International Humanitarian Norms and Organizations in Contemporary Conflict*, (Global Governance, 2005), 161, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/27800563?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A8ab342c4017037017bd0c2071a3a28db&seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/27800563?read-now=1&refreqid=excelsior%3A8ab342c4017037017bd0c2071a3a28db&seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents) accessed on September 1 2019.

Scholars, including Michael Walzer, Hugo Slim and Beat Shweizer have dedicated a big part of their lives to studying the misconduct; the ways in which humanitarian organizations deviate from the universal humanitarian principles. The tendency of human beings to help and wish goodness has to battle another natural aspect of the species' character, which is the desire to expediently misuse and take advantage of the first tendency. In order to explore the reasons why humanitarian principles are violated, Walzer, Slim and Shweizer dissected the contradicting dichotomy of the ideal and reality of humanitarian action. Their analysis relates to the concern raised about Garissa in the first paragraph of this introduction.

Michael Walzer argues that humanitarianism is ideally defined as an international act of philanthropy to reduce human sufferings and save lives.<sup>9</sup> Religious teachings in sacred texts equally promote assistance from the strong for the weak.<sup>10</sup> Different schools of thought, including those of monotheistic and secular seem to show a great propensity to devote, recognizing that as a common element of human nature.<sup>11</sup> However, Beat Shweizer argues that along with human's natural desire to help one another, different justifications are applied to take sides or favor particular people.<sup>12</sup> The socio-political dimensions of life in Garissa relates to IRK's commitment to its primary values, and that relation can easily put the organization under Shweizer's description. Hugo Slim believes that providing assistance to people who are politically deprived only delays the challenges from striking hard.<sup>13</sup> In addition, they exacerbate the situation by accommodating partial stances in the sector.<sup>14</sup> His argument relates to this study because the population of Garissa and the North-Eastern region in general, mostly of Somali migrants, remains poor and dependent on humanitarian aid, and not one that produces active workforces who contribute to development of the national economy.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, for a long time, thousands of people's destiny is tied to

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, (New York: Basic Books, 2015).

<sup>10</sup> L. Kovrok-Tokar, "Review of Michael Barnett and Janice Gross Stein's Sacred Aid: Faith and Humanitarianism," *Eastern Journal of European Studies* 5, (2014), 187-191.

<sup>11</sup> Beat Shweizer, "Moral Dilemmas for Humanitarianism in the Era of Humanitarian Military Intervention," *The Red Cross* 86, no. 855 (2011) : 547–564.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Hugo Slim, *Humanitarian Ethics: A Guide to the Morality of Aid in War and Disaster*, (2015), 470-475.

<sup>14</sup> Shweizer, *Moral Dilemmas for Humanitarian*, 549.

<sup>15</sup> Humanitarian and Development Program, *Northeastern Kenya: A Perspective Analysis*, (2015): 16, available from <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ENG-Observatoire-Prospective-Huma-NORTHEasternKenya-12-2015.pdf> accessed April 4 2018.

IRK's assistance, however, the support cannot be directed towards a sustainable development plan and it acts solely as a temporary remedy.<sup>16</sup>

This study uses humanitarianism as the conceptual/ideal framework and its theoretical foundation to rely on and takes the case of IRK in Garissa in order to investigate how humanitarian agencies forget their roots and evolve to become practically non-humanitarian, or less humanitarian.<sup>17</sup>

Islamic Relief-Worldwide is a prominent humanitarian organization that operates in Garissa. It was founded in 1984 in the UK. The Islamic relief worldwide now works in about 44 countries and is an example of an active humanitarian organization in Africa.<sup>18</sup> The organization was established with the aim of helping people regardless of their race or color.<sup>19</sup> IRW is fascinated by the teachings of Islam on helping the weak in a structured manner. The four universal humanitarian principles are the regulatory elements of IRW's work.<sup>20</sup> Favoritism of any type in allocation of humanitarian assistance is contradictory to the impartial essence of the organizations and the universal humanitarian principle of impartiality.<sup>21</sup> Impartiality from religious or ethnic tendencies matters greatly to this study.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Garissa has a total population of 699,534.<sup>22</sup> It contains six sub-counties including: Fafi, Garissa township, Ijara, Lagdera, Balambala and Dadaab. The majority of the population are pastoralists; movements have historically been restricted and the whole region seems to be in a political, social and economic unrest.<sup>23</sup> The region is dominated by Somali-originated population, which is

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<sup>16</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>17</sup> M. A. R. M Salih "Islamic NGOs in Africa: The Promise and Peril of Islamic Voluntarism" *Copenhagen: Centre of African Studies*, (2001).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Islamic Relief Worldwide, *IRW Code of Conduct*, available from <https://www.islamic-relief.org/family-governance/www.islamic-relief.org/family-governance/> accessed October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2017.

<sup>20</sup> Hossein Kamali, "The Dignity of Man: An Islamic Perspective" *Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society*, (2002).

<sup>21</sup> The Sphere Standards, Humanitarian Charter.

<sup>22</sup> Garissa County Government, *County Integration Development Plan*, (2013) : 9.

<sup>23</sup> Hassan Ndzovu, "Muslims in Kenyan Politics: Political Involvement, Marginalization, and Minority Status" *Journal of Religion in Africa* 46, (2016), 93-106.

considered to be one of the largest African ethnic groups that covers approximately 400,000 square miles of arid and semi-arid land, intersecting Djibouti, Somali republic, Kenya and Ethiopia.<sup>24</sup>

Medicine Sans Frontieres made a clear statement that humanitarianism has become an instrument of political strategies.<sup>25</sup> The IRW focuses on Garissa not merely because the area suffers from poverty, but also because Garissa is governed by a general policy of expansive humanitarianism.<sup>26</sup> Perhaps, the organization cherishes that policy because most of the residents of the north-eastern region of Kenya happen to belong to the ideological group that IRK is inspired by.

Despite all the efforts and the changes that the humanitarian community brought into the lives of the poor in Garissa, its projects are yet to contribute to the region's development because drought, flash floods, inter-clan conflicts, marginalization and poverty have been persistently threatening the majority of the population's lives.<sup>27</sup> While a policy of 'letting humanitarian agencies take care of the region' can make humanitarian assistance an instrument of political or religious bigotry, it also prolongs the conflicting situation with which Garissa lives.

The North Eastern region of Kenya has experienced poverty and deprivation over the years. For example, in the last two decades, residents of this expansive region lived on less than one dollar a day and lost many of their livestock to drought annually.<sup>28</sup> The region's dependency on humanitarian assistance as a result of its underdevelopment, is so high that it is difficult to comprehend its development without it. Despite years of humanitarian assistance, there is no noticeable change to the region's social and economic plight.<sup>29</sup> This study sought to find out and explain the reasons for this disconnect – between the ideal objectives of humanitarianism and its

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<sup>24</sup> Marco Zappi, "Greater Somalia, the Never-ending Dream? Contested Somali Borders: the Power of Tradition vs. the Tradition of Power," *Journal of African History, Politics and Society* 1, no. 1, (2015) : 43.

<sup>25</sup> Claire Magone., Micheal Neuman and Fabrice Weissman, *Humanitarian Negotiations Revealed: The MSF Experience*, (London: Hurst & Co., 2011), 197.

<sup>26</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> National Council for Population and Development, *Kenya National Adolescent and Youth Survey, Garissa County*; available from <http://kebudgetdocs.ipfkenya.or.ke/docs/Garissa%20County/2017-2018/PBB20172018.pdf> accessed 10 March 2018.

<sup>29</sup> Izzy Birch, "Economic Growth in the Arid and Semi-arid Lands of Kenya," *The K4D Helpdesk* (November 2017) : 2-23, in the UK Department for International Development database [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6fd72aed915d4a315f6552/482\\_Economic\\_Growth\\_in\\_the\\_Arid\\_And\\_Semi-Arid\\_Lands\\_of\\_Kenya.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5c6fd72aed915d4a315f6552/482_Economic_Growth_in_the_Arid_And_Semi-Arid_Lands_of_Kenya.pdf) accessed 10<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

realities on the ground. For that matter, this chapter provides an overview on how the project was conceptualised and carried out.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Increasingly, the literature on humanitarianism paints a gloss picture of international organizations that are upright, willing to help and unblemished. This may not be necessarily the case and needs interrogation through the case study of IRK in Garissa County of Kenya. Donor interests, religious orientations, clannist aspirations and political circumstances may have an influence on the nature of humanitarian aid delivery.<sup>30</sup> This project focused on this area of humanitarianism i.e. the roles and ramifications of humanitarianism which are affiliated with a dualism of reality and the ideal. The ideal is that humanitarian action is taken with ‘‘human face’’, at the service of the poor, vulnerable and victims of natural, social and political instabilities, but in reality it manifests the sophisticated and complex nature of the prevalent hegemonic socio-political environment in which its actors operate, reflects the politics of the domineering and the dominated and is orchestrated by the major custodians of the international system.<sup>31</sup> The extent to which IRK’s humanitarian activities in Northern Kenya conforms to the ideals of humanitarianism has not received attention and thus this study sought to investigate it’s engagement there to demonstrate how it departs from the ideal principles.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

1. To evaluate the IRK’s impartiality in its delivery of humanitarian aid. To examine the immunity of the IRK’s activities to political influence in Garissa.

## **1.4 Key Research Questions**

1. How does favoritism relate to the IRK’s principle of impartiality in Garissa?
2. In what ways do IRK’s services in Garissa become a subject of political instrumentalisation?

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<sup>30</sup> Kovrok-Tokar, Review of Michael Barnett, 188-189.

<sup>31</sup> Slim, Humanitarian Ethics, 471.

## **1.5 Justification of the Study**

Little effort is put on understanding the contradiction between the ideals and the reality of humanitarian initiatives. Much is written about the existence of expedient and biased notions among humanitarian activists.<sup>32</sup> However, very little data is produced on how different forms of humanitarian expediency take place and why. This leads to the academic necessity to understand the mechanisms by which political and ideological forces manipulate aid agencies and why agencies choose to falsify humanitarian principles. This leads to the academic necessity to understand the mechanisms by which political and ideological tendencies influence the agencies and whether IRK in Garissa is under the same umbrella.

The bigger part of this research was conducted in Garissa due to a number of reasons: a) Garissa accommodates Dadaab refugee camp and hosts a significant number of refugees; b) Garissa County is among the counties of the former Northern Frontier District of Kenya that have been marginalized throughout the period of colonial and post-colonial Kenya, c) Majority of the population practice the Islamic faith d) Garissa is where IRK manages its projects in the North-East of Kenya and holds a large number of projects.<sup>33</sup>

## **1.6 Scope and Limitations**

From the year 2007, with the post-election violence in Kenya, the already-established humanitarian network in the country began to expand with the humanitarian organizations working to expand their activities.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the period from 2007 to 2017 is suitable to conduct any study regarding humanitarianism in Kenya.

The high level of illiteracy and as well as difficulties in acceptance by the people and the staff of IRK made the predicaments more vexing. The historical memory of the people makes a significant number of both elders and youth in Garissa blame anyone with a different skin color for their misery, therefore they ultimately tried to avoid any interaction with the outsiders. It was revealed

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<sup>32</sup> Mary Petersen, ‘‘For Humanity or for the Umma? Ideologies of Aid in Transnational Muslim NGOs’’ Hurst Publishers, 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Human Rights Watch, *From Horror to Hopelessness: Kenya's Forgotten Somali Refugee Crisis*, (2009).

<sup>34</sup> Sara Jerving, ‘‘Inside Humanitarian Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Kenya Election Violence,’’ Devex, (2017).  
<https://www.devex.com/news/inside-humanitarian-efforts-to-prevent-and-respond-to-kenya-election-violence-90865> ; accessed 1 September 2019.

throughout the data collection phase, from both primary and secondary sources, that political leaders and elders would assume that this work carries extra-academic objectives that can potentially make them vulnerable, therefore avoiding to share their opinions. For that reason, all the interviewees were informed about the purely academic intentions of the interviews and focused group discussions.

Majority of Garissa's population are extremely keen to propagate clannism and stand for the extreme interpretations of Quran and the lifestyle of the prophet of Islam, with a proximity of ideas to those of Wahhabism or Salafism; ideologies that construct a framework under which violent extremism finds practical manifestations.<sup>35</sup> The limitations fundamentally stemmed from the Shia background of the researcher in an environment prone to Sunni Islam. Due to that restriction, having the people sit down and speak became an extremely sensitive and difficult task.

In addition to the mentioned challenges, restriction of movements made access to rural areas a unique experience but also hardened the situation from the academic point of view. However, a number of interviews and group discussions along with intimate and detailed observation of IRK's projects in Garissa took place in order to produce data for this study.

Considering the fact that the organization provides services with a focus on the Muslim population, a false assumption among the interviewees about the intention of the research emerged: it can seem to be directed against the Muslim population and the organization of concern, and not really against the possible absence of impartiality. Therefore, it was necessary to introduce the research prior to interviews and present the chief objectives of this study in brief in order to create confidence among the staff and manage conversations in ways that benefit this study.

## **1.7 Literature Review**

The literature review of this study clarifies the ideal framework within which humanitarian action should take place. It then raises the concern that the ideality of humanitarian action is often undermined. Having mentioned what is and what should be, it then provides a background on the

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<sup>35</sup> Rony Brauman and Regis Meyran, *Humanitarian Wars? Lies and Brainwashing*, (Hurst & Co., 2019).

causes of African countries' dire need for aid. This literature review also provides instances of violation of the humanitarian principles by donors and political controllers of humanitarian aid along with the justifications used by them to legitimize their deviation from the principles of humanitarian action.

### **1.7.1 Are Humanitarian Organizations Really Humanitarian?**

Hugo Slim names the 1993 Conference on Religion and Peace and 1994 International Red Cross Code of Conduct in Disaster Relief as significant sources of moral validity of actions, which are rooted in international humanitarian law and international human rights law and form the legal basis supposedly followed by humanitarian organizations.<sup>36</sup> Although over a hundred governments signed the above mentioned international patterns of law, these regulations' applicability remains a challenge.

Scholars including Fiona Terry emphasize on primary responsibility of states to protect their citizens. She argues that neutrality as a fundamental humanitarian principle should not make one blindfolded, looking at the oppressor and the victim with egalitarian lenses.<sup>37</sup> Humanitarian intervention will therefore be an option only when governments fail to secure their own people.<sup>38</sup> It is notable to state that if governments succeed in protecting their citizens and providing for their needs, foreign humanitarian organizations would barely find reasons to put their feet on other parts of the world.<sup>39</sup> For instance, Garissa and the north eastern province in general suffer from a historical political and economic deprivation, hence paving way for humanitarian organizations to settle in.

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<sup>36</sup> Hugo Slim, "Doing the Right Thing: Relief Agencies, Moral Dilemmas and Moral Responsibility in Political Emergencies and War," *Center for Development and Emergency Planning*, (July 2002): 3.

See also Hugo Slim, "Military Intervention to Protect Human Rights: the Humanitarian Agency Perspective," *International Council on Human Rights Policy*, (2001): 5.

<sup>37</sup> Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action*, (Ithaca, 2002).

<sup>38</sup> Sara K. Lischer, "Collateral Damage: Humanitarian Assistance as a Cause of Conflict," *Journal of International Security*, (2003) : 18.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Maxwell and Kirsten Gelsdorf, *Understanding the Humanitarian World*, (London: Taylor & Francis Ltd, May 2019).



The humanitarian ineffectiveness and the existing lack of substantial change in lives of people targeted by humanitarian agencies raises a concern about confrontation of community empowerment vis a vis self-empowerment, considering the fact that being active in areas associated with high levels of poverty acquires a notable amount of donation for humanitarian agencies. The capability of humanitarian organizations, including IRK to take independent actions, without any type of influence from governments and donors, is a major catalyst in determining the genuineness of humanitarian initiatives.<sup>40</sup>

Tony Vaux argues that impartiality, or as others state, neutrality of humanitarianism is a core principle of the subject; however, real situations on the ground prove the opposite. The author describes modern approach towards humanitarianism as the maximalist approach, arguing that it began building for itself a more solid foundation as a result of the politics of the Cold War, as opposed to the opinion of those who believed that humanitarianism should at all times maintain its ‘humanitarian imperative’. For instance, China was not willing to be bargained with about the international community’s plea to intervene in Darfur because of its interests in oil. Vaux’s argument indicates that humanitarian principles are ignored if necessary.<sup>41</sup>

The politicians and those in control of means of power are in charge of making sure that the existing economic structure remains active and progressive, for in return, it will guarantee their individualistic and corporate benefits.<sup>42</sup> Giles Bolton argues that globalization has more harms than benefits. To him, the technology and comfort brings about dependence on powerful corporations and that can render many insecure about a source of sufficient income. Foreign assistance comes at the cost of adherence to the policies set by powerful states that are comprised of giant corporations to ensure interests that benefit the giver more than the taker. For instance, in 1980s Kenya witnessed progression in its economy due to an increase in foreign aid, however, in the beginning of 1990s the country experienced its worst economic period because of the Kenyan government’s conflicts of interest over the external economic forces pushing for political reformation. Kenya was accused of showing an ‘off-track’ behavior.<sup>43</sup> The change of behavior

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<sup>40</sup> David Korten, *Getting to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda*, (Kumarian Press, July 1990), 99.

<sup>41</sup> Tony Vaux, “Humanitarian Trends and Dilemmas,” *Development in Practice* 16, no. 3&4, (2006), 3.

<sup>42</sup> Giles Bolton, *Aid and Other Dirty Business*, (Ebury Press, 2007), 239-241.

<sup>43</sup> Jerker Carlsson, Glaria Somolekae and Nicolas Van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*, (Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1997), 113-115.

by Kenya was the condition under which the country could receive aid, and that manifests an instrumental use of aid and a contradiction between how Kenya received aid vis a vis how it should have.

Humanitarian agencies may cater for IDPs, refugees and all those in need, and initiate reconstruction projects and welfare programs, but only under the platform designed by the intervening political state(s), with the aim of having their own national interests served.<sup>44</sup> The economic dependence on a dominant state, or a group of powerful states has become an inevitable measure to take for many countries. The national interests of major donors of humanitarian assistance in Garissa do not consider the long-term and sustainable development of Garissa. Are the givers and the takers of philanthropic aid in Garissa more after preserving the suitable status quo as opposed to providing aid in accordance to the humanitarian ideals? That is a key question in this study.

That approach, known as maximalist approach found a more justifiable position within the international community after September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001. The Global War on Terror changed the role of humanitarian agencies and paved way for intervention and drastically changed the interpretation of humanitarian assistance in ways that will disregard the universal humanitarian values. Afghanistan followed by Iraq fell at the center of attention and were eventually occupied by the Western powers as the initial strategic step to fight “Islamic radicalization”.<sup>45</sup> Humanitarian agencies in the eyes of the critiques of GWOT became a tool to pursue policies designated to accelerate the process of reaching the ‘new world order’.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, IRK is represented in the regular policy-making meetings in Garissa.<sup>47</sup> While IRK must only help those in need, it is engaged in political processes that may push the organization to make decisions not based on the people’s need but that of the political decision-makers.

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<sup>43</sup> Schweizer, *Moral Dilemmas for Humanitarianism*, 551.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*,

<sup>45</sup> Vaux, *Humanitarian Trends and Dilemmas*.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>47</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

The example of humanitarian presence in Rwanda ultimately pinpoints the argument of this study. Prior to the conflict in Rwanda, major donors in the international community willingly closed their eyes to the key political dynamics that led to the genocide. That changed dramatically in the post-genocide era, when policies changed shape to designate donations to tackle those issues that acted as barriers on the path to justice in Rwanda. Two fundamental mandates were designed to serve that goal: 1997 OECD guidelines on peace, conflict and development cooperation as well as 1998 united nations secretary general report: priorities for post-conflict peacebuilding. All new policies were geared upon prevention of further atrocities, but in favor of one particular party to the conflict; that is the dominating Tutsi government under the rule of Paul Kagame. The international community, mainly USA and UK have backed the Tutsi-dominated regime in Rwanda. Albeit policies set by Kagame's regime are believed to be discriminatory, they are often justified by the international community, claiming that the government has the right intention but the implementation could go wrong. Justification of the government and the judicial system is another point ignored by the donor community.<sup>48</sup> Ignoring matters on one hand and supporting a regime with a history of committing atrocities on the other, indicates that the international community is after all seeking to secure its interests and perhaps only pause the violence for a predicted amount of time. The providers of aid may not necessarily follow the ideal path and they often direct aid towards meeting political or ideological goals. That is the fundamental issue that this project tends to focus on.

