

# EVIDENCE REPORT

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Addressing and Mitigating Violence

## Violence and Violence Reduction Efforts in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast: Insights and Lessons towards Achieving SDG 16

Amber Huff, Caitriona Dowd, Awino Okech, Alfred Muteru, Thea Shahrokh, Patrick Zadi Zadi,  
Seidu Mahama Alidu and Jeremy Allouche

November 2016

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# Abbreviations

ACLED	Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AMV	addressing and mitigating violence
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence
CONARIV	National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims
CSO	civil society organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FESCI	Student Federation of Ivory Coast
FPI	Ivorian Popular Front
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICU	Islamic Courts Union
IDP	internally displaced person
IED	improvised explosive device
IGI	independent governance institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMLU	Independent Medico-Legal Unit
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission of Human Rights
KPF	Kenya Police Force
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPP	New Patriotic Party
NRM	National Resistance Movement
MPCI	Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast
PDCI	Democratic Party of Ivory Coast
RDR	Rally of the Republicans
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SLDF	Sabao Land Defence Force
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# Executive summary

## Introduction

The 2011 World Development Report on *Conflict, Security and Development* states that, 'repeated cycles of organized criminal violence and civil conflict that threaten development locally and regionally and are responsible for much of the global deficit in meeting the Millennium Development Goals' (World Bank 2011: 46). As a result, peace and security emerged as a 'core concern' in the development of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (Werner 2015: 348), and a remarkable high-level consensus has emerged on the basic elements of an approach to reduce violence across contexts. These include: (1) the need to create legitimate institutions, often through efforts to craft political settlements; (2) strengthening access to justice; (3) extending economic opportunities and employment, especially for young people; and (4) fostering societal resilience, through institutions as well as by considering the sustainability of interventions (Lind, Mitchell and Rohwerder 2016). Flowing from these ideas, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 aims to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' by meeting targets that range from reduction of violence and related death rates everywhere, to reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms, ending all forms of legal discrimination and developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions (UNDP 2016a).

## Challenges to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 16 targets

Making progress towards SDG 16 entails significant challenges. While the targets outlined above represent important long-term goals, there is little guidance on how they can be addressed in the short and medium term in diverse places where violence is part of everyday life. Furthermore, concepts such as 'peace', 'security', 'legitimacy', 'good governance' and even 'justice' are all highly contested and carry differing definitions, implications and stakes for actors across international, national and sub-national levels and in different contexts of violence, making them hard to define and measure. Multi-stakeholder discussions on international security indicators bring to the fore questions regarding intrusion on the sovereignty of individual states (Lucey 2015). Given the variety of forms, manifestations and rapidly changing dynamics and correlates of violent conflict, the 'dichotomy between conflict and non-conflict countries' and regions is often overly simplistic and can be misleading (UNDP 2016b: 4). As a result, discussions on concrete steps to building peace can be hindered by overly generalised objectives and prescriptions; for example, on the need to build 'inclusive institutions at all levels', paradoxically coupled with the formulation of overly restrictive metrics and indicators for progress (Werner 2015: 346). Other challenges include funding shortfalls, persistent insecurities and disparities in wealth and power in many countries, legacies of policies and agreements that have weakened state capacities for implementing programmes aimed at achieving good governance, widespread distrust of states and their security apparatuses, elite capture of aid and challenges to achieving accountability on the part of police, military and, increasingly, private security forces (Zuber 2016).

## Previous findings from addressing and mitigating violence research

Rather than identifying a standard formula or approach for peace-building, addressing and mitigating violence (AMV) research suggests that the challenges described above are of profound significance. There is no one-size-fits-all method of reducing violence. Violence dynamics, and therefore appropriate and effective means to address and mitigate violence, are highly contextual on national and sub-national levels, and the optimal design of

institutions is never an absolute. Rather, what is needed to reduce violence can change in response to political conditions and trends, and in the face of stakeholders' contested framings of these in places where violence is a currency of politics (Lind *et al.* 2016). In place of uniform approaches, we recognise that reducing violence requires identifying 'best-fit' political and institutional arrangements, based on detailed analysis of violence dynamics and reduction efforts in particular places (World Bank 2011).