### **1.7.2 The Well-Known Justifications**

One of the theories that justifies humanitarian intervention is the natural law. Believers of natural law including Hugo Grotius and Michael Walzer argue that human being has the natural and moral obligation to help others only by virtue of being a human being. Humanity in this theory belong to one nation and it therefore becomes morally justifiable to intervene. However, Michael Walzer is against the policy of prioritization of home by powerful states.<sup>49</sup> In most humanitarian interventions, the interests of the powerful donors are supreme. In the case of IRK in Garissa, one can sense that the organization does not enjoy the adequate and necessary support from public authorities, and is obliged through a governmental plan to carry the weight of Garissa in

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<sup>48</sup> Peter Uvin, "Difficult Choices in the New Post-conflict Agenda: the International Community in Rwanda after the Genocide," *Third World Quarterly* 22, No 2. (2001) : 177–189.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

conjunction with other humanitarian organizations. That highlights a duality between IRK and its ideal mandates, and could clearly manifest loss of autonomy by the agency.

Humanitarianism enjoys a moral position that very few would question. It stands for the weak and goes to places that others avoid. Humanitarian activists earn a great sum of money and respect because of the nature of their work and their outcry about poverty in underdeveloped areas.<sup>50</sup> The IRK is mostly active in areas with highest levels of poverty and lowest standards of life, including Garissa, which could put the agency under the same category. However, the long presence of IRK and other humanitarian organizations in Garissa proved to have minimal constructive impact, if anything at all. The political influence on humanitarian aid in Garissa, be it from the donors or recipient governments, pollutes the appropriate and ideal environment in which IRK must operate, hence takes away the chances of undertaking a purely altruistic way of working by the agency.

### **1.8 Conceptual Framework**

This project draws on the work of Henry Dunant, founder of the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movements, to make my argument that humanitarian action of the modern era does not enjoy a healthy commitment to the universal principles of humanitarianism. Henry Dunant emphasizes on the obligation of the humanitarian actors to remain impartial and independent, and this is especially useful to this study for it acts as the ultimate criteria in order to evaluate the commitment of the IRK to the universal humanitarian principles.

With a reference to the report published by United Nations' office for the coordination of humanitarian affairs, there are four fundamental principles associated with humanitarianism: humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence.<sup>51</sup> The four universal principles of humanitarian action are the common pillars on which the international community defines and conducts humanitarianism, and are the key criteria that distinguish a humanitarian action from those of other natures. These principles regulate any humanitarian action and protects the common philanthropic spirit amongst human beings.

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<sup>50</sup> Lischer, *Collateral Damage*, 106.

<sup>51</sup> Jim Dummond and Nicholas Crawford, "Humanitarian Crisis, Emergency Preparedness and Response: the Role of Business and Private Sector," *Humanitarian Policy Group*, (2014) : 1-2, in UNOCHA database <https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/KENYA%20case%20study%20FINAL.pdf> accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

## **1.9 Hypothesis**

1. IRK's activities in Garissa county of Kenya are not impartial from any type of favoritism.
2. IRK's in Garissa is not independent and is a subject of political influence.

## **1.10 Methodology**

### **1.10.1 Research Design**

This study investigates the humanitarian initiatives' intentions with regards to the activities of IRK in Garissa. Given the fact that this is a social study that deals with meanings, experiences and opinions, qualitative method of research was chosen to collect the necessary data.

### **1.10.2 Sources**

#### **1.10.2.1 Secondary Sources**

The primary and secondary sources of data were both used to compile this work. The available scholarly articles and books in the library of the department of history in the University of Nairobi are considered to be initial sources of this study, which helped acquire a more sensible understanding of humanitarianism and expedient tendencies among humanitarian organizations. The Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library as well as the library of the School of Law of the University of Nairobi hold significant literature on aid in Africa, which were used to establish the literature review and the problem of this study. Online sources, including online journals and news agencies further enhanced accessibility to the required literature and data.

Visiting the National Archives of Kenya gave an understanding on excessive and historical humanitarian activism in Kenya, particularly in the northeastern region of the country. This study collected the literature on humanitarianism and reports published by humanitarian and governmental organizations in Kenya and Garissa, including Islamic Relief Worldwide-Kenya, Garissa County Government, Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNHRC), the Non-Governmental Organizations Coordination Board, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and other relative organizations.

### **1.10.2.2 Primary Sources**

Garissa County was visited on multiple occasions in order to grasp a sense of familiarization with the population of the county and survey the area firsthand. Furthermore, the population in the area were the subjects of oral interviews and focused group discussions. Using a simple random sampling technique, the population of Garissa as well as the staff of IRK were given equal chance. Seven members of IRK's personnel involved with Garissa were interviewed, from which four were born and raised in Garissa, hence providing this work with substantial information about the area and IRK's services in it. On the other hand, eight members of the population of Garissa were interviewed. Snowball sampling helped identify more individuals for the purpose of interviewing. Two focused group discussions in Garissa were also organized, each group containing four residents of Garissa.

The target population included:

- Business community - the local business community members who engage in trade or pastoralism as well as the refugee population residing in Garissa were of the prime importance to speak to in order to grasp the state of impartiality in the activities of IRK. Therefore, interviews and focused group discussions were organized so to attain the necessary information as well as generate new issues related to this study. Because of Garissa's unique characteristics including the people's lack of trust towards an outsider, snow-ball sampling method was the safest method to find the right informants for this study.
- IRK staff members – interviews with IRK's Garissa county director Mr. Abdullahi and other staff members of the agency in Garissa and Nairobi were arranged to clarify the direction and ultimate intention of the organization, and the impacts they have left on the people's lives.
- Community elders and gatekeepers – interviews and focused group discussions took place with community elders and gatekeepers in Garissa to highlight the effects of IRK's services and raise the concern about expedient humanitarianism in Garissa.

Speaking to the people and the respective officials of the organization as well as visiting IRK's projects in Garissa clarified the relationship between locals and the organization, impacts of the services and the way in which IRK is governed. The interviews had the component of open-ended questionnaire to give the necessary flexibility to the interviewees to be free to discuss the matters in complete depth.

### **1.10.2.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation**

The social geography of Garissa as well as its highly complex socio-political atmosphere led this study towards choosing a narrative method of data analysis. The information collected are analyzed with a contextual approach. The acquired data are interpreted with considerations towards the individuals or organizations from which the data was collected. The available information was revised and themed under two broad and intertwined categories that basically speak to the objectives of this study: IRK's commitment to its ideals and if it had significant impacts for the betterment of the population's welfare. The information from the secondary sources and those of the primary sources were then organized in a cohesive manner to raise the gap that this study is working to fill.

## CHAPTER TWO

### HUMANITARIAN ACTIVISM: A BACKGROUND OF ISLAMIC RELIEF'S INTERVENTION IN GARISSA

#### 2.1 Introduction

A historical background of the justifications of aid in Kenya, particularly in Garissa and the large north-eastern lands of the country is provided in this chapter in order to enhance the understanding of the reality of humanitarianism. The chapter aims at presentation of social, political, economic and geographic traits of Garissa and its position as a humanitarian area of interest. In order to grasp the fundamental root-causes of Garissa's underdevelopment despite its overwhelming and old appetite for aid, this chapter brings out the historical significance of aid in Africa and then diversifies the discussion using Kenya, specifically IRK's activities in the north eastern city of Garissa. The chapter finally presents the two dimensions used in evaluating the humanitarian credibility of IRK in Garissa from 2007 to 2017.

#### 2.2 Why Expediency?

The ideal humanitarianism follows an internationally agreed-upon quadruple equation that consists of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence, with concrete and inflexible objectives and boundaries.<sup>52</sup> The humanitarian form of support in its essence strictly follows these principles, and these principles are the key determinants of distinguishing a humanitarian organization from those of other natures.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, following different justifications, the principles are often not implemented or interpreted in different ways by the multiple actors involved in the humanitarian field.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> UNOCHA, "OCHA on Message: Humanitarian Principles," (2010) : 1-2, in UNOCHA database

[https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM\\_HumPrinciple\\_English.pdf](https://www.unocha.org/sites/dms/Documents/OOM_HumPrinciple_English.pdf) accessed 31 August 2019

<sup>53</sup> Hans Haug, *Humanity for All: International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement*, (Paul Haupt Publishers, 1993), 443.

<sup>54</sup> Antonio Donini, *Humanitarian Agenda 2015: Final Report: The State of the Humanitarian Enterprise*, Overseas Development Institute, 2-8.



Humanitarian practitioners always claim that their field of work isn't political, however, it is also argued that humanitarian aid is indeed political.<sup>55</sup> Donor states and recipient states accept aid sharing a common agenda of maximizing or guaranteeing their power.<sup>56</sup> As a result of a will to ensure permanent presence, donors cooperate with the beneficiaries of aid to increase their influence and expand their markets globally.<sup>57</sup> Both donors and recipient countries engage in aid work for the sake of preserving the status quo, of which they are the main beneficiaries.<sup>58</sup>

Humanitarian organizations and their donor entities tend to normalize their departure from the principles using different justifications.<sup>59</sup> Diverse and complex humanitarian emergencies also systematically guide the humanitarian community to act cooperatively and objectively; a situation that fades away the independence of humanitarian aid.<sup>60</sup> For instance, the donors and governmental entities in Garissa are "trusted" by the organization and the humanitarian agency follows the government's development policies.<sup>61</sup> Complexity of conflicts, the magnitude of their effects and the necessity of partnership with political entities in the contemporary era are named as common justifications by humanitarian organizations to exceed their original principles and move towards constructing a new definition for humanitarianism.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Nicholas Leader, "The Politics of Principle: the Principles of Humanitarian Action in Practice," *Humanitarian Policy Group* (2000) : 3, in Overseas Development Institute database, <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/295.pdf>, accessed September 1<sup>st</sup> 2018.

<sup>56</sup> Masako Yonekawa, "Political and Military (mis)Use of Humanitarian Action and Aid: Since the End of the Cold War and the Onset of the War on Terror," (March 2017), 85-101, in Kyoto University database [https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/218913/1/ASM\\_S\\_53\\_85.pdf](https://repository.kulib.kyoto-u.ac.jp/dspace/bitstream/2433/218913/1/ASM_S_53_85.pdf); accessed 15 June 2019.

<sup>57</sup> Donini, *Humanitarian Agenda*, 2.

<sup>58</sup> Izabela Watts, "Is Humanitarian Aid Politicized?" *ETH Zurich Center for Security Studies*, (2017): 1-6, in e-International Relations database <https://www.e-ir.info/2017/04/13/is-humanitarian-aid-politicized/>; accessed 31 August 2019.

<sup>59</sup> Mohamed Helal, "Justifying War and the Limits of Humanitarianism," *Fordham International Law Journal* 37. No. 3. (2014) : 593, in Fordham database <https://ir.lawnet.fordham.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=2338&context=ilj>; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>60</sup> The New Humanitarian, "The Use and Abuse of Humanitarian Principle," (2013), available from <http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/report/97502/use-and-abuse-humanitarian-principle>; accessed 1 September 2019

<sup>61</sup> Marion Harrof-Tavel, "Does it Make Sense to be Neutral? Humanitarian Practice Network," *Overseas Development Institute*, (December 2003) : 2-3.

<sup>62</sup> Damaris Mateche, "The Cycle of Drought in Kenya a Looming Humanitarian Crisis," *Institute for Security Studies*, (January 2011), in ISS database <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/the-cycle-of-drought-in-kenya-a-looming-humanitarian-crisis>; accessed 6 March 2018.

Because of donors' influence, the constraints that are put by the international humanitarian network or having to favor a particular group, aid agencies may choose to turn a blind eye to the ideal principles of humanitarian assistance.<sup>63</sup> For example, manipulation of international law enforcement capacities as well as politicization of the international community through using leverage by the involved parties cannot allow the key responsible international organizations respond to Yemen's problem accordingly; blockade of aid is a common dynamic of the war in Yemen. Politicization of aid by the involved parties has restrained efforts to provide the sufficient aid based on a systematic pattern.<sup>64</sup>

The expediency in provision of aid is associated with different degrees of political, ideological or racial affiliations that act as points of identity/interest, causing a partial approach to humanitarian assistance.<sup>65</sup> What is witnessed on the practical ground is that humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence are utopian terms that are almost impossible to prevail and the ideal notion of humanitarian aid evidently becomes more undermined, ignored or compromised.<sup>66</sup>

### **2.2.1 A New Plan for Philanthropy**

The UN is in the forefront of coordinating the actions regarding the common philanthropic aspect of humanity, to help transition it to a regulated practice.<sup>67</sup> It is the main representative of the humanitarian community and regulates the field by creating a respective legal regime.<sup>68</sup> According to Stephen O'Brien, UN under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs, the transition is possible only through coordinated planning and partnership among all governmental and non-governmental agencies.<sup>69</sup> He emphasizes on the necessity of coordination and partnership, and insists that the nature of programs, in order to be effective enough, must follow long-term objectives.<sup>70</sup> This

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<sup>63</sup> Dreher Axel., Stephen Klasen and James Raymond, Eric Werker, "The Costs of Favoritism: Is Politically-driven Aid Less Effective?" *George-August Universitat Göttingen*, (March 2010), available from <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/41567/1/62241495X.pdf>; accessed 15 June 2019.

<sup>64</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, *Drivers of Yemen's Humanitarian Crisis*, (May 2018), in NRC database [https://www.senat.fr/fileadmin/Fichiers/Images/relations\\_internationales/Groupes\\_d\\_amitie/NRC\\_-\\_Drivers\\_of\\_Yemen\\_s\\_Humanitarian\\_Crisis\\_Paper\\_20180522.pdf](https://www.senat.fr/fileadmin/Fichiers/Images/relations_internationales/Groupes_d_amitie/NRC_-_Drivers_of_Yemen_s_Humanitarian_Crisis_Paper_20180522.pdf); accessed 12<sup>th</sup> August 2018.

<sup>65</sup> Kathryn Kraft, "Faith and Impartiality in Humanitarian Response: Lessons from Lebanese Evangelical Churches Providing Food Aid" *International Review of Red Cross*, (2016) : 398.

<sup>66</sup> Watts, *Is Humanitarian Aid Politicized*, 1.

<sup>67</sup> The United Nations, *Report*, available from <https://www.un.org/en/sections/what-we-do/deliver-humanitarian-aid/>; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> OECD, *Humanitarian Development Coherence*, available from <https://www.oecd.org/development/humanitarian-donors/docs/COHERENCE-OECD-Guideline.pdf>; accessed 3 February 2019.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

approach to humanitarian action is what he calls ‘new way of working’.<sup>71</sup> Major humanitarian organizations including IRW enjoy partnership with the UN.<sup>72</sup>

The nature and dimensions of crisis in the contemporary era have increasingly evolved in terms of complexity and length, forcing aid organizations to adopt themselves to development co-operations that are suited for ‘long-term’ development programs.<sup>73</sup> Economic limitations of donors and a tight global competition over resources have made them prefer aid management for growth rather than solely maintaining a consistent and unconditional flow of aid disbursement.<sup>74</sup> This change of approach lays the ground for creation of a controversial ‘humanitarian’ concept that is surrounded with contradictions.<sup>75</sup>

The absolute loyalty to the principles of humanitarian action is viewed as a recipe for failure because the new approach tends to consider humanitarianism as a political component expected to generate suitable political benefits and it met the standards of the power-thirsty governments, directing humanitarian action astray for the purpose of expanding their boundaries of political domination, or preserving the status quo.<sup>76</sup> This is precisely evident in the case of south Sudan as humanitarian assistance became an inseparable part of south Sudan’s economy, politics and society.<sup>77</sup> With the end of the cold war and balance of power in the world, humanitarian aid evolved and took a different approach compared to the ideal Red Cross view of an independent and impartial provision of aid.<sup>78</sup> The unconditional humanitarian aid was not a worthy deal anymore and provision of aid exceeded its traditional principles and became a tool of securing national interests as well as controlling international relations.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Country Profile Report, (2016) : 2.

<sup>73</sup> Harrof-Tavel, Does it Make Sense to be Neutral, 2.

<sup>74</sup> Carlsson, Somolekae and Van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*.

<sup>75</sup> Virginie Troit, “Humanitarian Ethics and International Relations: Contradictions or (re)Conciliations?” *Humanitarian Alternatives*, (2016) : 1, [http://alternatives-humanitaires.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/10.Ethique\\_VTroit\\_VEN.pdf](http://alternatives-humanitaires.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/10.Ethique_VTroit_VEN.pdf) ; accessed 31 August 2019.

<sup>76</sup> Antonio De Lauri, “The Politics of Humanitarianism: Power, Ideology and Aid,” *I. B. Tauris* (2012) : 1-12, <https://www.cmi.no/publications/file/6037-the-politics-of-humanitarianism-power.pdf> ; accessed 1 September 2018.

<sup>77</sup> The London School of Economics and Political Science, “The Politics of Humanitarianism: Perspectives from South Sudan” (2018) : 4, <http://www.lse.ac.uk/international-development/Assets/Documents/ccs-research-unit/Conflict-Research-Programme/policy-reports/The-Politics-of-Humanitarianism-Perspectives-from-South-Sudan.pdf> accessed 2 September 2019.

<sup>78</sup> Fyodor Lukyan, “Resisting the Politicization of Humanitarian Action in the Post-Cold War Era,” *ICRC*, (2016). <https://blogs.icrc.org/law-and-policy/2016/06/14/resisting-politicization-humanitarian-action-post-cold-war-era-interview-fyodor-lukyanov/> ; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

<sup>79</sup> De Lauri, *The Politics of Humanitarianism*, 2-3.

Despite a conceptual shift of approach, the new way of working also does not seem to reduce the rising magnitude of poverty in order to manage the economic expectations of people.<sup>80</sup> Since the beginning of 2017, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance globally reached 14.1 million, signaling a catastrophic condition and a shame for humanity.<sup>81</sup> In 2017, only less than 30% of the current global appeal is funded.<sup>82</sup> with a rising number of almost 10 million people in shocking and horrific conditions, Yemen is one of the worst humanitarian situations of this time, which has frustrated the international system of humanitarian assistance.<sup>83</sup> Humanitarian society, with all their assistance, have not succeeded to make their vision a possibility.<sup>84</sup> Besides putting their activities under question, aid organizations seem to also demand more investigation about their loyalty to the principles of their profession, or in other words, their genuineness.<sup>85</sup>

### 2.3 Aid in North-Eastern Kenya

The underdevelopment of African countries is often blamed on the European conquest and colonization of the continent, and the latter is attributed to abundance of natural and human resources in Africa.<sup>86</sup> the biased colonial rulers that administered the exploitation of Africa's resources, took away the opportunity for Africans to embark on their contextual and localized journey of developing effective political administrations, and the colonial heritage left behind drastic consequences for the continent.<sup>87</sup>

African countries, perhaps to a more severe magnitude, became the subjects of global powers' desires of expansion to control the world's resources.<sup>88</sup> The newly independent African countries had to weigh the situation and choose their position as to who to side with.<sup>89</sup> Foreign aid and loan are of the most repeated terms in African social studies and a mechanism to dominate Africa's

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<sup>80</sup> Sophie Edwards, "Humanitarian Actors are Failing the World's most Vulnerable, New Report Finds," *Devex*, (2017). <https://www.devex.com/news/humanitarian-actors-are-failing-the-world-s-most-vulnerable-new-report-finds-90528>; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>81</sup> UONCHA, Global Humanitarian Overview.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> UNICEF, *Report*, available from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2018/11/1025301>; accessed 1 September 2018.

<sup>84</sup> Healy, Hazel, "Who Cares? Humanitarianism Under Threat," *New Internationalist*, (2018), in New Internationalist database <https://newint.org/features/2018/04/01/who-cares-21st-century-humanitarianism>; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>85</sup> Donini, Humanitarian Agenda, 4-6.

<sup>86</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (London and Tanzanian Publishing House, Dar-Es-Salaam: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications, 1973), 10-19.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> George Maangi, *Kenya's Ties with Superpowers Pay off*, The Standard Media, available from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001324917/kenya-s-ties-with-superpowers-pay-off>; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

market and resources.<sup>90</sup> For instance, foreign aid was transformed and became an instrument for USA to pursue its agenda of world's leadership.<sup>91</sup> Therefore, a humanitarian aid organization like IRK was not able to operate, had it not been for taking under consideration the social and political necessities.<sup>92</sup>

Africa fell behind other developing regions of the world with a huge margin and that has attracted aid organizations to think of Africa as their prioritized area of intervention.<sup>93</sup> Despite the major aid activism in African countries over the past four decades, most parts of the continent still suffer from slow development and poor infrastructure.<sup>94</sup> The bitter fact stimulates the mind to search for the dynamics that form the described lack of effectiveness. Is humanitarian aid only an instrument of mitigating poverty, or also a political tool?<sup>95</sup>

With regard to Kenya in particular, the drought in 1980s and a failed coup in 1982 strikingly isolated the country's economy;<sup>96</sup> Kenya then had no other choice but to compromise on its political stance, accept "democratization" and commit to structural adjustment packages planned by international monetary fund and world bank as the imposers of Kenya's microeconomic policies.<sup>97</sup> A more severe decline of Kenya's economy was experienced with disagreements over the donors and the Kenyan government in 1993, resulting in 0.2% growth.<sup>98</sup> However, with yet another retreat by the recipient, aid began flowing back to the country in 1995.<sup>99</sup> Clearly, foreign assistance is attached to the past and present state of affairs in Kenya.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>90</sup>Mills, Neo-Humanitarianism.

<sup>91</sup> De Lauri, *The Politics of Humanitarianism*, 10.

<sup>92</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Muhamed (IRK Garissa county director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>93</sup> Jerker Carlsson, Glaria Somolekae and Nicolas Van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*, 7-10.

<sup>94</sup> Juliette Lyons, "Foreign Aid is Hurting, not Helping Sub-Saharan Africa," *Le Journal International* (2014). [https://www.lejournalinternational.fr/Foreign-aid-is-hurting-not-helping-Sub-Saharan-Africa\\_a2085.html](https://www.lejournalinternational.fr/Foreign-aid-is-hurting-not-helping-Sub-Saharan-Africa_a2085.html); accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Carlsson, Somolekae and Van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*, 113-115.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> USAID, Report, available from <https://www.usaid.gov/kenya/history>; accessed 1 September 2019.

In the late 2007, political tensions added violence as extra burden on Kenya's shoulder, convincing humanitarian agencies to intervene, or expand their existing intervention.<sup>101</sup> Post-election violence of 2007 may not have affected north east of Kenya to any notable degree, but it certainly opened new horizons in front of humanitarian agencies.<sup>102</sup>

According to OECD, drought followed by political violence put Kenya in the list of fragile states, resulting in a continuously expanding work by humanitarian agencies. The arid and semi-arid condition of the northern part of Kenya puts it at the heart of the crisis that emerges as a result of drought.<sup>103</sup> Drought has historically been Kenya's one of the most significant hurdles the nation has been tackling frequently; with different cases from 1977, the situation only exacerbated over time due to climate change and the rising number of affected people; in 2010, the drought affected 10 million people in the country, putting them at the risk of hunger.<sup>104</sup> The disaster has resulted in losing livestock and economic mayhem. Drought is experienced more often in the past 10 years, which creates an economically unsafe situation, with no guaranteed sustenance vision and planning; scarcity of water could destroy all that was built and worked for.<sup>105</sup>

Another fundamental point that puts Kenya under the radar of humanitarian organizations is the existing ethnic tensions that give birth to political violence.<sup>106</sup> Antony Otiemo Ong'ayo notes that biased policies of the British in Kenya left a heritage of political illegitimacy and non-democratic norms, particularly within political and military administrations.<sup>107</sup> A similar behavior to that of British forces was witnessed in post-colonial Kenyan politicians; a political behavior far from accountability and inclusive rule of law.<sup>108</sup> Ong'ayo argues that leadership in post-colonial Kenya

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<sup>101</sup> Sara Jerving, "Inside Humanitarian Efforts to Prevent and Respond to Kenya Election Violence," *Devex*, (2017). <https://www.devex.com/news/inside-humanitarian-efforts-to-prevent-and-respond-to-kenya-election-violence-90865> ; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Daniel Wanjuhi, "Assessment of Meteorological Drought Characteristics in North Eastern Counties of Kenya," (2016) : 2. [http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/97109/Wanjuhi\\_Assessment%20of%20Meteorological%20Drought%20Characteristics%20in%20North%20Eastern%20Counties%20of%20Kenya.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/97109/Wanjuhi_Assessment%20of%20Meteorological%20Drought%20Characteristics%20in%20North%20Eastern%20Counties%20of%20Kenya.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y) ; accessed 2 September 2019.

<sup>104</sup> E. Mbogo, F. Inganga and J. Maina, "Drought Conditions and Management Strategies in Kenya," (2012) : 2. [http://www.droughtmanagement.info/literature/UNW-DPC\\_NDMP\\_Country\\_Report\\_Kenya\\_2014.pdf](http://www.droughtmanagement.info/literature/UNW-DPC_NDMP_Country_Report_Kenya_2014.pdf) ; accessed 31 August 2019.

<sup>105</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK financial officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>106</sup> Oluwafemi Adeagbo, "Post-election Crisis in Kenya and Internally Displaced Persons: A Critical Appraisal," *Journal of Politics and Law* 4, no. 2, (2011).

<sup>107</sup> Antony Otiemo Ong'ayo. "The Post-election Violence in Kenya: an Overview of the Underlying Factors," Pambazuka, Amsterdam, (2014).

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

has been exclusive and intolerant toward other ethnic groups, and the 2007 post-election mayhem is a pure outcome of the undemocratic governance and impunity, on which Kenya's political structure largely lays on.<sup>109</sup> The north eastern region of Kenya has historically been a victim of marginalization in both colonial and post-colonial periods.<sup>110</sup>

The trait which makes the northern region significant is that it is neighboring Somalia on the east.<sup>111</sup> Being in such a geographic position, Garissa has been an escape door for the people affected by violence in Somalia.<sup>112</sup> The population of the northern region of Kenya including Garissa County is pre-dominantly inhabited by ethnic Somalis.<sup>113</sup> Fear of insecurity and desire to seek a more pleasing welfare condition have paved way for a massive refugee influx from Somalia to Kenya.<sup>114</sup>

Marginalization of the area is a key point that must be kept in mind for better understanding of the socio-economic condition of the area.<sup>115</sup> Northern part of Kenya has a contradicting element to it; covering 58% of the country's area, the region consists of only 10% of the national population (approximately 4m); stemming partially from that, the region dominates only 5% of national economic activity.<sup>116</sup> It can easily be sensed that there exists an apathetic or even antagonistic attitude among bodies of public administration in the country towards the region, which has resulted in socio-economic isolation of the region's population.<sup>117</sup>

The history of the region indicates a dark fact: there always prevailed a significantly low level of interest by the national administrative bodies, both within the colonial period and post-colonial periods.<sup>118</sup> The historic marginalization of the region which began with the colonial rule and went

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<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Garissa County Government, County Integrated Development Plan, 3-9.

<sup>112</sup> Abdi Roble, "Influx of Somali Refugees in Dadaab, Kenya and its Effect on the Neighboring Host Community," (2011) : 3. <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/5491/Abstract.pdf?sequence=1> ; accessed 2 September 2019.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>116</sup> The World Bank, "Boosting Prosperity, Improving Equity in North and Northeastern Kenya," (2018).

<https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2018/05/08/boosting-prosperity-improving-equity-in-north-and-north-eastern-kenya>; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>117</sup> Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, "Regional Disparities and Marginalisation in Kenya" (2012) : 10. <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/kenia/09859.pdf> ; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>118</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi, (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

on even after the independence of Kenya, viewing the people as a threat and not potentially productive members of the national family.<sup>119</sup> The population of the area is rapidly increasing and that fuels the frustration over mismanagement of the region, putting it in a more devastating condition.<sup>120</sup> Therefore, marginalization and poverty often limited relief supplies to provision of basic necessities including food, water and hygiene services, leaving no room for an idealistic humanitarian activism.<sup>121</sup>

### **2.3.1 The Humanitarian Work of IRW in Garissa**

Islamic Relief Worldwide is an “independent” humanitarian and development organization that was established in 1984 in Birmingham, England, and is actively present in 40 countries across the world including Kenya, South Africa, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Iraq, etc., with the common philanthropic aim of mitigating poverty.<sup>122</sup> IRW started operating in Kenya in 1993 with an orphan sponsorship program in north eastern county of Mandera, providing financial support, health care services and education to orphan families.<sup>123</sup> Looking at the areas of concentration of Islamic relief in Kenya, majority of the efforts are made in the northern counties of the country; having most of the offices in the region, IRK shows a great interest in this particular region of the country.<sup>124</sup> The organization opened its full-fledged office in Nairobi in March 2006, following the drought that hit the horn of Africa. It then opened five field offices in Mandera, Wajir, Garissa, Kilifi and Marsabit.<sup>125</sup>

The IRK took an official step into Garissa by opening an office in 2011, following a severe drought in the northern counties that affected 3.7 million people.<sup>126</sup> Establishment of an office was an emergency response to the devastating condition of the area at the time, and it was also a step towards supporting the refugees of Dadaab camp.<sup>127</sup> After years of efforts by IRK and other active

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<sup>119</sup> Muturi Njeri, Kenya that was Never Kenyan: the Shifta War and the Northeastern Kenya,” Medium, (2015). Available from <https://medium.com/@muturi/kenya-that-was-never-kenyan-the-shifta-war-the-north-eastern-kenya-e7fc3dd31865>; accessed 31 August 2019.

<sup>120</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>121</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>122</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Country Profile Report, available from <https://www.islamic-relief.org/about-us/>; accessed 20 August 2018.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.



agencies in Garissa, drought continues to harshly endanger the people's health and progression.<sup>128</sup> In the people's eyes, this is rooted in an anarchic state of political affairs and consequently a politicized use of humanitarian aid in Garissa.<sup>129</sup>

The organization is ideally committed to empowering people by letting them do the "main job" themselves.<sup>130</sup> The formal position is that the organization has to work in conjunction with the local population for a number of reasons: first, the locals provide an affordable workforce; many of the projects were done using locals' labor services. Second way in which the organization engages locals in the projects is using the population's knowledge about the area; for instance, locals have been helpful in identifying water points for boreholes and fertile lands for initiation of agricultural activities; once projects are over, locals are responsible about the protection and sustenance of the sites.<sup>131</sup> However, that prospect did not seem to work either, and people at times failed to apply the necessary measures due to lack of interest and knowhow.<sup>132</sup>

According to the staff of the organization, the most important reason behind choosing locals as workforce is their vulnerability; knowing in depth about the value of the services, the affected population have shown a more sincere willingness to cooperate in the projects.<sup>133</sup> IRK's emphasis is on the organization's willingness to welcome volunteers and interns. "they have finished their education and need to work" Maingi said.<sup>134</sup> He added that community leaders and elders give talks to create the awareness that is needed to mobilize people and ease the implementation of the projects, and locals provide services based on their field of education and skills; "health students would participate in management of health facilities and those who can teach will do so in accordance to their respective specialties..." he said.<sup>135</sup> Despite that, lack of sufficient financial resources and the problematic notion of "no need to work" makes an environment with inadequate and inconsistent workforce.<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Abbas Deere, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>130</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.

<sup>134</sup> Oral Interview. Stanley Maingi (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

IRK denies that there is any relationship between the faith-inspired nature of the organization and its interest in the northern counties.<sup>137</sup> It seemed to be skeptical about any connection between choosing to focus on places where people share a common faith with what the organization inspirationally built itself on, and claimed that need is the main factor that dragged them to Garissa and other parts of north eastern Kenya; however, it could not be denied that the area is considered the poorest.<sup>138</sup> A senior employee of IRK argued that beside the peoples' dire need for water, low literacy level among the population is also a challenge that has not been attended effectively.<sup>139</sup>

### **2.3.2 Why IRK?**

The IRW portrays an ideal and altruistic gesture of itself; it introduces IRK as an organization that is inspired by faith, and not a religious organization; and it does not discriminate on the basis of creed, race, ethnicity, gender or belief.<sup>140</sup> Being a signatory to the code of conduct for the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, IRK adheres to the core global standards of humanitarian action.<sup>141</sup> It works to: a) enable communities to mitigate the effect of disasters, prepare against their occurrence and respond by providing relief, protection and recovery b) promote integrated development and environmental custodianship with a focus on sustainable livelihoods c) support the marginalized and vulnerable to voice their needs and address root causes of poverty.<sup>142</sup> In addition, it is indicated in the list of IRK's core values that the five key principles that are attributed to the Islamic faith guide the actions of the organization. These five principles are: *adl* (justice), *ikhlas* (sincerity), *ihsan* (excellence), *rahma* (compassion) and *amana* (custodianship).<sup>143</sup>

The gesture shown by IRK is a subject of critical analysis. To evaluate the loyalty of humanitarian agencies to fundamental humanitarian principles, this study will touch on three key concerns about IRW's activities in Garissa County in Kenya from 2007. First, it must be clarified whether IRK detaches itself from religious or clannist favoritism in its provision of assistance; second, how independent it remains from political actors, and third, how it relates to the local population's

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

<sup>140</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Country Profile Report.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid.

wellbeing. In other description, this study will analyze the humanitarian principles that IRK in Garissa mandates itself with vis a vis its activities on the operational realm.

The humanitarian family may be used for extra-humanitarian purposes and become instruments of political or ideological actors.<sup>144</sup> For example, IRW works closely with governmental and non-governmental organizations.<sup>145</sup> It also highly focuses on the areas with people who practice the faith with which IRK is inspired by.<sup>146</sup> That gives the impression that there is an inevitability in being neglectful, that perhaps it is not a question of whether it adheres to the principles or not that is relevant, but an analysis of how and to what extent does IRW deviate from the pillars of what can be ideally called humanitarian assistance.

As witnessed in Fafi, identifying strategic water points by IRK paved way for the emergence of communities. Other facilities such as schools, health facilities and markets were built thereafter.<sup>147</sup> In its efforts to manage aid for growth, the organization came up with vocational, rehabilitation and scholarship programs. It funded the education of over 3000 primary-level students, with some being supported for their higher education, including those who eventually became members of parliament.<sup>148</sup> However, the poor conditions still prevail and development is not a visible reality, reflecting a failure of the humanitarian cause. Many youths in Garissa lack basic necessities including education.<sup>149</sup> The underdevelopment of Garissa and IRK's slippery stance on humanitarian principles stem from a common cause: political and ideological influence.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Michael Barnett and Thomas Weis, *Humanitarianism in Question: Politics, Power, Ethics*, The International Studies Association, (2009), 1-48.

<sup>145</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Kenya Annual Report, 2016.

<sup>146</sup> Paul Wafula, "Population Numbers: Somalis Race to Join Big Four," *The Standard Media*, (2018). <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001275101/population-numbers-somalis-race-to-join-big-four>; accessed 31 August 2019.

<sup>147</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> David Mwangi, "Canada Helps Kenya's Garissa and Turkana Counties Access Quality Education," *Standard Media*, (2014). <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2000132318/canada-helps-kenya-s-garissa-and-turkana-counties-access-quality-education?pageNo=2>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

<sup>150</sup> Mohammed Kusow, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

IRK's aid in Garissa to a large extent only supports the basic needs and have failed to transform both Garissa's condition and its own nature of assistance.<sup>151</sup> It is argued that the inability to achieve the ultimate objective of aid and the continual struggle of poor to step out of poverty stem from aid agencies' malfunction: they cannot freely exercise their ideal mandates, and in order to exist, they may have to undermine their ideal mandates by following policies that are set by governments of the countries where they operate and rich donors as means of achieving ends not related to pure humanitarianism.<sup>152</sup>

The systematic instrumentalisation of the humanitarian community makes IRK find itself in an international network of coherent donors with fixed policies and guidelines, hence working with a disturbing binary.<sup>153</sup> The problem associated with UN is that the few major donors of the organization ratify policies that serve their common interest, and use humanitarian agencies to pursue expedient policies.<sup>154</sup> Therefore, it can become virtually impossible for IRK to adhere to the principles of humanitarian action. The ways in which the two crucial principles of impartiality and independence are undermined is highlighted in the following:

### 2.3.3 IRK's State of Independence

The leadership and aid agencies in the region seem to enjoy a bilateral relationship to meet the interests of both.<sup>155</sup> The term partnership in humanitarian action has evolved to a situation of 'leadership of aid through implementing agencies': in order to be recognized, will have to adhere to national and international policies of the leaders.<sup>156</sup> That is a vital precondition for them to exist. Conflicting situations exist because of politics and so does humanitarianism.<sup>157</sup> Humanitarian aid is not for free; it is an industry that aims at creation of 'one world society' and contributes to creation of a dreamland for powerful countries.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> Jeremy Lind, "Relief Assistance at the Margins: Meanings and Perceptions of 'Dependency' in Northern Kenya," *Humanitarian Policy Group*, (2005) : 6. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/426.pdf> ; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>152</sup> Hari Bhattarai and Kshitiz Acharya, "Humanitarian Assistance: is it Politically Instrumentalized?" *Journal of Public Health*.17, no. 1, (2018) : 1. <https://www.nepjol.info/index.php/HPROSPECT/article/view/20563/16898> ; accessed 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>153</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>154</sup> Mohammed Atmar, "Politicisation of Humanitarian Aid and its Consequences for Afghans," *London Conference Paper*, (2001) : 1-5. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/3772.pdf> ; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>155</sup> Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>156</sup> De Lauri, *The Politics of Humanitarianism*.

<sup>157</sup> Watts, *Is Humanitarian Aid Politicized*.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*.

It is noted that the programs implemented by the organization respond to and comply with government policies (such as vision 2030).<sup>159</sup> In what the staff of the organization described, the programs of IRK complements government's emergency and developmental policies.<sup>160</sup> The partner-friendly and complementary approaches by the organization leads to big questions about its independence from political bodies and funding partners.

IRK is a partner of EU, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, OCHA, USAID, UKAID, Aga Khan Foundation, CDC, Forum SYD, SIDA and what is known as the Islamic relief family which is comprised of IR Belgium, IR Canada, IR Germany, IR Mauritius, IR Netherlands, IR Switzerland, IR Sweden and IR USA.<sup>161</sup> The named organizations, to a large degree, are directly and indirectly under the management of government(s); a humanitarian activism of that sort can make one consider to reevaluate the term 'partnership'. A partnership that IRK has to change its pure nature for.<sup>162</sup>

Humanitarian organizations including IRK only follow governmental guidelines and policies; it can be argued that humanitarian organizations in the north east only work to save the government from the trouble of having to initiate wider development programs in the region. In an attempt to gain extra knowledge in the contemporary humanitarian dynamics and to examine the independence of humanitarian aid, this study will look at the types and quality of IRK's partnerships from 2007 in Garissa, and how those partnerships affect IRK's independence.

#### **2.3.4 Impartiality of IRK**

From the official position of the organization, the core mandate of the organization is to 'save lives' and 'bring goodness to people'; a vulnerability criteria is followed and the selection of target population does not include any bias.<sup>163</sup> It is only because of the poor circumstances in the region that the organization chooses to focus on the area.<sup>164</sup> Officials of the organization argue that not only the international norms, but the Islamic values also encourage an impartial manner of

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<sup>159</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Kenya Annual Report.

<sup>162</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>163</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Kenya Annual Report.

<sup>164</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2018.

assistance, solely based on the need criteria, and that is the only reason why north-eastern region is prioritized.<sup>165</sup>

Besides asking about the big interest of IRK in northern counties with a majority of Muslim population, the impartiality in aid provision among the people of Garissa can also demand investigation. However, a more significant Islamic inspirational background encourages the prioritization of Garissa and Muslim populations globally. A dilemma with more significance to this study. IRK's heavy concentration on Muslim populated areas remains an intact matter of concern. The next chapter of this study will provide an intimate assessment of impartiality in the activities of IRK in Garissa. Further information will be presented to reflect more on the organization's loyalty to the fundamental principle of impartiality. By the end of the next chapter, one should be able to assess the influence that religious bigotry can have on humanitarian action. With a view towards the activities of IRK in Garissa, it is the interest of this study to interrogate whether or not an Islamic sense of 'brotherhood' overtakes that of humanity.

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<sup>165</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **IMPARTIALITY IN THE ACTIVITIES OF IRK IN GARISSA**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The dilemma that faith-based organizations including IRK face is a product of possibilities of two general deviations in faith-inspired humanitarian action: they can use the anarchic socio-political conditions to either choose to prioritize members of the society who share the same ideological background as the chief beneficiaries of the aid, or they can take the conflicting situations as an advantage to proselytize and propagate their own ideology in an effort to cause a massive ideological conversion.<sup>166</sup> While the second possibility does not relate to this study, the first concern is the central dilemma which dedicates this chapter to itself. Surprisingly, the amount of IRK's services in the Muslim-populated areas of the north-east of Kenya is by far more than other regions of the country.<sup>167</sup> That certainly reflects a possible religious favoritism. On the other hand, clannist tendencies also play a role in the disbursement of humanitarian aid in Garissa. After raising the ideal vision, this chapter discusses how years of political marginalization, massive refugee influx from Somalia, inter-clan violent competition for monopolization of resources, growth in corruption and the Al-Shabaab violence can tamper with IRK's non-favoritism policy in Garissa.<sup>168</sup>

#### **3.2 Impartiality in Humanitarian Action; a Reality or a Formality?**

The philanthropists emphasize on their formal values that gives them an identity and a code of conduct. Nevertheless, humanitarianism in the contemporary era is a subject of inquiry because of the differences witnessed in the practical level vis a vis the ideal principles of humanitarian action. For understanding that concern, it is relevantly important to discuss both the ideal and the reality of humanitarianism.

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<sup>166</sup> Kraft, Faith and Impartiality in Humanitarian Response," 1-3.

<sup>167</sup> Berkley Center, A Discussion with Abdalla Rashid Agola, Head of Programs at Islamic Relief Kenya, (2014). <https://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/interviews/a-discussion-with-abdalla-rashid-agolla-head-of-programs-at-islamic-relief-kenya> ; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>168</sup> International Crisis Group, "Kenya's Somali North East: Devolution and Security," (2015) : 1.