## The methods and aims of this report

As part of our continuing work, this report develops evidence-based insights into contextual dimensions of violence and practices of reducing violence from multiple perspectives; and at multiple levels of governance, in two blocks of neighbouring countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have diverging violence trajectories and differ in their experiences of addressing violence. Focal countries include Kenya and Uganda in East Africa, and Ghana and Ivory Coast in West Africa. We analyse secondary literature and data compiled by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) to build mixed-method case studies with process tracing and tiered comparison. This approach facilitates an understanding of the role of multiple factors, including governance and the evolution of institutions and justice mechanisms over time, both in facilitating the emergence of violence and reducing violence at multiple levels, from sub-national to cross-regional.

In our analysis we are particularly interested in the intersection of three crucial dimensions of violence over time: (1) the incidence, types and overarching patterns of violence documented in and across the focal countries and regions, including sub-national and international geographies of violence; (2) key actors and institutions implicated in trajectories of violence and peace; and (3) processes of political change, including (but not limited to) efforts to reduce violence. Across all four cases, the politicisation of ethnicity; sub-national variation in political power, inclusion, development and growth; and variable types and consequences of violence across different groups and communities, are common threads that shape the trajectories of violence, and the success and efficacy of mitigation and management strategies. Second, our cross-regional analysis assesses the role of trans-border, cross-regional and international processes in spanning systems of violence and mitigation, including legacies of colonisation and de-colonisation, influences of international peace-building initiatives, transnational actors, and flows and broad trends in extractive development.

Through this approach, we examine and assess causal and constitutive relations between characteristics and factors of violence and violence reduction efforts. At the same time, we consider historical trajectories, different positionalities, and understandings and motivations of different actors and groups on different jurisdictional levels. This opens space to critically evaluate dominant assumptions about the causes of and solutions to violence in and across the different focal settings, and to identify a suite of evidence-informed practical lessons and policy propositions that we believe can make an important contribution in progressing towards SDG 16.

## Trajectories of violence, contemporary dynamics and peace-building

### Kenya and Uganda

The nature of state-making in Uganda and Kenya, viewed from a historical perspective, provides an important foundation for understanding the nature of violence and actors in both countries. Uganda and Kenya share several key features of conflict, including: ethnic diversity, the salience of politicised ethnicity, and corresponding volatility of ethnicised politics; the referencing of these identities, often in relation to regional pockets of

marginalisation and inequality; and the state-making processes that have underpinned often violent contestation over contemporary elected representation and power in a system of institutions that are not seen as wholly credible, effective or legitimate. The instrumentalisation and political polarisation of identity have deep roots in Kenyan and Ugandan conflict dynamics, as they have consistently served as a basis for claims made for land and other resources and against regimes. The failure in both countries to create a consensus over ‘belonging’ in the contemporary nation state has not been ameliorated through the introduction of multiparty democracy and elections. In fact, analysis of longitudinal trends demonstrates that contestations over representation, power, and inclusion, which are deeply rooted in Kenya and Uganda’s colonial and postcolonial histories, manifest themselves in the contemporary spikes in violence surrounding election cycles, frequent elite-sponsored militia violence, and violent confrontations with the state itself.

Despite these similarities, the two countries diverge in the forms and functions of resulting violence. Uganda’s history is replete with episodes of high-intensity civil war seeking to overthrow and replace sitting regimes; while Kenya’s domestic politics have been largely characterised by internal and factional fighting setting out to negotiate the nature and configuration of power within a regime. Although the abovementioned form of insurgency no longer affects Uganda, it is worth recalling that this violence has in effect been exported to neighbouring states; while contemporary manifestations of social unrest – centring on issues of representation, inclusion, and regime power – demonstrate some continuity in the underlying conditions that fuel them.

For both countries, violence emerged due to the lack of consensus on the nature of the state on the one hand and state capabilities on the other. Scholars note the inability of the state in both cases to discharge basic functions, such as the maintenance of peace and security, act as a neutral arbiter in competing public claims, provide public goods and amenities, or become an engine of development. This drives processes of violence. Furthermore, both cases highlight the role of the state as a crucial actor in conflict, and the significance of moving beyond structural/institutional explanations to consider the historical inter-structural social relations that can drive violence and peace-building within countries and in the region.