### 3.2.1 How is the Ideal?

Humanitarian aid in the contemporary era is a dynamic field of work of the international community, thanks to the life and activities of the founder of Red Cross, Jean-Henry Dunant (1828-1910).<sup>169</sup> International humanitarian organizations, donor states and recipients borrowed his indoctrination of humanitarian assistance, which compassionately stands for saving lives.<sup>170</sup> The ideal humanitarian aid has an inevitable impartial quality that obligates humanitarian organizations to view all as equal, and take the hands of anybody who needs it the most, regardless of the possible affiliations.<sup>171</sup> The inspirational motive behind IRK's activities, as seen among the core values of IRK, stems from the Islamic principle of *adl* (justice) in provision of assistance.<sup>172</sup>

Ali Ibn Abi Talib, the first believer in Islam, is a prominent figure in the history of the religion.<sup>173</sup> Ali who was well-known among different classes and races of Muslims as a man of justice narrated in a letter to his governor in Egypt that: "people are two types: they are either your brothers in faith or your equal in humanity." Islamic jurisprudential realm does not restrict nor does it reject an equal humanitarian view in provision of assistance.

Impartial viewpoint towards helping the needy is a common approach among the followers of Abrahamic religions.<sup>174</sup> In addition, the non-governmental humanitarian organizations and powerful donors harmoniously agreed through the 1994 Code of Conduct to be free from any religious, ideological or political bias and be responsible to care for all humans in need, irrespective of how they choose to live.<sup>175</sup> The principle of impartiality, similar to independence, humanity and neutrality, is not only a symbolic regulator of humanitarian action, but also part of a doctrine set to ensure that humanitarian aid will not result in deterioration of crisis by engaging in political and community dynamics.<sup>176</sup> But the contradictions generated by the practical stage of

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<sup>169</sup> Pierre Boissier, *Henry Dunant* (Geneva, 1974), 9-12.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Alpaslan Ozerdem and Gianni Rufini, "Humanitarianism and the Principles of Humanitarian Action in Post-cold War Context," (2005) : 1-3.

<sup>172</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Kenya Country Profile.

<sup>173</sup> Aliasgar Razwy, "A restatement of the History of Islam and Muslims," *World Federation of Khoja Shia Ithna-Asheri Communities*, in al-islam.org, <https://www.al-islam.org/printpdf/book/export/html/27929> ; accessed 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

<sup>174</sup> Yousuf Ali, "The Three Abrahamic Faiths and their Roles in Making Peace, Unity and Co-existence," *World Journal of Islamic History and Civilization*, (2011) : 187-188, in IDOSI publications database,

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/118a/ccd150c235378f4dd15b88e63f2f3012a5d9.pdf> ; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>175</sup> ICRC, Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief".

<sup>176</sup> Leader, *The Politics of Principle*, 22.



humanitarianism requires this research project to ask: do humanitarian organizations, particularly faith-based ones practically follow the principles of their work?

### 3.2.2 The Reality

One of the biggest issues that is discussed by experts from aid organizations, academia, governments and the members of the UN is the instrumentalisation of humanitarian aid in Kenya by exerting political influence to expand markets of the rich governments, and use aid agencies as tools that serve best the common interests of compliant governments and powerful donors.<sup>177</sup> The interruption of regular humanitarian action as well as its inconsistent effect could be the products of an instrumental use of aid, or in other words the patron-client politics that constructs the framework within which humanitarian aid is disbursed.<sup>178</sup>

Humanitarian impartiality is a strong tool to protect human rights on an equal basis.<sup>179</sup> However, majority of humanitarian organizations including the ones with a faith-based background, are funded by donor states and individuals with whom the recipient pledges an alliance.<sup>180</sup> Donors and local authorities are the primary decision-makers with regards to any humanitarian action, giving political roles to the altruistic field of work.<sup>181</sup>

Humanitarian aid that comes under larger foreign aid package aims at serving the strategic and interventionist global development policy of the richer countries.<sup>182</sup> However, humanitarian aid in Garissa appears to be unable to ensure sustainable development because the degrading conditions of life are still persistent.<sup>183</sup> While poor areas scream for help, the rich and partisan donors as well as the international stakeholders including the UN allow a significant level of biased action for the sake of security, ideological or political interests, hence neglecting the disciplined humanitarian action.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Martin Quack, "Based on Need Alone?: Impartiality in Humanitarian Action," *Reliefweb*, (2018).

<sup>178</sup> Leonardo Arriola, "Patronage and Political Stability in Africa," *SAGE Publication* 42. no. 10, (2009) : 1352-1354. [https://polisci.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/people/u3618/Arriola\\_2009.pdf](https://polisci.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/people/u3618/Arriola_2009.pdf) ; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>181</sup> Leader, *The Politics of Principle*.

<sup>182</sup> "Our Work: Global Prosperity Built on Smart Policy," *Center for Global Development*, available from <https://www.cgdev.org/our-work> ; accessed 2 September 2019.

<sup>183</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>184</sup> Oxfam, "Whose Aid is it Anyway? Politicizing Aid in Conflicts and Crisis," (2011) : 5. [https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file\\_attachments/bp145-whose-aid-anyway-100211-en\\_0\\_3.pdf](https://www-cdn.oxfam.org/s3fs-public/file_attachments/bp145-whose-aid-anyway-100211-en_0_3.pdf) ; accessed 1 September 2018.

### 3.3 IRK's Efforts to Eradicate Poverty in Garissa

The IRK in Garissa plays a key role in saving the lives of thousands of the poor and deprived residents of the area. According to the statistics revealed by the IRK, out of every 10000 people, the organization selects 2000 people to assist.<sup>185</sup> It is important to note that some of the IRK's target population in Garissa cannot survive without the basic services given by the organization. However, in the stage of implementation, the organization is challenged by the political factors that wish to decide about the selection of targets.<sup>186</sup>

In order to tackle poverty in Garissa, the IRK offers sharia-compliant loans of up to Ksh50,000 (US\$ 500) to less than 50 men and women every year. The loans helped the people initiate small-scale businesses including tailoring and grocery. However, the loans are transacted under political instructions and supervision, often looted or exploited, rendering IRK unable to manage an impartial microfinance development program.<sup>187</sup> On the other hand, the agency cannot increase the number of people who receive loans because the stakeholders prefer more of goods to be disbursed than cash. Interestingly, these goods are often the products of rich donor countries and are imported to Kenya.

Many girls in Garissa do not attend school some days a month because of not affording to purchase sanitation pads.<sup>188</sup> However, IRK provided school girls of Yathrib primary and secondary school in Garissa Ndogo with sanitation pads despite the fact that other schools are experiencing worse condition in terms of financial capacity to purchase sanitation facilities.<sup>189</sup> The sanitation pads are disbursed in the named school simply because: it is easy to access and it hosts most of the leaders' children in Garissa, and it is located at an area with a majority of voters.<sup>190</sup> That reality clearly reflects IRK's contradictions in its bid to provide aid impartially and a clear violation of the principle.

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<sup>185</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

Some classes in Yathrib are held under tents and trees; a school with a capacity of maximum 500 students, in which close to 1100 students pursue their primary education. The IRK's occasional support of the school by providing stationary goods help the students pursue their primary education, however, infiltrated by clannism, county and regional offices direct humanitarian organizations to pour their resources where it serves the clannist interests best.<sup>191</sup> Consequently, politicians take charge of where and how IRK's resources are donated, hence leaving no option for the agency but to adhere to partial instructions.<sup>192</sup> In spite the fact that the population of the rural areas in Garissa are by far more in need of IRK's services, Garissa Township is the most reasonable place in terms of security and equipment for humanitarian organizations to settle and manage their activities, and basic necessities including education and sanitation materials flow around more frequently in the education and health facilities of the township.<sup>193</sup>

The IRK engaged in construction of wells and solar power systems in other sub-counties in order to boost the pastoralist community's welfare, as well as promoting agriculture. Constructing wells in different parts of Garissa including Dadaab and Fafi, has been one of the most common forms of support from the organization. IRK has constructed four wells in different parts of Garissa including Fafi, and infrequently supplies sanitation services to schools in Fafi, Balambala and Garissa-ndogo.<sup>194</sup> However, because of government's over-reliance on NGOs for supply of water as well as lack of political accountability, the wells are not sufficient to respond to the need of the people.<sup>195</sup>

Dadaab refugee camp also dedicates a big chunk of assistance to itself certainly for its high urgency.<sup>196</sup> Through UNHCR, powerful donors within the international community continue to defend the existence of Dadaab refugee camp as a fundamental destination of the West's humanitarian aid.<sup>197</sup> For the rest of the sub-counties, humanitarian aid has been less productive, or

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<sup>191</sup> Oral Interview, Abdinoor Hassan, Garissa, 1st March 2019.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>194</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>195</sup> Kiprono Rop, "Factors Influencing Water Service Provision in Garissa Central Division, Kenya," (2013) : 1-19. [http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/60040/Rop\\_Factors%20Influencing%20Water%20Service%20Provision.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/60040/Rop_Factors%20Influencing%20Water%20Service%20Provision.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y) ; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>196</sup> Audrey Wabwire, "Resource Distribution and Security in Kenya: a Case study of North Eastern Kenya," USIU-Kenya (2016) : 23-24.

<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

in other words, less effective because of further challenges that other sub-counties face as opposed to the township, such as accessibility.<sup>198</sup>

### 3.4 IRK's Journey to Impartiality

The officials of the organization discussed that faith-inspired aspect of their work does not make them exclude non-Muslims. The staff of IRK spoke about instances of their work expansion to other regions of Kenya including Marsabit and Kilifi with less Muslims.<sup>199</sup> They also mentioned IRK's participation in the humanitarian emergency response during the 2007-2008 post-election violence in the Rift Valley.<sup>200</sup> However, due to a historical politics of patronage and extreme poverty, the organization's main area of operation is the north-eastern region. According to Joanna Macrae, humanitarian organizations after the end of the Cold War are further reunited with political institutions to address the geopolitical specificities in conflict resolution, hence forcing organizations to engage in aid provision where, when and how political interests dictate.<sup>201</sup> Therefore, undermining impartiality became a common aspect of humanitarianism.<sup>202</sup>

The employees of IRK spoke about poor and harsh life conditions in the North-Eastern region, naming those as the main motives for being in Garissa.<sup>203</sup> Arguably, the situation in Garissa not only motivate IRK to provide aid, but may be suitable for religious favoritism, or any other type of favoritism too. The university graduates in Garissa believe that the disturbing realities about their place of birth do not necessarily displease the management of the Islamic-inspired organizations, since Garissa holds a majority of Muslim population.<sup>204</sup>

In order to better grasp the difficulties that the IRK face when implementing its principles, a number of key issues that may affect the IRK's activities in Garissa are explained:

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Oral Interview, Stanley Maingi, (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 2 November 2018.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Devon Curtis, "Politics and Humanitarian Aid: Debates, Dilemmas and Dissension," *The Humanitarian Policy Group* (2001) : 5. <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/18F8247951DBA45CC1256D6600483BFD-ODI-politicsandhumanitarianaid-apr01.pdf> ; accessed 31 August 2019.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>204</sup> Muhammed Kusow, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

### 3.4.1 Political Barriers

Nicholas leader argues that political instructions contaminate impartiality in humanitarian action and the help is directed towards those chosen to be helped.<sup>205</sup> Humanitarian action's universal principles are compromised and have found different definitions depending on the political necessities dictated by the powerful political entities. Hence, humanitarian aid agencies work under circumstances that are not humanitarian-friendly.<sup>206</sup> The IRK ensures its existence and the ability to work by complying with the political and ideological demands, resulting in creation of grounds for IRK to pursue a religious and political selection of targets that does not speak to the universal concept of humanitarianism.<sup>207</sup> The political control of aid and the underdevelopment in Garissa are embraced by the IRK, given the fact that a significant number humanitarian initiatives by the agency took place in Garissa. It can also acquits the organization from helping the 'brothers' first.<sup>208</sup>

The IRK's total subordination to the government because of 'not being able to work in isolation' and the argument that the government is the main responsible body with regards to citizens' welfare reflect an inability to be impartial or independent.<sup>209</sup> The type of alliance that exists between IRK and political leadership is a cooperation based on total obedience from the agency towards political instructions.<sup>210</sup> It can be argued that in a scenario of absence of freedom, humanitarian organizations may see no necessity to follow universal humanitarian guidelines, and if inspired by a particular affiliation, including religious affiliations, they may choose to prioritize the members of a particular group, or the 'brothers' in the case of this IRK.<sup>211</sup>

To analyze the impartiality of IRK in Garissa, it is crucial to consider the element of subordination in the activities of IRW. The organization in Kenya is limited to providing basic services to the people of Garissa.<sup>212</sup> Similar to other parts of the region, perhaps slightly more advanced, Garissa

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<sup>205</sup> Leader, *The Politics of Principle*, 1-11.

<sup>206</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, "Challenges to Principled Humanitarian Action: Perspectives from Four Countries," (2016) : 8-9. [https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/nrc-hi-report\\_web.pdf](https://www.nrc.no/globalassets/pdf/reports/nrc-hi-report_web.pdf) ; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>207</sup> Elias Diriye, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Wilfred Mlay, "Some Myth about Faith-based Humanitarian Aid," *World Vision International* (2004). <https://odihpn.org/magazine/some-myths-about-faith-based-humanitarian-aid/> ; accessed 17 February 2019.

<sup>212</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

lacks fundamental infrastructural capacities.<sup>213</sup> Its primitive road networks, inadequate health facilities and low educational capacities describe best the awful condition in which the people live. It can be argued that an open expedient and partial strategy to administer the north-eastern part of the country by the bodies of public administration leaves IRK with no other choice but to inject most of its aid to the veins of Garissa and its north-eastern siblings.<sup>214</sup> Garissa's chaotic situation is a pure example of why humanitarian organizations exist in the first place.

The IRK is ideally adherent to both Islamic values and international humanitarian standards.<sup>215</sup> The organization is constructed on an Islamic-inspired structure, in accordance to the teachings of the holy Quran and the traditions of the prophet of Islam.<sup>216</sup> However, that pretension can highly likely be a subject of deviation. The inability of the county and national leaders to transform Garissa to a decent and standard living environment that is free of corruption and bigotry forces humanitarian agencies to prioritize the county and operate as instructed.<sup>217</sup> The organization operates solely as a complementing entity with the aim of fulfilling governmental plans, leading to a convenient use of the situation for faith-inspired prioritization; an anarchic situation which makes aid agencies, and particularly IRK in Garissa able to tie their activities and affiliations, without necessarily losing their humanitarian identity.<sup>218</sup>

The humanitarian services in Garissa are distributed with the consent of governor's office, paving way for implementation of patronage strategies. Therefore, aid agencies must serve the leaders' cause or they will not be able to work; a nature of politics that uses humanitarianism as a resource like any other, aimed at serving expedient political objectives.<sup>219</sup> All the powerful politicians who are blamed for mismanaging the resources share faith, and that provides a convenient environment for a possible use of humanitarian services for religious objectives.<sup>220</sup> By favoring a particular group, be it religious, clannist or political, the humanitarian services of the IRK and other agencies in Garissa will undermine the prosperity of the favored group in the long run.

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<sup>213</sup> Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Regional Disparities and Marginalisation in Kenya.

<sup>214</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>215</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Dominic Wabala, "Garissa Tops List of 10 Most Corrupt Counties," The Star, (2016). <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2016-03-16-garissa-tops-list-of-10-most-corrupt-counties/>; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>218</sup> Oral Interview, Ismail Diriye Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>219</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>220</sup> Elias Diriye, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

Many of the people in Garissa believe that the politics behind conquering the leadership of Garissa is associated with a primacy with regards to management of humanitarian aid.<sup>221</sup> A few prominent political figures with different political and clannist tendencies are the members whom the ‘mafia’ is comprised of. Garissa is also led by a group that seems to be suffering from internal political conflicts and yet surprisingly manage to share the pieces of the ‘cake’.<sup>222</sup> The dilemma associated with IRK’s activities in Garissa is that its services are directed through politically-imposed patterns, and may have turned to another piece of the ‘cake’.<sup>223</sup> The employee of IRK bluntly stated that idealism at times get no results. The IRK follows and complements the government and is a member of north-east NGOs Coordination Board that brings philanthropic organizations together in forums with government representatives and community gatekeepers in order to distribute its packages where needed the most.<sup>224</sup> For instance, in 2016, IRK had to step out of Modogashe because of the board’s order to direct IRK to a different location.

Most parts of Garissa were in equal need for assistance, hence resulting in competition over humanitarian resources by the politicians in order to secure clannist and political dominance.<sup>225</sup> The IRK’s assistance always faced the dilemma of sharing resources with people who have a sentimental relationship with their clannist and political patrons.<sup>226</sup> The organization implemented the policies aimed at pursuing political or clannist interests or ultimately a fusion of the two, with a common statement from the staff of IRK: ‘it is impossible to work without governments’ instructions’.<sup>227</sup>

The frequent attenders of Zikrillah mosque in Garissa Township approve the above facts, arguing that humanitarianism sounds better as a theory because in practice, it falls into the hands of corrupt politicians who seem to take advantage of Garissa’s vulnerability by dedicating aid to the members of a particular clan in times of emergency or political campaigns.<sup>228</sup> The so called ‘mafia’ is a

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Oral Interview, Abdi Dakane, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Humanitarian and Development Program, “Northeastern Kenya: A Perspective Analysis,” (2015) : 3. <https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ENG-Observatoire-Prospective-Huma-NORTHEasternKenya-12-2015.pdf> ; accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>226</sup> Abdi Mahmoud, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>227</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>228</sup> Abbas Deere, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

term that the people commonly used to refer to the network that runs different dimensions of life in Garissa, including the excessive and decisive humanitarian activism. The community members believed that in spite of the benefits of the excessive humanitarian assistance, the latter has proven to be an underdevelopment catalyst in the long run.<sup>229</sup>

### 3.4.2 Clannist Politics

North eastern region of Kenya has been a subject of Somali clan-related tensions.<sup>230</sup> The latter further exacerbates Garissa's anarchic political condition as clannist tendencies are the key determinants of choosing political representatives.<sup>231</sup> Clannism is at the core of the political structure that takes charge of the fate of IRK's impartiality.<sup>232</sup> Clan politics in Garissa are highly intertwined with the struggle to access the means of political power, making political positions as clan properties.<sup>233</sup>

Somali population consists of three major clans: Saab, Irir and Darood.<sup>234</sup> The people of north-eastern province of Kenya belong to Darood's largest sub-clan, known as Ogadeen.<sup>235</sup> Most of Ogadeen's population live in Somali region of Ethiopia, Jubaland and Puntland regions of Somalia and the north eastern part of Kenya. Perhaps the community dynamics among the Ogadeens in Garissa are the main causes of their further sub-division into more sub-clans including Abduwak/Authaq, Auliyan, Abdalla, etc. The first clan is the main stakeholder of humanitarian assistance in Garissa and Abduwak's domineering position through political representation on the national level remains persistent.<sup>236</sup> The political representation does not react sharply to the critical condition of the area, and the Abduwak's dominance seems not to be useful. Most people are in equal need of assistance in Garissa, but the stakeholders' priorities foil aid organizations' approach of 'need criteria', because it is only the need of major actors that is relevant.<sup>237</sup> In short,

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<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Hassan Mohamed, "Korane's New Leadership Style is Reason Garissa Clans Now Talk of Unity" *The Standard Media* (2018), available from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/article/2001300123/korane-s-new-leadership-style-is-reason-garissa-clans-now-talk-of-unity>; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>231</sup> World Bank, "Kenya Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project," (2017) : 29. <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/414531488805793647/pdf/SFG3117-SA-P161067-Box402893B-PUBLIC-Dislosed-3-3-2017.pdf>; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>232</sup> Elias Diriye, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>233</sup> Mohamed, Korane's New Leadership.

<sup>234</sup> Jan Abbink, *The Total Somali Clan Genealogy: a Preliminary Sketch* (Leiden: Netherlands, African Studies Center, 1999), 5.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> Oral Interview, Abdi Dakane, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>237</sup> Ibid.



IRK's Islamic sentiments are used by the Abduwak godfathers to manipulate the sense of 'brotherhood' to direct the services towards their clannist and political goals and not a pure humanitarian one.<sup>238</sup>

Abduwaks benefited from IRK's ignorance towards an impartial nature in aid disbursement and took control of how and where the organization must work.<sup>239</sup> Hence, IRK not only falls into the trap of religious favoritism, but also a clannist and political one prior to that. With a majority of Abduwaks, Garissa Township's development advantage pertains to Abduwak's political leverage, resulting in an overconcentration on the township by the government.<sup>240</sup>

The clannist leaders fiercely strive for occupying more rooms in the corridors of power and have no shame to apply divisionary and violent methods in their attempts to grasp and hold on to power and resources.<sup>241</sup> The inter-clan tensions between Auliyani and Abduwak which left behind loss of livestock and other resources more notably in Balambala led to signing a peace agreement between the two clans through Finn church aid's moderation efforts in 2015.<sup>242</sup> Therefore, it is crucial to argue that clan-oriented political orders meddle with the efforts of IRK's not to take sides. IRK in Garissa is impartial but in a system with a partial foundation.<sup>243</sup>

A key informant to this study and business owner in Garissa said that political leaders in the region and Garissa in particular guide IRK and other agencies to provide their services to the people of the clans which the leaders originally come from.<sup>244</sup> The high clan-orientated aspect of life in Somalia has penetrated into the lives of the residents of north east of Kenya, making it more difficult to manage an impartial disbursement of aid by the humanitarian organizations, specifically IRK.<sup>245</sup> After raising his concerns about the partisan inheritors of power in Garissa, Dakane further mentioned instances of political leaders paving way for their family members to

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<sup>238</sup> Ibid.

<sup>239</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Cliff Munda, "Divisive Clan Politics Won't Develop Garissa, Jama Tells Residents," Hivisasa, available from <https://hivisasa.com/posts/divisive-clan-politics-wont-develop-garissa-jama-tells-residents> ; accessed 1 September 2019.

<sup>242</sup> Mohamed Abdi, "Factors Influencing Perennial Sub-clan Conflict in Garissa County, Kenya," *Semanticscholar* (2016) : 13.

<sup>243</sup> Abdikarim Yusuf, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>244</sup> Oral Interview, Abdi Dakane, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid.

possess the country's top administrative seats.<sup>246</sup> He argued that the leaders go beyond their clans and create nepotistic networks that are consisted of their family members. After all, inter-communal marriages in Garissa are not favorable.<sup>247</sup> Inter-clan rivalries to possess resources and gain political influence through putting one of their own as their representative fuel the flames of underdevelopment in the area.<sup>248</sup>

### 3.4.3 Gender-Related Issues

Tahhiya who travels every three days to Nairobi to make a living stressed on the need to empower women because the socio-cultural norms in the region suppresses women and tampers with their individual and social growth.<sup>249</sup> Drained from long working hours and road trips, she argued that leaders do not accept aid if assumed not compatible with cultural norms.<sup>250</sup> in other words, IRK would not be welcomed if it does not favor its fellow Muslim community members in Garissa and that has resulted in failure of any decisive program to provide women with higher education.<sup>251</sup> The elders and gatekeepers are strictly faithful to their cultural and religious interpretations, and would make endeavors to allow aid to come in under circumstances that preserve their political and ideological objectives.<sup>252</sup> The outcome of that notion is an expedient disbursement of aid, far from what could be described as impartial or equal.

Hussein, who manages a family grocery business in Garissa expressed an opposite opinion to that of Tahhiya.<sup>253</sup> He stated that humanitarian organizations favor women in terms of health services and no or little attention is paid to men in dealing with the health challenges that come as a result of poverty and illiteracy.<sup>254</sup> Hussein further spoke about an emerging drug and theft problem among the youth, particularly men which is often ignored by the government and the IRK. He mentioned a sense of gender prioritization in favor of girls.<sup>255</sup> The experiences of both Hussein

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<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Ibid.

<sup>248</sup> Elias Diriye, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>249</sup> Oral Interview, Tahiya Farah, Garissa, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid.

<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Oral Interview, Ismail Diriye, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>253</sup> Oral Interview, Hussein Abdirahman, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>254</sup> Ibid.

<sup>255</sup> Ibid.

and Tahhiya reflect the existence of gender partiality in humanitarian programs of IRK and among significant portion of people of Garissa in general.

#### **3.4.4 Religious Prioritization**

Political and communal leaders along with the majority of the population do not seem to be bothered about the rights of non-Muslims in Garissa.<sup>256</sup> Speaking to two members of Christian faith in Garissa generated further knowledge about the absence of impartiality in the root of IRK's aid disbursement in the county. They spoke about the general hostile attitude against Christians and their inability to practice their right to worship in an appropriate manner.<sup>257</sup> The opposition towards construction of any church or Christian-based organizations is yet another concern raised by the minority Christians in Garissa.<sup>258</sup>

A Christian casual worker living in Garissa described himself as hopeless about any sincere interest from the government to enhance quality of life in Garissa and said that despite his hopes of working and living modestly, lack of business and unemployment has destroyed his chances of prosperity.<sup>259</sup> The Christian respondents argued that they never received any help from IRK, but the Red Cross assisted them with water in 2018. Although IRK revealed that a small number of non-Muslims have also been the beneficiaries of IRK's services in public schools in Fafi and Garissa Ndogo, the socio-political characteristics of the region aid agencies regulates the behavior of aid agencies, commanding them to help in a biased way.

Non-Muslim teachers and believers of Christian faith have fled Garissa because of threats posed by members of Al-shabaab.<sup>260</sup> It can be raised in mind that IRK's overconcentration on Garissa is also a tactical step to maintain its religious partiality in a safe and secure environment without fears of getting harmed from the radical armed organization.

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<sup>256</sup> Ahmed Salim, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>257</sup> Oral Interview, Johnson Kamora (casual worker), 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>258</sup> Ibid.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> Mohamed, The Impact of Terrorism, 1-3.

The process of deciding on who to help in humanitarian action has political, cultural and ideological elements to it, and these elements dictate the target populations in aid disbursement.<sup>261</sup> The organization engages in processes that can potentially restrict its performance to particular policies and coerce the organization to compromise on its impartial way of aid provision, and the political and clannist leadership that decides about the impartiality of IRK's projects in Garissa.<sup>262</sup>

### **3.4.5 The “No Need to Work” Notion: Are the People Culprits?**

External and internal factors both play an equally important role in the county's failure to keep up competing with other regions in Kenya. External factors are those which the people of Garissa are victimized by, and internal factors are what makes them culprits. The mother of all challenges in Garissa is an educational debility which then results in an absence of socio-political awareness, hence making people unable to rescue themselves from marginalization and impoverishment that they suffer from.<sup>263</sup> The latter has also contributed to an extant mentality of “no need to work” which is backed by the humanitarian assistance. It creates a desirable environment to build on clannist and religious extremism. Not to mention, it also makes it easier for IRK to be comfortable about ignoring impartiality.

Blaming the policy-makers for Garissa's unpleasant economic status cannot be sufficient in addressing the concerns of this study, nor can it be rationalistic due to the contradicting relationship between the people and the leaders of Garissa. Another tragedy that contributes to the existing anarchy in Garissa is the extremely illiterate population.<sup>264</sup> Barely able to read and write in English, people are not capable to politically determine their rights and stand for them.<sup>265</sup> This misfortune is produced as a result of the people's commitment to Salafism and the belief that secular education brings more harms than benefits.<sup>266</sup> On the other hand, shortage of teachers with the necessary

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<sup>261</sup> Ibid.

<sup>262</sup> Ibid.

<sup>263</sup> Abdirahman, Somali Pastoralism in Transition.

<sup>264</sup> Arangi Arangi, “Garissa County Ranks Last in Literacy Levels,” (2017), available from <https://hivisasa.com/posts/report-garissa-county-ranks-last-in-literacy-levels> ; accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2018.

<sup>265</sup> Oral Interview, Ismail Diriye, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>266</sup> The Conversation, “The Preacher Who Laid the Ground for Violent Jihadi Ideology in Kenya,” (2018), available from <http://theconversation.com/the-preacher-who-laid-the-ground-for-violent-jihadi-ideology-in-kenya-106712> ; accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

qualifications makes it more difficult for students to discover their potentials, and rescue themselves from radicalization.<sup>267</sup>

Only 8.1% of people of the North-Eastern province are literate.<sup>268</sup> The staff of IRK in Garissa confirmed the fact that the population do not demand much from the government because of a common mentality of tolerating hardships and be content with basic means of survival.<sup>269</sup> In the environment associated with patronage politics, lack of a minimal literacy level among the population keeps them unaware of their rights and also makes people view any governmental development project as a privilege and not a responsibility.<sup>270</sup>

Many people in Garissa, including those in their middle and elderly stages of life stated that humanitarian prioritization is their right, but at the same time argued that excessive humanitarian assistance contributes to economic retrogression by shutting down sustainable economic aspirations among the youths.<sup>271</sup> The above contradiction raises the concern that clan-based political siding by the people of Garissa particularly in rural areas is more or less an endeavor to monopolize humanitarian aid, making people not any better than their political leaders.

The war of monopoly of humanitarianism by clannist political leaders, their poor performance and consequently a high level of poverty help IRK legitimize its heavy presence among the Muslim population of Garissa.<sup>272</sup> The radical interpretations of Islam in Garissa is not limited to violent imposition of a particular understanding of the religion; it is broader and more complex.<sup>273</sup> It is used to justify the unproductive mindset among a significant portion of clients of humanitarian aid, who consider IRK's services as their unconditional right, and keep enjoying a bogus and fatal notion of not having to work.<sup>274</sup> Hence, fruits sellers, hairdressers, motorcycle taxi operators and construction workers in Garissa are the citizens of other parts of the country who have migrated to

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<sup>267</sup> Estephen Astariko, "Insecurity No Excuse to Understaff Garissa Schools, MP Shurie tells TSC," *The Star* (2019), available from <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/north-eastern/2019-07-04-insecurity-is-no-excuse-to-understaff-garissa-schools-mp-shurie-tells-tsc/> ; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>268</sup> Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Kenya National Adult Literacy Survey Report, (2007).

<sup>269</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>270</sup> Roger Tangri, *The Politics of Patronage in Africa: Parastatals, Privatization and Private* (James Currey, 1999), 3-4.

<sup>271</sup> Oral Interview, Ismail Diriye, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>272</sup> Mohammad Haji, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>273</sup> Ibid.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid.

Garissa to snatch job opportunities. Majority of the population in Garissa suffer from what is described as aid syndrome. Dependency on aid in Garissa reduces the possibilities of a dynamic market in Garissa and the country in general, but at the same time it continues to be a vital source for survival.<sup>275</sup> In another instance, businessmen of central region of Kenya succeeded to dominate the profitable barber shop business in Garissa township.

The opinion of elders and gatekeepers of Garissa is one of the key determinants of allocation of aid by IRK. According to the residents' observation, the prominent gatekeepers and leaders are affiliated with strong clannist, religious or political sentiments.<sup>276</sup> The poor local leadership by uneducated gatekeepers as well as people's unaware and unambitious lifestyle does not allow any notable change to be applied in the common understanding of development.<sup>277</sup> Majority of the residents of the county are content or in support of the extant political and economic environment, hence putting the population in position of not only victims but also culprits.<sup>278</sup> The township's superiority to the other sub-counties and Garissa's problematic political and economic condition in general is a result of the majority's will in the county.<sup>279</sup>

### **3.5 Life in Garissa**

Garissa is located in the low lands that covers one of the largest provinces in the country.<sup>280</sup> Drought is experienced annually in different degrees and the arid region sees rain only a few times a year, within not more than a month.<sup>281</sup> Nomads of Garissa rely heavily on water to sustain their livestock.<sup>282</sup> The IRK's projects helped people access the basic needs including water, even though inconsistently, however, despite the efforts by the IRK and other humanitarian organizations in Garissa to resolve the shortage of water, construction of wells for instance, drought still continues affecting people by destroying their livestock and endangering their health.<sup>283</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Kagwara Wanjiru, "The Effects of Food Aid on Food Security in Kenya," (2014) : 2.

[http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/76465/Kagwara\\_The%20effects%20of%20food%20aid%20on%20food%20security%20in%20Kenya.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y](http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/76465/Kagwara_The%20effects%20of%20food%20aid%20on%20food%20security%20in%20Kenya.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y); accessed 17 June 2019

<sup>276</sup> Oral Interview, Ismail Diriye, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

<sup>278</sup> Oral Interview, Abdinoor Hassan, Garissa, 1st March 2019.

<sup>279</sup> Abdi Mahmoud, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>280</sup> Garissa County Government, "Second Garissa County Integrated Development Plan," (2018) : 3-4.

[https://www.globalcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Garissa\\_CIDP\\_2018-2022\\_County-Integrated-Development-Plan.pdf](https://www.globalcrf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Garissa_CIDP_2018-2022_County-Integrated-Development-Plan.pdf); accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid.

<sup>283</sup> Oral Interview, Abdi Dakane, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

There are no major industries in Garissa.<sup>284</sup> Humanitarian actors who work in Garissa believe that “people survive anyway”.<sup>285</sup> They emphasized on the need for more complex development projects to enhance the infrastructure, including roads, hospitals and schools.<sup>286</sup> Garissa township began enjoying tarmac road from 2013, which according to the population is not sufficient to enable the business community to invest in the area in a progressive and visionary manner.<sup>287</sup> According to the employees of IRK, when certain areas in Garissa are not easily accessible through road, impartiality needs to be “contextually analyzed”.<sup>288</sup> The organization “has to do what it can” to bring Garissa back to life without much concern about the organization’s lack of a strongly impartial approach.<sup>289</sup>

The youth of Garissa claim that inequalities in allocation of resources have paved way for lack of industrialization. A pastoralist from Fafi expressed his disappointment in political leaders for their refusal to invest in pastoralism, which has made Fafi’s pastoralists dependent on the IRK-sponsored wells.<sup>290</sup> Nomadism is a symbol of people’s pride and identity in Garissa.<sup>291</sup> He insisted that for as long as their pride is ignored, nobody must blame IRK to prioritize Fafi because they “deserve it the most”.<sup>292</sup>

The government is hesitant to initiate the necessary projects that are the key channels of providing water, partly because of the insecurities.<sup>293</sup> The insecure environment is more visible outside the township and more towards the Kenya-Somalia border, and is to some extent rooted in the historical claim by both Somalia and Kenya to own the north-eastern region.<sup>294</sup> The independent Kenya did not succeed to neutralize the Somalis’ sense of ownership of the north-east and keeps postponing the inevitable consequences of its exclusive approach; one that reminisces the British colonial approach.<sup>295</sup>

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<sup>284</sup> Garissa County Government, Second Garissa County Integrated Development Plan, 3-4.

<sup>285</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid.

<sup>287</sup> Oral Interview, Abdi Dakane, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>288</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid.

<sup>290</sup> Ahmed Salim, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>291</sup> Abdirahman, Somali Pastoralism in Transition.

<sup>292</sup> Ahmed Salim, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>293</sup> Ibid.

<sup>294</sup> Njeri, Kenya that was Never Kenyan.

<sup>295</sup> Ibid.

British colonial rulers had no interest in nomadism.<sup>296</sup> The post-independent Kenyan leaders are also fond of the same school of thought. Colonial leaders controlled the region through imposition of discriminatory policies including restriction of movement to indigenous people.<sup>297</sup> The described political culture did not change much with the establishment of the Republic of Kenya in 1964, and despite termination of the militaristic rule over the region, post-colonial Kenyan governments replicated the colonial methods, perhaps in a different way.<sup>298</sup> The long, unmarked and unequipped dirt roads from Garissa township to other constituencies can certainly be a subject of serious questions. There seems to be a deliberate opposition to Garissa's development and the access to development keeps being hindered by local and national governments.<sup>299</sup> As a result of political intervention in virtually every other aspect of life in Garissa, many people share the common attribute of "being excluded" from the Kenyan national family.<sup>300</sup> Hence, since IRK adheres to the government's policies for the sake of existence, it can be argued that perhaps the religious and political dynamics of Garissa regulate IRK's services, and not necessarily the humanitarian principles.<sup>301</sup>

Garissa's hands are tied when corresponding to the high medical demands that emerge as a result of poverty and drought.<sup>302</sup> For example, Garissa's provincial general hospital slightly developed over the past five years; however, the hospital lacks the financial strength to employ doctors with different specialties including radiology blood transfusion.<sup>303</sup> It is also not easily accessible due to poor road conditions and long distance.<sup>304</sup> The budget constraints along with people's financial inability to seek the services of private health facilities raises the hands of Garissa's stakeholders towards humanitarian aid. The IRK provides the hospital with basic medicine, for example for flu or diarrhea, and gives IRK one more reason to make a religious and political use of humanitarian

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<sup>296</sup> Tabea Scharrer, "Ambiguous Citizens": Kenyan Somalis and the Question of Belonging. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* (2016) : 494-513. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17531055.2018.1483864> ; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>297</sup> Njeri, Kenya that was Never Kenyan.

<sup>298</sup> Ibid.

<sup>299</sup> Oral Interview, Ali Kheiro, Garissa, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

<sup>300</sup> Wabwire, Resource Distribution and Security in Kenya.

<sup>301</sup> Abbas Deere, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>302</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>303</sup> Clerk Changers, "Report of the Departmental Committee on Health and Sanitation Garissa County Assembly," (2018) : 11. <https://garissasassembly.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Health-committee-on-GCRH.pdf> ; accessed 3 March 2019.

<sup>304</sup> James Chege, "Health Challenges in Garissa" (2017), available from <https://hivisasa.com/posts/health-challenges-in-garissa> ; accessed 3 March 2019



assistance. Consequently, IRK's aid becomes a remedial instrument to compensate negligence within the health system, far from the ethical disciplines that guide the organization's actions.<sup>305</sup>

Kenya at independence assumed that an equal distribution does not serve the long-term economic progression of the nation and national economic growth should be put in a superior position because as the country gets economically elevated, the capital begins to flow into poor areas.<sup>306</sup> However, the general economic approach taken by the Kenyan government does not seem to be time-efficient or even keen to initiate the economic revolution that the north-east strives for.<sup>307</sup> Humanitarian organizations cannot remain impartial in their new role as political actors. They are prone to manipulation.<sup>308</sup> As a result of manipulation and control, IRK's services in Garissa are arguably prone to ideological, clannist and political influence.

National policy-makers' disregard for the Garissa appears to be a cultural collusion between the agriculturalists who administer the country against pastoralists of the north-east who are deemed 'un-Kenyan'.<sup>309</sup> The expedient politicization of affairs has transformed the complementing role of IRK in Garissa to an instrument of maintaining the basic necessities of survival, which evidently indicates a transition to a role that directly decides about people's lives.<sup>310</sup> However, the adaptation of IRK to political guidelines may not necessarily be a critical blunder in the eyes of the organizations' donors and managers. Had it not been for Garissa's horrific conditions of life, IRK could not step into Garissa, let alone pursuing any expedient or partial notions.

The restaurants of Garissa township are filled with educated youth who spend multiple hours in the township searching for jobs or pursue their education with wishes of self-sustenance that seem more like a mirage.<sup>311</sup> Abdinoor, an undergraduate student of procurement in Garissa stated that political leaders such as members of parliament and county commissioners are the main beneficiaries of the aid and their supporters are the prime targets of aid distribution. He added that

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<sup>305</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>306</sup> Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and Society for International Development, "Exploring Kenya's Inequality: Pulling Apart or Pulling Together" (2013) : 4.

<sup>307</sup> Ahmed Salim, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>308</sup> Leader, *The Politics of Principle*, 3.

<sup>309</sup> Scharrer, *Ambiguous Citizens*.

<sup>310</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>311</sup> Oral Interview, Abdinoor Hassan, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

politicians defend a partial use of humanitarian capacities in Garissa for it compensates the loss of resources that they fight to personally confiscate.<sup>312</sup> A procurement student argued that the style and magnitude with which IRK and other humanitarian organizations operate in Garissa need an immediate reevaluation because they never brought people out of misery.<sup>313</sup> IRK is forced to negotiate with local politicians and act upon the instructions set by the political leaders who represent Garissa.<sup>314</sup> This conforms to extant fear that if they demand change and act upon it, they may put their lives at risk by being deprived of the little they depend on. This is a clear sign that people of Garissa have played an equal role in ensuring a long-lasting misery for themselves.

The youths in Garissa believe that regional leaders have left the fate of the region to humanitarian organizations and that people of Garissa need political participation more than water and food. After all, the sense of isolation from the rest of the country and also dire need for basic needs can drive the public opinion away from the issue of violation of humanitarian impartiality, making it an irrelevant issue in the eyes of many.

The reality of the IRK's intervention in Garissa reflects the existence of strong ties between aid and the socio-political dynamics.<sup>315</sup> The tremendous degree of poverty along with an agriculture-unfriendly climate are embraced by the rich European and Arab Muslim donors of IRK, also known as IRK family, to channel most of what they donate to the Muslim population of Garissa.<sup>316</sup> However, over 50 years of time have not been enough to ensure a decent condition of life for the people of Garissa, and the hot sands seem to be burning not only people's feet, but also the social and political awareness that can respond to their needs.<sup>317</sup>

### **3.6 Is Impartiality an Impossibility for IRK?**

Ali, a Somali Kenyan who is also a citizen of UK believes that Kenya's alliance with the West is doing the country more harm than good.<sup>318</sup> He argued that humanitarian organizations are adherent to policies of governments with representatives who are more loyal to interests of powerful foreign

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<sup>312</sup> Ibid.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Oral Interview, Abdinoor Hassan, Garissa, 1st March 2019.

<sup>316</sup> Islamic Relief Worldwide, Kenya Country Profile.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> Oral Interview, Ali Kheiro, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

allies than that of their own nation. He blamed aid agencies' defeat against external pressures on the global political order which is a capitalist one in nature.<sup>319</sup> The powerful Western donors of humanitarian aid in Kenya construct political relationships aimed at pursuing biased economic and political goals.<sup>320</sup> “for as long as African countries accept foreign aid, justice will not prevail...” Ali said. Governments will not be condemned for or stopped from their exclusionary policies because they politically and economically maintain and cherish their loyalty to the “big brothers”. Ali argued that peace in Somalia is not profitable for the powerful donors and the Somali population are doomed to be managed through humanitarian aid. The policy of using excess humanitarian aid to pave way for improvement of life standards can be a catalyzer of underdevelopment.<sup>321</sup> The continuous provision of humanitarian aid including food and water in Garissa increases the residents' carelessness about development, decreases local production and omits the need to create a competitive and vibrant market in Garissa.<sup>322</sup> Nevertheless, that is not the sole factor that contributes to IRK's failure in eradication of poverty.<sup>323</sup>

A businessman based in Nairobi who often travels to Garissa to visit his family and pursue business, believes that humanitarian organizations including IRK in Garissa are in favor of Somali–Kenyans who practice the Islamic faith and the prioritization of the region is justifiable because of the discriminatory and inattentive attitudes that formulate the policies of the government with regards to the pastoralist Muslims of Garissa and the bigger region.<sup>324</sup> He further argued that the government's misery of incapability to combat radicalization generated illusions, hence making people of the region be seen as suspects of terrorism-related crimes, and abandoning the people in isolation.<sup>325</sup> He saw it fully understandable that IRK would focus on the members of Islamic faith in Garissa. However, residents in Garissa rarely apprehended that heavy humanitarian intervention particularly by IRK could be nothing but a part and parcel of the discriminatory attitude towards the region.

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<sup>319</sup> Ibid.

<sup>320</sup> Mills, Neo-Humanitarianism, 165-171.

<sup>321</sup> Kaiser Sithole, “The Role of Foreign Aid in the Underdevelopment of the States in Sub-saharan Africa,” (2014) : 2-30. <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/94cc/95903415dae64197db5006e20de4389a595b.pdf> ; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>322</sup> Oral Interview, Abdirashid Hussein (IRK program manager), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>323</sup> Abdikarim Yusuf, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>324</sup> Oral Interview, Abdihakim Kalif, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

<sup>325</sup> Ibid.

How will IRK eventually deal with the intrinsic contradictions in its ideal principles on paper vis a vis the decision to find explanations to justify its disregard for impartiality and other humanitarian principles? Do the members of humanitarian community particularly IRK in denial about their impartial position? Is contributing to underdevelopment of the region by excessive presence speaking pleasantly to the universal altruistic principles? Is what IRK doing and impartial act of kindness or recipe for disaster? The answer to those questions is yes. However, the instrumentalization of humanitarian aid by political entities is a fair complaint. At the end, it is best that IRK be left to deal with its conscience.

Observations aimed at examining impartiality in modern humanitarian activism through scrutinizing the activities of IRK in Garissa manifest a contradiction that approves this study's hypothesis. The IRK violates impartiality by having to be obedient to political orders, or willing to possibly prioritize the population that believe in Islam. The officials of the organization responded to the questions on IRK's impartiality as if the principle is both practiced and ignored at the same time.

Impartiality under political influence and ideological prioritization remains to be more of a myth than a practical principle in modern humanitarian interventions, or what is termed as neo-humanitarianism.<sup>326</sup> Apart from the draining climatic traits of Garissa, the security threat posed by Al-shabaab's active presence, strong clannist sentiments, consistent economic stagnancy, high level of poverty and inadequate infrastructure are the bitter angles of Garissa's social geography that have emerged as a result of a historical discriminatory and exclusive set of guidelines and policies in both the colonial and post-colonial era.

The governor of Garissa, Mr. Ali Korane in his remarks during the frontier counties development council conference held in February 2019 in Garissa stated that development of the North-Eastern province demands eradication of violent extremism, resolution of communal conflicts and elimination of radicalization, and the region's freedom to grow is being violated by the named hindrances.<sup>327</sup> However, Garissa township politician Ahmed Abdi argued that the obstacles named

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<sup>326</sup> Mills, Neo-Humanitarianism, 6.

<sup>327</sup> Estephen Astariko, "Unite and Fight for Rights, Leaders Told," The Star, available from <https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/north-eastern/2019-03-02-unite-and-fight-for-rights-leaders-told/>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

by Garissa's representative excludes the absence of a vital prerequisite for development, which is a dynamic and inclusive political leadership in international, national and regional stages.<sup>328</sup> The endeavors to preserve the status quo by the leading political entities in all the three stages generate political and administrative incompetence; a collection of organizational shortcomings that not only turn the humanitarian principles of impartiality and independence to null instructions, but also defuses the long-term development perspectives.<sup>329</sup>

As noted earlier in this chapter, humanitarian organizations inevitably engage in multilateral relationships with governments, powerful donors and community leaders.<sup>330</sup> They are incapable to survive without subordination to the particular guidelines formulated by different stakeholders who control humanitarian aid.<sup>331</sup> They are limited and dependent on powerful political institutions and often fail to implement their ideal mandates. Impartiality of humanitarian assistance has failed to grow roots in IRK's activities, and the organizations' management announces its full subordination to the donors and Kenya's leaders. According to IRK's financial officer in Garissa, relying solely on the principle of impartiality is "almost impossible and certainly not realistic..."<sup>332</sup>

The next chapter of this study will give an analysis of the wider political dimensions that task the humanitarian agencies to regulate their activities as instructed by national and international political entities. It explores the qualities of humanitarian organizations independence in the contemporary era from the lenses of IRK's activities in Garissa from 2007 to 2017. Evaluation of IRK's independence in Garissa will ease the comprehension of the philosophy behind the expedient notions among the humanitarian community.

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<sup>328</sup> Carson Jnr, "Garissa MCAs Sleeping on their Jobs, Aspirant Claims," available from <https://hivisasa.com/posts/garissa-mcas-sleeping-on-their-jobs-aspirant-claims>; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>329</sup> Arriola, Patronage and Political Stability in Africa.

<sup>330</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, Challenges to Principled Humanitarian Action.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid.

<sup>332</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### INDEPENDENCE: A HUMANITARIAN MYTH?

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter produces additional information on the state of humanitarianism with regards to the fundamental principle of independence. It dissects how humanitarian organizations operate in a global environment that is highly political and become subjects of control by political actors who take benefit of humanitarian aid as an instrument of political dominance.<sup>333</sup> It is the aim of this section to test the independent gesture of humanitarian organizations through a glance towards the activities of IRK in Garissa from 2007 to 2017. It does so by investigating the independence of the organization's services from international and national political frameworks. This chapter hypothesizes that IRK's autonomy is defeated by political actors at the county, national and international levels and leaders are the chief determinants of how, where and when humanitarian projects are disbursed.<sup>334</sup>

#### 4.2 How does a Strict Humanitarian NGO Operate?

The principles proclaimed in the 20<sup>th</sup> international conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement in 1965 in Vienna followed by the 1994 Code of Conduct clearly reflect the necessity for humanitarian action to remain independent and neutral, meaning that they preserve their autonomy in order to be free of political, ideological/religious or racial affiliations.<sup>335</sup> The 1994 Code of Conduct refers to the international Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations in Disaster Relief.<sup>336</sup> Principle 3 of the 1994 Code of Conduct prohibits any inclination to take standpoints of any sort by humanitarian actors.<sup>337</sup> The IRW is a signatory to the mentioned agreements and it demonstrates a firm commitment to remain detached from any type of bias.<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Curtis, Politics and Humanitarian Aid, 1-5.

<sup>334</sup> Oxfam, Whose Aid is it Anyway, 2011.

<sup>335</sup> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, "Hunger, Disaster, Hope: Rethinking Humanitarian Action in Africa," (2009) : 23. [https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/177700-BiA-Report-EN%20\(2\).pdf](https://www.ifrc.org/Global/Publications/general/177700-BiA-Report-EN%20(2).pdf) ; accessed 1 September 2018.

<sup>336</sup> Ibid.

<sup>337</sup> Schenkenberg Van Mierop, "Coming Clean on Neutrality and Independence: The Need to Assess the Application of Humanitarian Principles," *International Review of Red Cross* (2016) : 295-296.

<sup>338</sup> Islamic Relief Worldwide, IRW Code of Conduct. 2014.

Despite reaching different definitions of what independent humanitarian organizations are, the world is yet crawling to present one general definition as to what constitutes an NGO.<sup>339</sup> This is rooted in the diverse range of NGOs, big and small, formal or informal in societies with different objectives including that of humanitarian.<sup>340</sup> However, in all sorts of definition, be it the definition in the USA with more emphasis on being ‘non-profit’ or in the UK where a NGO is one that is ‘non-political’, there is a common fundamental principle of independence that guides the activities of the voluntary organizations.<sup>341</sup> The terminological introduction of an NGO is originated in the formation of United Nations in 1945 and the need to develop an official discipline for the non-state actors that were given consultative status in the UN initiatives.<sup>342</sup> From the late 1980s, NGOs assumed greater responsibilities by being perceived as the new tools that provide solutions to protracted obstacles to development.<sup>343</sup> For that matter, the late 1980s marks the start of new, flexible and contradicting types of humanitarian assistance.<sup>344</sup>

### **4.3 Why is Garissa a Humanitarian Hub?**

In order to understand the roots of Garissa’s long overreliance on humanitarian aid, a brief history of aid activism in Kenya and a background on hosting a great number of humanitarian organizations by Garissa helps understand better the socio-political elements that bring humanitarian aid to Garissa and regulate its disbursement. Then, the current challenges ahead of Garissa’s development are demonstrated to better absorb the state of affairs that restricts the free spirit of humanitarian activism.

#### **4.3.1 Kenya and Aid**

Years of foreign humanitarian aid inflow to the north-eastern region of Kenya did not decrease people’s vulnerability to poverty and drought and the named challenges in Garissa continue to affect thousands of people annually.<sup>345</sup> In short, IRK’s adherence to government’s impotent trials

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<sup>339</sup> Sylvania Ferreira, “Review of Non-governmental Organizations, Definition and History,” Springer, (2010) : 1-5.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Ibid.

<sup>342</sup> Kerstin Martens, “Mission Impossible? Defining Non-governmental Organizations,” *International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 13, no. 3. (2002) : 271.

<sup>343</sup> Ibid.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.

<sup>345</sup> Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Kenya, Climate Risk Profile Garissa County, Kenya County Climate Risk Profile Series, (2016).

to develop Garissa caused further degradations.<sup>346</sup> From 1980s with the economic crisis in Kenya, the country underwent an unbearable economic condition, forcing the leaders to accept the structural adjustment packages offered by international monetary fund and the World Bank. Kenya from then became a frequent client of Western aid.<sup>347</sup>

The magnitude of aid in Kenya from 1980 to 1999 took an unbalanced course, peaking from US\$ 393.4 million in 1980 to US\$ 1120.5 million in 1990, and decreasing to US\$ 308.85 million in 1999.<sup>348</sup> In 2002 with the establishment of the new government under Mwai Kibaki's leadership and the quest to utilize domestic capacities for economic growth, Kenya's strife for development of infrastructure and her efforts to improve social welfare resulted in an increase in the country's borrowing, reflecting a fresh indication of the country's confidence in foreign aid for economic advancement.<sup>349</sup> Therefore, the desperation to increase the country's infrastructural and financial capacities have resulted in acceptance of IRK's services with neither the necessary premeditation on its consequences, nor on an efficient use of the services for Garissa's development.

In a contradicting response to the query about the circumstances of the organization's relationship with political institutions, IRK declared its firm position as the government's complementing body, dedicated to government's development plans and prioritizations.<sup>350</sup> On the other hand, the staff of IRK expressed their grief over the historical marginalization of the area formerly known as the northern frontier district (NFD), and the north-eastern province after the formation of the independent republic of Kenya in December 1964.<sup>351</sup>

#### 4.3.2 Why Garissa?

The dark period of British colonial rule in Kenya began its official course in 1920, embarking on an authoritarian, exploitative and discriminatory journey of governance.<sup>352</sup> The British settlers

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<sup>346</sup> Abdikarim Yusuf, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>347</sup> Carlsson, Somolekae and Van de Walle, *Foreign Aid in Africa*, 113-115.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid.

<sup>349</sup> Francis Mweza, "A Case Study of Aid Effectiveness in Kenya: Volatility and Fragmentation of Foreign Aid, with a Focus on Health," *Wolfensohn Center for Development* (2009) : 3-4.

<sup>350</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>351</sup> Mulango Baraza, "Address Sentiments Leading to Talk of Northeastern Secession," *Daily Nation*, (2019), available from <https://www.nation.co.ke/oped/letters/Address-sentiments-leading-to-talk-of-northeastern-secession/440806-5162218-lwjimdz/index.html>; accessed 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

<sup>352</sup> Ibid.



suppressed the Africans and Asians by leaving no space for them to participate in decision-making processes and a set of dictatorial administrative methods were applied on the people of the NFD too, aspiring the regions' population to beat on the drums of Pan-Somali Secession.<sup>353</sup> The British colonial government administered the NFD with a hostile and segregating style, a fact attributed to the British perception of the Somali as a threat and also due to the climate of the area which rendered it incompatible with the white settlers' agricultural interests.<sup>354</sup> Consequently, that displeased the well-armed Somalis and the colonial government was forced to administer the region using military between 1921 and 1926.<sup>355</sup> In this period, the 1926 "closed districts ordinance" sought to isolate the NFD region from the rest of the country by regulating the travel of non-residents into the area. NFD had to be governed using a contextual and specific method.<sup>356</sup> The militaristic control of Garissa continues to prevail until today, manifested in heavy presence of military forces and a police check after every 40 kilometers towards different constituencies in Garissa. Kenyan authorities have a single-minded approach towards security in Garissa: they would choose police-check over enhancing the conditions of roads.<sup>357</sup> There is a fundamental difference between the two approaches. A lot of insecurities threaten Garissa as a result of poor road networks and businessmen and owners of capital find it irrational to invest in rural areas.<sup>358</sup> They are irrelevant and unimportant to both local and national leaders. For instance, it is not permissible for individuals to access Fafi except for the residents, government officials and humanitarian workers.<sup>359</sup>

Although security forces are actively in control of movement from and to Fafi, the constituency remains vulnerable to religious and clannist violent extremism.<sup>360</sup> Teachers in Fafi argued that the terrorists easily infiltrate police checks because the police officers are poorly equipped and highly keen on engaging in bribery.<sup>361</sup> The staff of IRK also illustrated examples of not being allowed to reach their target places because of security measures.<sup>362</sup> The exclusionism witnessed in Kenya's

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<sup>353</sup> Ibid.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid.

<sup>355</sup> Njeri, Kenya that was Never Kenyan.

<sup>356</sup> Ibid.

<sup>357</sup> Mohammed Haji, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid.

<sup>362</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamed (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

attitude towards Garissa seems to be a growing threat and certainly tampers with an idealistic humanitarian activism by IRK.

The separate administration of NFD through martial law as well as restriction of movement from and to the NFD by the British colonial government, inter-clan conflicts across the region and inadequate resources forced the colonial rulers to confess their failure in managing the Somali population in 1946.<sup>363</sup> Despite the unanimous will of the people of NFD in 1963 to secede, the British decision to preserve the region as part of Kenya's territory declared by the colonial secretary Duncan Sandys frustrated the population, resulting in a more antagonizing vibe towards the region.<sup>364</sup> People were hungry and their lives as well as that of their livestock were in danger. Hence, they became suicidal and revengeful as if they had nothing to lose. As from 1964, the population's armed resistances began to flourish and Kenya found itself in a civil war, known as Shifta wars.<sup>365</sup> In post-colonial Kenya, the secessionists were regarded as rebels and bandits by the leaders and "Shifta" was the Amharic terminology used to downplay members of the armed group who were viewed as hooligans and rebellious criminals.<sup>366</sup>

Kenyan authorities who felt threatened by the secessionist sentiments decided to turn the Shifta challenge into an opportunity to ease the control of NFD, and Shifta was propagated by the government as a genuine cultural representative of the pastoralist Somali clans in Kenya.<sup>367</sup> This generalization was perceived as an insult by many Somali-Kenyans. The country's leadership did not embrace the feeling of a Kenya with herders, and perceived pastoralist way of life as rather backward and uncivilized, or not purely Kenyan.<sup>368</sup>

Kenya has persistently upheld a strategy of promotion of agriculture throughout the country, inducing the nation to nurture agriculture as its cardinal matter of national pride and identity.<sup>369</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Njeri, Kenya that was Never Kenyan.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid.

<sup>366</sup> Ibid.

<sup>367</sup> Owaahh, "From Shifta War to Al-shabaab: Why Kenya is Her Own Worst Enemy," (2015), available from <https://owaahh.com/shifta-war-to-al-shabaab/>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid.

<sup>369</sup> Domic Omondi, "Kenyan Farmers Languish in Loss Amid Plenty," *Standard Media* (2018). Available from <https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/article/2001297540/why-2018-is-rated-the-worst-time-to-be-a-farmer>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

the secessionist tendencies gained the support of the Somali government and on the other hand, the British interests directed the colonialists to side with Kenya African national union (KANU) as the preferable party in order to reach the terms of a decolonization agreement; a party that considers the Somali ideal a violation of Kenya's territorial integrity and a shame, hence contributing to initiation of the Shifta war of 1963 to 1967 between Shifta insurgents and the government.<sup>370</sup>

The described historical facts explain an extremely uneasy relationship between Kenya and its Somali-originated citizens. Shifta is an indicator of a turbulent relationship between the population of the north-east and the post-independent Kenyan administrators.<sup>371</sup> There seems to be a cultural clash between the people of the region and political institutions in charge of different post-independent governments, whereby minimal efforts are made to ensure pastoralism flourish.<sup>372</sup>

An elder and a salesman in Garissa Ndogo argued that different governments tend to ignore the potentials of pastoralist aspect of life in the region, hence neglecting what could turn into a large-scale national industry of which both the people and the government could be beneficiaries.<sup>373</sup> He stated that IRK is unable to contribute to formation of Fafi's pastoralism as an industry because of being submissive to the interests of politicians for whom the people's poverty is a profiteering strategy.<sup>374</sup>

#### **4.4 Challenges of IRK in Garissa**

The governmental projects in Garissa are inadequate and aid agencies turn into napkins that keep the politicians' noses clean, to the extent that without IRK's support, drought may take the lives of some people in Garissa.<sup>375</sup> The functionality of aid in Africa and other deprived parts of the world has more or less been altered to ensure the political security of both the giver and the taker

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<sup>370</sup> Njeri, Kenya that was Never Kenyan.

<sup>371</sup> Patrick Mayoyo, "Shifta War Marked the Start of Brutal Killing," *Daily Nation Kenya*, available from <https://www.nation.co.ke/news/politics/Shifta-war-start-brutal-killings/1064-1859964-t104rjz/index.html>; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>372</sup> Joun Omtiti and Patrick Irungu, "Institutional and Policy Issues Relevant to Pastoral Development in Kenya," *Institute of Policy Analysis and Research* (2002) : 18.

<http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/bitstream/handle/11295/13424/2002-Pastoral%20Issues%20Paper-Omiti%20%26%20Irungu.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018.

<sup>373</sup> Oral Interview, Ismail Diriye, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.

<sup>375</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

of aid.<sup>376</sup> Dependency on humanitarian aid is still persistent in Garissa. The population remains poor and the conditions for an independent humanitarian action do not seem to be ripe. These challenges are explained as below:

#### 4.4.1 Corruption

Close to 90% of the people in Garissa have witnessed corruption in one form or other.<sup>377</sup> As the head of the national youth council in Garissa, Hussein Salat argued that the youth in Garissa are disappointed about political representatives of the region and believed to have been victimized by the high level of corruption that doesn't let Garissa blossom.<sup>378</sup>

It is witnessed by the respondents that IRK's excessive operations in the area paves way for pocketing development budgets worth millions of shillings by the influential politicians. Leaders keep the population unaware of the realities and come up and cannot account for huge sums of public funds.<sup>379</sup> for example, IRK's project manager in Garissa spoke about instances of pocketing financial aid for the deprived people within the education sector by the politicians, halting chances of the poor to pursue their primary education.<sup>380</sup> she reported that a 60-million humanitarian aid on education for poor and orphan students in Garissa was transferred to the political authorities personal accounts in the early 2018 and later vanished, or in common terms "pocketed" by politicians without any transparent accountability.<sup>381</sup> She added that there is no accountability with regards to budget expenditure in Garissa and any sustainable and constructive plan for the county's development is a dream of many in Garissa. Therefore, the contributions of IRK are equally under the control of politicians, tasking the organization in a way that undermines the principle of independence in the activities of IRK.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>376</sup> Nicholas Leader, "The Politics of Coherence: Humanitarianism and Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era," Humanitarian Policy Group, (2000) : 4-5.

<sup>377</sup> Wabala, Garissa Tops List of 10 Most Corrupt Counties.

<sup>378</sup> Abdimalik Hajir, "Corrupt County Officers will be Sacked, says Garissa Governor," Daily Nation Kenya (2013), available from <https://mobile.nation.co.ke/counties/Garissa-County-to-sack-corrupt-officers/1950480-2107150-format-xhtml-ryqwbzb/index.html> ; accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>379</sup> John Mbaka, "Audit Reveals Massive Waste by Assemblies," The Star, (2018), available from <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/2018-10-26-audit-reveals-massive-waste-by-assemblies/> ; accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>380</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

According to the youths of Garissa, religious leaders are equally guilty and responsible about their suffering.<sup>383</sup> They mentioned that the contents of sermons for every Friday prayer must be shared with and approved by county commissioners and the issues raised by imams on the weekly congressional Friday prayers are often do not echo the people's concerns. The youth added that politicians' money keeps the religious leaders mesmerized and quiet in Garissa.<sup>384</sup>

Citizens of Garissa are concerned about the unjust allocation of services as far as issuance of identification card is concerned.<sup>385</sup> people believed that marginalization has rendered many unable to acquire the Kenyan national identification card and the vetting process can take approximately 2 years for the people of Garissa and other counties within the north-eastern province to officially be a Kenyan, whereas the same procedure may take only a few weeks for some in other parts of the country.<sup>386</sup> Due to the long, draining and costly procedure to acquire an identification card, many residents of Garissa particularly in the rural areas have given up on the idea of having a citizenship document, thus undermining their chances of pursuing a career.<sup>387</sup>

In a different scenario of the same nature, the government allocates budget to schools based on population, only registering those with a birth certificate; majority of the 304 students in Fafi primary school do not enjoy the public funds because of not possessing a birth certificate. The IRK is limited to provision of only food and water in Garissa and can be accused of political intervention if it engages in an independent project to help residents acquire official documents.<sup>388</sup> Many people in Garissa believe that what they call "family business" in Garissa and other parts of the big north eastern region is not a nearly recent phenomenon and its foundation was built with the British colonial tradition of authoritarian and militaristic management of the population.<sup>389</sup> The post-independent Kenyan leaders played their role in a similar manner, using violence and suppression to control the furious population of Garissa.<sup>390</sup> For instance, Abdi Mohammad, a

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<sup>383</sup> Mohammed Dhahir, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid.

<sup>385</sup> Ibid.

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

<sup>387</sup> Ibid.

<sup>388</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>389</sup> Mohammed Dhahir, Focused Group Discussion, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>390</sup> Peter Karari, "Modus Operandi of Oppressing the "Savages": the Kenyan British Colonial Experience," *Journal of Peace and Conflict Studies*, 25. no. 1. (2018) : 12-13. <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1436&context=pcs> ; accessed 1<sup>st</sup> February 2019.

former Red Cross employee believes that the police force in Garissa does not necessarily work to ensure people's safety and security and operates in a pleasurable and partial manner, which systematically serves the interests of powerful and rich leaders.<sup>391</sup> He expressed his grief about people's mistrust in the police officers and added that one cannot feel safe to report a crime to the police because he/she will immediately be accused, labeled as prime suspect and arrested.<sup>392</sup>

The principle of Fafi primary and secondary school believes that leaders' greed is not allowing Garissa to develop.<sup>393</sup> Dennis spoke about the greed-based corrupt political network that destroys the possibilities of a long-term development vision for Garissa particularly in the education sector.<sup>394</sup> Dennis worked for the government, but looked lonely and helpless in the middle of Fafi deserts. He stated that out of 9 teachers in the school, 4 are paid by the parents because of the governments' failure to meet the necessary financial requirements to sustain the teachers' livelihood, and that is not less important than water.<sup>395</sup> Dennis expressed his wishes that IRK transits from being a provider of basic necessities to a provider of sustainable development, like how it ideally must.<sup>396</sup>

The dependence of aid disbursement on political objectives takes away the chances of an efficient and precise distribution of humanitarian assistance by IRK. The management of the public school in Fafi complained about the flow of aid to schools in Welmerer and Amoma where Al-shabaab members have created an extremely unsafe environment by attacking schools and abducting children, causing an exodus from the schools.<sup>397</sup> There is an imbalance in aid distribution created by assisting schools that are almost fully evacuated. IRK and other active NGOs in Fafi are restricted to share their goods and are forced to work as instructed by the stakeholders of humanitarian aid in Garissa, even if their knowledge informs them of places with higher urgency.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> Abdikarim Yusuf, Focused Group Discussion, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid.

<sup>393</sup> Oral Interview, Dennis Limisi, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

<sup>398</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

#### 4.4.2 Water Shortage

IRK prioritizes water, which appears to be an understandable humanitarian investment, considering the arid nature of the region and shortage of water.<sup>399</sup> The extreme furiousness of Garissa's population regarding the insufficient initiatives by the government to guarantee a better water condition is rooted in the Muslim population's heavy reliance on water to preserve the terms and conditions of their faith.<sup>400</sup> It also finds extreme significance with regards to saving their livestock. In the late 2017, IRK constructed a pump-equipped well in Fafi that can potentially assure the supply of basic amount of water to the school and homes.<sup>401</sup> However, the NGOs in Garissa including IRK do not take charge of the projects' maintenance and hold the local population and the government responsible for that matter. The people are often unable to maintain the wells and water distribution systems collapse due a general lack of commitment towards maintaining the projects.<sup>402</sup> according to the claim raised by the residents of Fafi as well as the staff of IRK in Garissa, the government shows a disregard of different type and ignores the reports on damaged facilities, or delays the process of repairing or maintaining for over a year, if it responds at all.<sup>403</sup> Therefore, IRK is forced to cope with the challenges and have less chances of remaining idealistic.<sup>404</sup>

It is also important to note that the colonial legacy inherited by the authorities does not favor the industrialization of the usage of Tana River water that passes through Garissa.<sup>405</sup> In the people's opinion, the government could be of great benefit to the people if it invested in an infrastructure to use the waters of Tana River.<sup>406</sup> The pastoralist population may not depend on water as much as the agriculturalists, but they are not free of that need either. The main cause of pastoralists' movement is to search for resources including water and pasture.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>399</sup> Rop, Factors Influencing Water Service Provision.

<sup>400</sup> Husna Ahmad, "Islam and Water: The Hajjar (r.a.) Story and Guide," *Faith Regen Foundation* (2011) : 4-6. <http://www.arcworld.org/downloads/Hajjar%20Story.pdf> ; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>401</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Ahmed Salim, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>404</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah, Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>405</sup> Astariko, Unite and Fight for Rights.

<sup>406</sup> Ahmed Salim, Focused Group Discussion, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>407</sup> Kyala Yurko, "Pastoral Movements and Movements in Pastoralism: Shifting Traditions and Institutions of Modern Management Strategies in Laikipia, Kenya," *Deepblue*, (2011) : 9. [https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/85796/KaylaYurko\\_thesis\\_final.pdf?sequence=1](https://deepblue.lib.umich.edu/bitstream/handle/2027.42/85796/KaylaYurko_thesis_final.pdf?sequence=1) ; accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

The construction of a water channel to benefit from Tana River is a heated debate among the employees of IRK and members of the society in Garissa. The youths argued that national governments avoid infrastructural projects because they view the north-east's improvement as a threat from the pastoralists to the powerful agriculturalists.<sup>408</sup> Introduction of the agro-solar irrigation technology (ASIT) by IRK in Garissa enabled smallholder farmers to produce more food. However, the production is not adequate to meet the needs and the people continue to consume the imported agricultural products to the county. Disenfranchisement of the people of Garissa from water seems to be a deliberate policy to delay Garissa's sustainable advancement, hence forcing the people to rely on NGOs assistance with regards to water.

#### **4.4.3 Need to Cooperate**

Besides their obligation to follow governmental plans and objectives, staff of IRK in Garissa also spoke about the necessity of communication with other humanitarian organizations, civil servants and community leaders in order to "create balance and share responsibilities" in aid disbursement. The UNICEF-Backed North-East NGO coordination board consists of members of the mentioned segment and the other stakeholders including political leaders, community gatekeepers and elders who gather to assess the capacities of each organization and work as a network that is ran by the state, despite being a committee that takes charge of a non-governmental activity.<sup>409</sup> The interrelated fate of IRK to other humanitarian counterparts in Garissa is yet another fact that demonstrates the infirmity of the agency to remain independent as the human conscience would expect.

#### **4.4.4 Violent Extremism**

The Muslim population of the north-east, particularly the elders of different clans and a large portion of the people are challenged by the devastating low educational standards and a threatening rate of illiteracy.<sup>410</sup> A devastating situation that meets the necessary criteria for one to find interest in violent extremism.

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<sup>408</sup> Abbas Deere, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>409</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>410</sup> United Nations' Development Program, "Preventing and Responding to Violent Extremism in Africa: a Development Approach" *Regional and Multi-country Project Document*, (2012) : 20-21.

[https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Local%20Governance/UNDP\\_RBA\\_Preventing\\_and\\_Responding\\_to\\_Violent\\_Extremism\\_2016-19.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Local%20Governance/UNDP_RBA_Preventing_and_Responding_to_Violent_Extremism_2016-19.pdf); accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.



A big section of the youth of Garissa believe that they could do better in Somalia as far as welfare is concerned, hence witnessing more youths making way to move to Somalia to join the ‘‘jihad’’.<sup>411</sup> Years of conflicts of different types as well as the unjust and discriminatory rule over the Somali population in Garissa has made the situation ripe for the youths to set a purpose for their feelings of vengeance by joining Al-shabaab.<sup>412</sup>

Al-shabaab’s frequent attacks on public telecommunication facilities have taken away the calm from the government and the people. Galmagala village in Fafi was a subject of an attack of the same nature in the late 2018, creating hurdles for the residents of the village and the NGO. Unable to use communication services and trapped by scarcity of water and a harsh climate, men and women of all ages had to flee their homes and move away from the danger zone in order to survive.<sup>413</sup> The teachers, particularly those of Christian faith are under constant threat of murder and abduction in Garissa. The teachers in Welmerer have left their place of work and possibly the region because of the insecurities imposed by the Al-shabaab loyalists.<sup>414</sup> Consequently, the insecure environment prohibits IRK from an equal distribution of resources since it is unable to access particular areas towards the Kenya-Somalia border.<sup>415</sup>

#### **4.4.5 Poverty**

The larger portion of people of Garissa suffer from severe poverty, constantly in need of aid.<sup>416</sup> The survival of the population to a large extent lays on the shoulders of humanitarian organizations.<sup>417</sup> The limited magnitude of aid and the inconsistency of supply renders many children incapable to pursue their secondary education, hence dropping out of school and start a journey that can highly likely end in a bizarre way.<sup>418</sup> The upcoming generations demand more than the infrequent supply of basic needs that may reach the target population too late or during

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<sup>411</sup> Mohamed, *The Impact of Terrorism*, 24.

<sup>412</sup> IPI Global Observatory, ‘‘Marginalization Lies at Heart of Kenya’s Insecurity: Q&A with Moses Onyango,’’ (2015). <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2015/08/kenya-somalia-al-shabaab-radicalization-garissa/>; accessed 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

<sup>413</sup> Oral Interview, Dennis Limisi, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

<sup>415</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>416</sup> Kennedy Kimanthi, ‘‘Call for Food Aid as Drought Intensifies in 12 Arid Counties,’’ *Daily Nation* (2019). <https://mobile.nation.co.ke/news/Victims-call-for-help-as-drought-persists/1950946-5027388-j75j01/index.htmlgarissa> ; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>417</sup> Rift Valley Institute, ‘‘Managing Development and Security in Northeastern Kenya,’’ *Meeting Report*, (2013). <http://riftvalley.net/publication/managing-development-and-security-north-eastern-kenya#.XWQXseMzBIU> ; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>418</sup> Oral Interview, Dennis Limisi, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

religious occasions such as the month of Ramadan. IRK is unable to fulfill that because of the absence of necessary and basic development standards.<sup>419</sup> That means if the preliminary development characteristics were present and IRK only complemented the work of Kenya's leadership, people of Garissa could take advantage of IRK's aid to beef up their condition and not rely on the agency for survival.<sup>420</sup>

The economic and political necessities prohibit any engagement in disbursement of cash, and limits it to small-scale loans.<sup>421</sup> Because of the capitalistic and political nature of management of humanitarian aid in Garissa, IRK's viewpoint with regards to the type of aid is intrinsically product-based. For instance, IRK in Kenya imports its sanitary pads and medicine from abroad, mainly from members of IRW family in Asia and Europe.<sup>422</sup>

Education for girls in the Fafi public primary and secondary school becomes more problematic as a result of gender-related sanitation demands.<sup>423</sup> The principle of the school stated that girls miss classes because of not having access to hygiene necessities, hence growing with an educationally weaker foundation.<sup>424</sup> The hygiene demands are too expensive for people to purchase. Therefore, the girls and women in Garissa depend on IRK to respond to their health demands.<sup>425</sup>

#### **4.4.6 Educational Debility**

The dark facts surrounding the north-east and Garissa in particular are numerous and reproductive. Education is a fundamental human rights. It is therefore an essential part of humanitarian action. However, people of Garissa and a majority of Somali population consider secular education as a weapon used against their culture to promote foreign or rather western culture. Therefore, they are usually mesmerized by personalistic politicians' promises and statements and become part of the 'family business'' in order to secure their own survival.<sup>426</sup> IRK's activities in Garissa is a part and parcel of what people in Garissa call the 'family business''.<sup>427</sup>

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<sup>419</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>420</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>421</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid.

<sup>423</sup> Oral Interview, Dennis Limisi, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Mohammed Kusow, Focused Group Discussion, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>427</sup> Ibid.

The outcome of the combination of illiteracy and the extant unproductive notion of ‘no need to work’ fueled by poverty and unemployment has helped increase drug abuse among a vast part of the population, including youths and elders of both genders, especially men. Similar to the scenario in Yemen, consumption of Khat, or in the local term ‘Miira’ among the Somali population of Garissa is assimilated to an intrinsic component of life in the north-eastern province.<sup>428</sup> Men gather in groups of five or six, particularly after the sunset prayers and spend multiple hours every evening chewing Khat and sharing stories of which the contents reflect a great deal of frustration, confusion and incomprehension among the population. School boys in Garissa, as young as 15, are not raised in a social environment with ethical sensitivities about the consumption of Miira, hence not having an interest in education.

The high level of poverty, an interconnected fact to the low literacy level, cannot be blamed solely on the political hostilities, and a custom of ‘no need to work’ strongly rules the minds in Garissa, however, minor shifts of ideas towards acceptance of secular sciences are visible. Lack of basic and adequate academic skills renders many unaware of the scientific interpretation of Quran, and more attracted to literal interpretations with subliminal, expedient and political objectives.<sup>429</sup> To illustrate that further it should be noted that the subliminal interpretations of the book and lifestyle of the prophet of Islam is manifested in the ideological vicinity of a significant part of Muslim population of Garissa,<sup>430</sup> which has a historical tendency for violence and oppression.<sup>431</sup>

The custom of early and arranged marriage as well as the educational restrictions on girls and women is a fundamental challenge that threatens both the population of Islamic faith and the women of the north-east in particular.<sup>432</sup> In many cases, girls in Garissa and other parts of the north-east are at best only allowed to finish their primary education.<sup>433</sup> A matter that humanitarian organizations dare not tackle for the fear of being rejected by political and community leaders.

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<sup>428</sup> Peter Hansen, “Governing Khat: Drugs and Democracy in Somaliland,” *DIIS Working Paper* (2009) : 6-8.

[http://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/45269/WP2009\\_24\\_Governing\\_Khat\\_web.pdf](http://pure.diiis.dk/ws/files/45269/WP2009_24_Governing_Khat_web.pdf); accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2019.

<sup>429</sup> Karen Armstrong, “Wahhabism to ISIS: how Saudi Arabia Exported the Main Source of Global Terrorism,” *New Statesman America* (2009). <https://www.newstatesman.com/world-affairs/2014/11/wahhabism-isis-how-saudi-arabia-exported-main-source-global-terrorism>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

<sup>430</sup> Christopher Wakube, Thomas Nyagah, James Mwangi and Larry Attree “Inside Kenya’s War on Terror: Breaking the Cycle of Violence in Garissa,” Safeworld, available from

<https://www.saferworld.org.uk/long-reads/inside-kenyaas-war-on-terror-breaking-the-cycle-of-violence-in-garissa>

<sup>431</sup> Ibid.

<sup>432</sup> Oral Interview, Tahiya Farah, Garissa, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

The next chapter of this study seeks to provide a conclusive description of humanitarianism in the world and in Garissa. It explains where humanitarianism comes from and where it should go. By looking more at the relationship between the people and the IRK, the next chapter will conclude that humanitarian agencies in the modern era are political toys that entertain expedient and unjust objectives of powerful political actors.<sup>434</sup>

#### **4.5 Is Humanitarianism Political?**

With all the efforts by humanitarian organizations to remain faithful to the universal humanitarian principles particularly independence and impartiality, humanitarian aid as a contemporary political subject is controlled by political entities in an all-political world with restless struggles for power.<sup>435</sup> Politicization of humanitarian aid is a concept generated as a result of different ethical approaches that exist within the international community in its endeavors to enable humanitarian aid to be used in the way that is most efficient and most effective.<sup>436</sup> Nevertheless, that modern notion or perhaps justification becomes a subject of severe criticism, facing the arguments that modern/flexible form of aid provision can contribute to underdevelopment and undermines domestic production capacities.<sup>437</sup> Hence, supporters of that notion give the humanitarian agencies including IRK clear plan of action in order to direct the advantage towards addressing objectives that are political.<sup>438</sup>

On 4 February 1998, The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) in conjunction with other partners organized a seminar titled: ‘the emperor’s new clothes: the collapse of humanitarian principles’.<sup>439</sup> The seminar was intended to explore the measures of improving the coherence of political and humanitarian actions.<sup>440</sup> In Afghanistan during the Cold War, Western foreign policy goals were the final determinants of the existence of a systematic humanitarian aid activism, as

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<sup>434</sup> Tahir Mahmoud, “NGOs: the West’s Soft Instrument for Hegemonic Policies,” *Crescent International* (2019). <https://crescent.icit-digital.org/articles/NGOs-the-west-s-soft-instrument-for-hegemonic-policies>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

<sup>435</sup> Charlotte Dany, “Beyond Principles vs. Politics: Humanitarian Aid in the European Union,” *ARENA Working Paper ii* (2014), 1-10.

<sup>436</sup> Global Humanitarian Assistance, Report, (2018) : 43, available from <http://devinit.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/GHA-Report-2018.pdf>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019.

<sup>437</sup> Jack Jackson, “Dependency and Third World Underdevelopment: Examining Production-Consumption Disarticulation in Nigeria,” *Africa Research Review 10(5)*, no.44, (2016) : 205.

<sup>438</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>439</sup> Curtis, Politics and Humanitarian Aid.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

well as formulating long-term humanitarian policies and implementation of instructions.<sup>441</sup> In Kenya, the conditions set to preserve the interests of powerful donor states are key in regulating humanitarian aid, guiding the African nation to follow the prescribed economic and political direction.<sup>442</sup> Because of donors' pressure imposition that comes to existence as a result of global power relations, humanitarian organizations lose their autonomy.<sup>443</sup>

Humanitarian aid have always been a big part of life in Africa, yet very little knowledge about the quality of aid and its effectiveness is broadcasted by the media both in the powerful donors' and African recipients' countries.<sup>444</sup> Humanitarianism fell into the hands of political leaders, hence turning humanity's sympathetic feelings into a multi-billion dollar hidden industry, with intentions not so friendly to the principles of humanitarian action.<sup>445</sup> How humanitarian aid is organized and distributed go step by step with the transformation that it conceptually experienced by the end of the Cold War.<sup>446</sup> With an increase in balance of power between the West and the East, internal conflicts particularly in Africa and other developing regions of the world started to emerge and evolved into a more sophisticated and multi-dynamic nature, and the altruistic objectives of humanitarian aid became politicized.<sup>447</sup> This leads to a more complex and diverse political framework that cannot ignore the powerful tool called humanitarian action, hence guiding the powerful political institutions to engage in an instrumental use of humanitarian aid by channeling the services purely to the "friendly" countries in order serve their foreign policy.<sup>448</sup>

#### **4.6 How free is IRK from Political Influence?**

After raising the realities of humanitarianism in the contemporary era and the role of politics in it, the IRK's way of doing things can turn it into an instrument of powerful policy-makers. The instrumentalisation of the organization stems from two realities: A global partnership which

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<sup>441</sup> Atmar, Politicisation of humanitarian aid, 2.

<sup>442</sup> Sithole, The Role of Foreign Aid, 12.

<sup>443</sup> Ibid.

<sup>444</sup> Bolton, Aid and other Dirty Business, 78-79.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Michael Barnett, "Humanitarianism Transformed: Perspectives on Politics," *American Political Science Association* 3. no. 3. (2005) : 723. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/3688176?read-now=1&refregid=excelsior%3Aa2ea4c81d8639258e44852ade4563f0d&seq=9#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/3688176?read-now=1&refregid=excelsior%3Aa2ea4c81d8639258e44852ade4563f0d&seq=9#metadata_info_tab_contents); accessed 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.

<sup>448</sup> Atmar, Politicisation of Humanitarian Aid. 1.

mandates humanitarian agencies to cooperate with political and non-political actors, and the extant economic aspirations sought through humanitarianism.

#### **4.6.1 IRK's Global Partnership**

The states in control of humanitarian aid transformed the definition of humanitarianism, making an instrumental use of it as a strategy to control the global stage for liberal development.<sup>449</sup> Under the skin of struggling for good governance and democracy, aid becomes a complementing tool for interventions that are aimed at ensuring political, economic and security interests.<sup>450</sup> With regards to the great matter of national interest, aid is used as a ‘‘carrot and stick’’ strategy to influence the domestic dynamics of politics, economy and culture in recipient countries and shape the behavior of the client regimes.<sup>451</sup> For instance, it is relevant to note that the national government’s ‘‘well wishes’’ for the county is an accepted fact among the staff of IRK.<sup>452</sup> They stressed on the necessity to be recognized by the government and that recognition certainly ‘‘comes at a cost’’.<sup>453</sup> The recognition however is not provided unconditionally, which can lead to a political use of IRK’s altruistic assistance. The IRK is established because it has chosen to expediently support the political decisions that are made in relation to its services.

The IRK works closely with the organizations including UNICEF, USAID and UNHCR which are funded by political institutions.<sup>454</sup> The named organizations engage in partnership with IRK and fund its projects.<sup>455</sup> For instance, although not consistently, all the above organizations contribute to IRK’s child welfare program which is mandated with enhancing children’s education and health.<sup>456</sup> To illustrate that further, it should be mentioned that UNICEF is the chief financier of the NGO Coordination Board in Kenya.<sup>457</sup> The board is the main responsible organ that directs the humanitarian operations of IRK and its counterparts in Garissa.<sup>458</sup> The County Steering Group in

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<sup>449</sup> Curtis, *Politics and Humanitarian Aid*, 5.

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Oral Interview, Isiah Cheboi (IRK officer), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>453</sup> Ibid.

<sup>454</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Kenya Country Profile.

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

Garissa, where contextual plans for aid disbursement are decided, is a subclass of the NGO Coordination Board. The IRK cherishes independence and crushes it at the same time.<sup>459</sup>

The legal credibility and a universal agreement, which looks more like a formal pretense than a respected framework, did not secure IRK's independent state of affairs in Garissa. For example, in Garissa County Steering Group meetings, the organization regularly discusses the terms of instructions in the presence of government officials, particularly representatives of the North-Eastern Provincial Government, Garissa's County commissioner, senator as well as political representatives of different constituencies.<sup>460</sup>

The IRK is obliged to disburse services on the basis of need only, and the organizations must be able to receive donations in an absolutely unconditional manner.<sup>461</sup> However, the IRK adheres to public policies of the "friendly" governments in Kenya; a fact that IRW calls global partnerships.<sup>462</sup> The IRK's county director in Garissa confirmed that by stating: "we can't work in isolation, and we are not primarily responsible about Garissa's welfare; the government formulates the development agenda and we follow,"<sup>463</sup> The latter shows that despite all the efforts put by IRK, the organization has transferred its main responsibility in Garissa, which is eradication of poverty, to the political administrations in charge. In a nutshell, the politics of patronage and authoritarianism determines the destiny of aid disbursement and only those who contribute to retaining the profiteering framework will benefit from it.<sup>464</sup>

Humanitarian organizations are not afraid to admit that their activities are less related to what is truly needed and more focused on expedient economic and political objectives.<sup>465</sup> Powerful states' policies are further followed by humanitarian aid to meet political ends.<sup>466</sup> For instance, foreign aid in Afghanistan was only disbursed in areas that were under the control of anti-Soviet forces during the Cold War, and fell as quick as the withdrawal from Afghanistan by soviet forces.<sup>467</sup> In

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<sup>459</sup> Ibid.

<sup>460</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>461</sup> Van Mierop, *Coming Clean on Neutrality*.

<sup>462</sup> Islamic Relief Kenya, Kenya Country Profile.

<sup>463</sup> Oral Interview, Abdullahi Mohamud (IRK Garissa director), Nairobi, 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

<sup>464</sup> William Tordof, *Government and Politics in Africa*, (Palgrave Macmilan, 1984), 8.

<sup>465</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>466</sup> Bhattacharai and Acharya, *Humanitarian assistance: is it politically instrumentalized*.

<sup>467</sup> Donini, *Humanitarian agenda*, 2-8.

Garissa, the fate of humanitarian resources is in the hands of regional and national policymakers who wish to use the funds for political and clannist objectives.<sup>468</sup>

#### 4.6.2 Modern Humanitarianism and Capitalistic Interests

The capitalistic motive behind aid is another cause of the prevalence of expedient philanthropy. The commercial objectives of donor states along with the disability of the underdeveloped countries in terms of self-sustenance are tied to ensure that Africa's hands are open for powerful political institutions' assistance for long time to come.<sup>469</sup> Major corporations in the banking sector including Barclays and Standard Chartered play a great deal of role in terms of both development investment as well as safeguarding and transacting capital within the continent and in the north-eastern county of Garissa in Kenya.<sup>470</sup> For instance, in order to receive funds, IRK is considerably dependent on the services of the named foreign financial institutions in the country. The economic aid dependency makes the foreign market gain more hegemony within the developing countries' markets and foreign corporations diversify their activities in an endeavor to create jobs for their nationals and enhance their economic capacities.<sup>471</sup>

Political actors and donors expect value for money.<sup>472</sup> The humanitarian subclass of aid, similar to that of economic, is manipulated by powerful capitalist donors and the recipient governments in power for pursuing policies that are hitherto incapable of and uninterested in enhancement of socio-economic development in the deprived parts of the world, and are merely focused on achieving political ends.<sup>473</sup> The expedient capitalistic intentions may lead to economic deprivation of a group within a society. For instance, an elder and school teacher in Fafi said: 'our way of life is not respected; the government representatives cannot help us industrialize pastoralism and we can't sell our products where there is demand...'.<sup>474</sup> He insisted that IRK prioritizes Garissa because the residents may lose their lives if it doesn't.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Mohamed, Korane's New Leadership Style.

<sup>469</sup> Eleanor Davey, John Borton, Mathew Foley, "A History of the Humanitarian System: Western Origins and Foundations," *Humanitarian Policy Group* (2013) : 12. <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/8439.pdf> ; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018.

<sup>470</sup> Stephen Kamau, List of International Banks in Kenya, TUKO, (2018), available from <https://www.tuko.co.ke/279884-list-international-banks-kenya.html#279884> ; accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2018.

<sup>471</sup> Claire Apodaca, "Foreign Aid as Foreign Policy Tool," *Department of Political Science, Virginia Tech, Oxforde.com*, (2017).

<sup>472</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council, Challenges to Principled Humanitarian Action, 3.

<sup>473</sup> Mills, Neo-Humanitarianism, 166.

<sup>474</sup> Mohammed Kusow, Focused Group Discussion, Garissa, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2019.

<sup>475</sup> Ibid.



Kenya continues to receive humanitarian aid in spite of failure to push Garissa's developmental limits.<sup>476</sup> The patronage politics is manifested in the management of humanitarian aid in Garissa at times of elections; the sources are used as rewards for the voters and the clients' relationship with their patrons is of a sentimental nature. In short, IRK's independence is undermined by a system in Garissa that is not purely based upon democratic principles. In the case of Africa and Kenya in particular, the clients tend to create idols out of leaders and enjoy the personalistic leadership, idolizing the position as people's hero or perhaps savior.<sup>477</sup>

Many developing countries in Africa would have collapsed, had it not been for the foreign equipment, materials, arms and numerous other services and commodities that enables Africa to run its economic affairs.<sup>478</sup> The dependency situation, or the absence of autonomy stems from what is described as an economy tied to aid, that transits the relationship of donors and recipients from partnership to paternalism.<sup>479</sup> It refers to humanitarianism as a business system that heavily relies on foreign funds, consultancy and technical knowhow, creating more opportunities for external corporations and contractors to invigorate their markets globally.<sup>480</sup>

#### **4.7 Humanitarianism Continues**

Humanitarian aid has constantly been at the service of foreign policy of powerful/developed countries in the world, widely used to inflict tormenting pressure on the states that are assumed to be hostile, or rather ideologically opposing.<sup>481</sup> Humanitarian aid can equally be used to encourage the compliant system to further facilitate the application of donors' mandates with regards to foreign policy.<sup>482</sup> As a result, the dependency of the states in need of aid coerces them to desperately shift from their stances and comply with the guidelines imposed by the economically gigantic states.<sup>483</sup> Donor states use suspension or termination of aid as a force to shape the recipient

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<sup>476</sup> Oral Interview, Ali Kheiro, Garissa, 29<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

<sup>477</sup> Bruce Berman, "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: the Politics of Uncivil Nationalism" in *Journal of African Affairs* 97, (1998) : 305. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/723213?seq=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/723213?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents); accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2019.

<sup>478</sup> William Zartman, "Europe and Africa: decolonization or dependency?" (1976). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/africa/1976-01-01/europe-and-africa-decolonization-or-dependency>; accessed 2 December 2018.

<sup>479</sup> Angelle Kwemo, "Making Africa great again: reducing aid dependency," *Brookings*, (2017).

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2017/04/20/making-africa-great-again-reducing-aid-dependency/>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018.

<sup>480</sup> De Lauri, *The Politics of Humanitarianism*, 1-5.

<sup>481</sup> Watts, *Is humanitarian aid politicized*.

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid*.

states' behavior.<sup>484</sup> Once Kenya's commitment is assured, the extant political injustices that lead to both Garissa's misery as well as instrumentalized use of IRK are peripheral. Therefore, IRK and other politicized humanitarian organizations in Garissa lose their independence and become a part of the envisioned governmental plans.<sup>485</sup> Their works will continue, and their principles may not change, but their commitment to those principles will always remain a dilemma.

Humanitarian aid can be fruitful only if the policy environment of both donors and recipients merge with the profoundly moral principles.<sup>486</sup> The government is not committed to its obligation of sustaining IRK's projects for long-term use.<sup>487</sup> What it provides cannot be enough to push the wheels of prosperity, thus the IRK's work has become all about people's mere survival.<sup>488</sup> Foreign humanitarian aid is a double-edged sword that has not succeeded to acquire its idealistic prospects, and continues to be objectified for foreign and national policy purposes.<sup>489</sup>

In the African political environment with high external and internal development barriers including absence of independent judicial systems or having to remain compliant to policies of powerful external actors, foreign aid can be passed from enriched wrong hands into the wrong hands in need, transformed to mobilize the incapable and ill-governed administrations and also improve the hegemony of donor states.<sup>490</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> Ibid.

<sup>485</sup> Oral Interview, Ferdowsa Siyat (IRK officer), Garissa, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Claudia Williamson, "Exploring the Failure of Foreign Aid: the Role of Incentives and Information," Researchgate, (2009).

<sup>490</sup> Mwega, A Case Study of Aid Effectiveness in Kenya, 3-4.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### A CONCLUSION: THE STATE OF MODERN HUMANITARIANISM

#### 5.1 The Utopia

One of the common characteristics of the Abrahamic religions is their affirmative emphasis on altruism and the obligation to help the weak.<sup>491</sup> Christianity and Islam share a fundamental value which is to care for and express love to ‘neighbors’, using the term as a symbol to let humanity know that it is divine to help one another.<sup>492</sup> Jesus Christ preached love and lived a life filled with sacrifices that carry great lessons for human beings.<sup>493</sup> Prophet Mohammad’s life is one of commitment to wellbeing of the weak and the poor.<sup>494</sup>

The massacre of prophet Mohammad’s grandson, Hussein, along with his family in 680 A.D by the tyranny of the time in today’s Iraq shows the fact that defending common human values, for example not harming women and children or standing for the rights and welfare of the oppressed, regardless of their faiths, are values that one can proudly give life for.<sup>495</sup> The founding fathers of humanitarianism were not the only souls who sought to fight misery. Millions of people around the world are dedicated and contribute to the idea that was formed to become the international Red Cross and Red Crescent movement today. A magnificent number of humans, perhaps more from places with higher degrees of suffering are globally and strongly in touch with the philosophy that mankind always admired.<sup>496</sup>

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<sup>491</sup> John D. Levenson, “Why give? Religious Roots of Charity,” Harvard Divinity School, (2013), available from <https://hds.harvard.edu/news/2013/12/13/why-give-religious-roots-charity#>; accessed 31<sup>st</sup> august 2019.

<sup>492</sup> Greg Strand, “Understanding Islam, Loving our Neighbors,” EFCA, (2017). Available from <https://www.efca.org/blog/understanding-scripture/understanding-islam-loving-our-neighbors>; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

<sup>493</sup> Prayer Closer Ministries, “A Monthly Publication of the Prayer Closet Ministries” no. 4. (2012), available from <http://www.prayerclosetministries.org/assets/newsletters/JulyAug2012.pdf>; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

<sup>494</sup> Sami Zataari, “The Prophet Muhammed (PBUH) and Helping the Poor,” (2013). <http://islam.ru/en/content/story/prophet-muhammed-pbuh-and-helping-poor>; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

<sup>495</sup> Rose Hattab, “Corruption and Oppression: the Martyrdom of Imam Hossein (AS),” Odyssey, (2016).

<https://www.theodysseyonline.com/corruption-oppression-martyrdom-imam-hussein>; accessed 15<sup>th</sup> August 2019.

<sup>496</sup> Haug, Humanity for All, 443-448.

Henry Dunant witnessed the horrible impacts of conflict.<sup>497</sup> He witnessed people swim in blood in the battle of Solferino in 1859.<sup>498</sup> The founding father of today's humanitarianism heard women and children scream for help as they were in dire need of basic necessities including medicine.<sup>499</sup> What Dunant saw in Solferino and his experience in fighting war-generated miseries made him never view conflict with ease. He couldn't be scared any longer. His heart, just like many others, was tied to mitigating people's pain and giving them comfort.

Hans Haug is perhaps the most loyal believer of Henry Dunant's cause.<sup>500</sup> He used his positions, first as the secretary general of the Swiss Red Cross from 1952 to 1967 and later as the president of the organization from 1968 to 1982 to acquire more legal credit for humanitarianism.<sup>501</sup> His dynamic activism made the concept find a more significant status in the international level. The named personalities, particularly the modern thinkers who are mentioned above, managed to let the world know that a humanitarian action is one that is independent, impartial, neutral and humane.<sup>502</sup>

Idealistic humanitarian activists argue that as a matter of necessity, they work with and are recognized by governments and state authorities, but completely independent in their work. However, the desire to control and political or cultural prejudice interferes with the independent and impartial type of action that makes humanitarian activities humanitarian. State actors and national societies cross the limits. They shamelessly open the doors of humanitarian aid solely to political or ideological objectives. Hans Haug argues that lack of accurate information about the altruistic approach of impartiality among societies is a key factor in man's ignorance towards humanitarian principles.<sup>503</sup>

## **5.2 Is Humanitarianism Resembling its Ideal?**

There is a very disturbing fact about the realities surrounding the principle of independence. International humanitarian mandates regulate or rather force humanitarian agencies to be

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<sup>497</sup> Ibid.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid.

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> Haug, 21-34.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> Ibid.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid.

recognized by the governments of countries within which they wish to operate. The ICRC movement strongly emphasizes on the importance of the political, religious and economic independence. However, it may force a philanthropist movement to submit to the will of governments that are oppressive and corrupt.<sup>504</sup> In that case, the fate of principled humanitarianism is unclear, if not dark.

Certainly, thousands of people may find it impossible to bare the conditions without IRK's support. However, this study found that political and ideological elements in Kenya and specifically Garissa play a great role in formation, foundation and operation of humanitarian organizations. IRK in Garissa manifests a fracture in the bones of humanitarianism in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The story of IRK in Garissa reflects one of multiple cases in which implementation of humanitarian principles becomes a subject of victimization.

The study also found that the frequent clan-related tensions have taken away the required peace for development in Garissa, hence undermining an ideal humanitarian activism.<sup>505</sup> They are often instigated by political leaders.<sup>506</sup> Elders of Garissa did not seem to be in a shock after the inter-clan conflicts of 2018 in Lagdera which resulted in death of three herders.<sup>507</sup> From the people's point of view as well as the IRK's officials' viewpoint, this study was informed that politics in Garissa are highly associated with power, wealth and supremacy and the organization's services are regulated by the same style of politics. With most of its population living in dry rural areas, over 50% of the population receives little or no opportunity for reflection on matters other than surviving drought.<sup>508</sup> The study discovered that due to political and cultural traits in Garissa, IRK's assistance did not contribute to building the socio-political structure for sustainable development over the past 5 decades, and has been having a temporary, or inadequate positive impact. Humanitarian aid in Garissa is good but not enough.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>504</sup> Mwega, A Case Study of Aid Effectiveness in Kenya, 3-4.

<sup>505</sup> Oral Interview, Mohammed Salah (IRK Garissa program coordinator), Garissa, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

<sup>506</sup> Ibid.

<sup>507</sup> The NTV, "3 People Killed in Inter-Clan Conflict in Garissa," available from <https://ntv.nation.co.ke/news/2720124-4663484-xxyn7v/index.html>; accessed 17<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

<sup>508</sup> Garissa County Government, Second Garissa County Integrated Development Plan, 3.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid.

Development projects are mismanaged or not initiated in the first place. In 2019, the governor of North-Eastern province spoke about his counterpart's personalization of development projects, hence initiating the projects in areas that are not in urgent need as compared to other regions. It was mentioned that a dam with a capacity of 120 million liters which could help people in rural areas was built in Garissa township with a lower need for water.<sup>510</sup> The unequal distribution of resources blocks the IRK from taking idealistic steps towards helping Garissa. For instance, despite the fact that certain regions of Garissa need water more than the township, the leadership chose the township for most of its development projects.

In the midst of all the complex challenges that Garissa faces, an important factor is identified that makes Garissa's progression more unlikely: illiteracy combined with clannist and religious bigotry.<sup>511</sup> This study discovered that ignorance of the people of Garissa towards their surrounding realities makes them culprits who are equally responsible about the amount of misery that is witnessed. Only a minority are able to critically analyze the situations they find themselves in.<sup>512</sup> For instance, University graduates in Garissa blamed their own people for their misery, arguing that it is 'wrong culture' that keeps them backward and isolated. In their opinion, those who are eligible to vote do so without any profound understanding of different aspects of life vis a vis what could make their lives better. The term 'blind voters' could perhaps suitably explain the culprit face of the people in Garissa.

The policy of management through excessive humanitarian activism is paramount. The political leadership in Garissa have shown not to be concerned with the restrictions on the IRK's work in Garissa. It was found that political representatives of Garissa are in full control of IRK's services to decide what, where and who to help. This means that excess humanitarianism can continue to bring about retrogression and never reach its ideals. It also means that IRK is possibly contributing to more misery in the lives of the deprived population of Garissa. Perhaps, a study on the causes of people's ignorance towards their rights in Garissa, any work on the continuous and increasing

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<sup>510</sup> Magical News Kenya, 2019, Youtube video, 4:02 minutes, "Interview with Ali Korane: Raila Happy as Garissa Governor Korane Supports BBI". accessed on 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObuoLEizYHA>

<sup>511</sup> Ibid.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid.

misery despite a long humanitarian activism as well as a research on Kenya's big interest to feed Garissa mostly through humanitarian aid could draw more light on the objectives of this study.

Hans Haug's statement gives a clear insight about the backward conditions in places with a high level of poverty including Garissa, and also helps students of peace and conflict to evaluate the problematic, hypocritical and ineffective state of humanitarianism in the modern era:

“The enemy, our true enemy is not the neighboring nation; it is hunger, cold and misery, ignorance, routine, superstition and prejudice”.<sup>513</sup>

The ignorance in Garissa is a bitter fact but fundamentally important in analyzing the critical socio-economic condition of the region.<sup>514</sup> A historical failure in political governance of the region mixed with a population torn by conflicts of different sorts explain Garissa's appetite for overreliance on humanitarian aid and perhaps its insouciance towards development.

Will Garissa remain the same for a long time to come? Are the people going to embark on acquiring the necessary knowledge for development? Are the prerequisites for development going to be seen in Garissa any time soon? Can cultural and political prejudice be detached from humanitarian action in the world and in Garissa so it could effectively work for the people? Those are open-ended questions that the minds of many will continue to be occupied by. The Ignorance and prejudice evolve from one shape to another and can grow even stronger; on the other hand, the altruistic nature that urges mankind to help others in need, have a sense of loving and caring and be the committed to and responsible about other human beings. That may eventually rescue humanity and free people from misery. It is a humanistic wish to want to see a Garissa that takes firm steps towards development. A Garissa not defeated by war, culture or climate. A Garissa that learns how to use IRK the right way.

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<sup>513</sup>Haug. Humanity for all, 17.

<sup>514</sup> Focused Group Discussion, 21<sup>st</sup> March 2019.

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