Given the different historical trajectories of these countries, it follows that violence exhibits different contemporary patterns and dynamics in the two settings. Violence levels in general have varied over time. Kenya has witnessed pronounced spikes in violent episodes, centred on national electoral contests in 2007–08 and 2013, in addition to the increased activity of the Somalia-based militant Islamist group Al-Shabaab since late 2011. Violence levels in Uganda, in contrast, have fallen considerably in the past ten years, since the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) insurgency became less active in the country, although new forms of violence have emerged, including urban rioting and political militia violence. Our analyses further show that differential and wide-ranging effects of violence dynamics on the politics of threat, resource access, economic opportunities, and the burden of care work and vulnerabilities to displacement and health problems are clearly and heavily gendered.

For each country a range of internal dynamics influence the proliferation of certain actors and forms of violence (these are discussed in detail in Section 5 of the report). However, collectively as a sub-region, the trends in violence and actors revolve around common themes: citizenship and identity; land as a productive asset and a resource through which claims for belonging are made; and elections as sites for contestation over access to benefits accrued from the state. In addition, both countries experience frequent and widespread violence from communal militias. In Kenya, discourses around the threat of terrorism and violent extremism justify increasing levels of force used by security forces on civilians and/or subaltern groups. It is on the basis of these shared factors and unique political trajectories that certain actors take pre-eminence over others in certain countries. The proximity of

Uganda and Kenya to each other also contributes to shared experiences of violence through spillover effects in border areas, and transnational violence in specific sub-regions.

In terms of peace-building and violence mitigation, our analyses reveal that in Kenya and Uganda the idea of the rule of law has taken root and come to be seen as important to preempting, managing and resolving violence emanating from diverse actors. However, both countries emerge from long histories in which institutions such as the judiciary have not operated independently of the political elite, and large portions of the population mistrust them. This plays out in the context of the management of, for example, electoral crises. In Uganda in 2016 and Kenya in 2013, even where there were fairly robust legal frameworks to address possible constitutional crises such as those created by contested presidential elections, it was not the letter of the law alone that mattered, but larger considerations about the impact of court decisions on national stability and therefore regional stability. These factors can make it difficult or technically impossible for political parties to use legal channels to pursue their grievances. It follows that if the machinations of political elites affect their ability to either use the rule of law effectively or abuse it, then the likelihood that less privileged members in wider society will trust the courts and the judiciary as viable institutions to reduce violence is minimal.

Kenya and Uganda have long histories of civil society's organising, and interventions in peace-building, conflict management and community reconstruction. While larger international non-governmental organisations support and run some of this work – the failures of which to achieve sustained change are frequently critiqued in the literature – a number of violence reduction initiatives also emphasise pre-existing models of conflict resolution as key to rebuilding societies. *Mat Oput* in Northern Uganda and the Tecla Lorupe Peace Foundation in Karamoja in Kenya illustrate these home-grown initiatives. It must be noted, though, that most of these models, in drawing on 'traditional approaches', can end up re-inscribing gender power hierarchies, which may have been destroyed or changed by conflict.

## Ghana and Ivory Coast

As in Kenya and Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast are politically, economically, ethnically and demographically diverse countries. Colonial histories and respective development trajectories, their very different profiles of conflict, and experiences of past and present political life, have historically shaped violence trajectories in Ghana and Ivory Coast. State building was an inherently violent, contradictory and competitive process in both countries, and the process of building political and economic structures interacted with macroeconomic factors in ways that broke and bridged societal and political institutions.

Both countries set out at independence with single-party, authoritarian systems of governance; and regional inequalities, single commodity dependence, economic crisis and structural adjustment programmes created the basis for similar crises. The interplay of economic instability with zero-sum political power dynamics (formal and informal) in particular fuelled conflict in both countries. However, they followed different paths because the economic dynamics, political process and political settlement differed in both cases. These divergent pathways, however, have coalesced around certain shared characteristics, including: the significance of sub-national geography in shaping regional difference, inequality and perceptions of marginalisation and exclusion; the salience of identity as a factor in determining access to, and control over, resources, power and representation; and the centrality of land in politics, violence, and peace-building processes.

In Ivory Coast, former president Félix Houphouët-Boigny (1960–93) left a legacy and settlement that could not work following his death given changing economic conditions. The changing economic context intersected with elite power struggles and dramatically heightened the stakes in the country's 1995 elections, which in turn destabilised the country's

nascent democratic system and led to large-scale violence from 2000 onwards, with civil war being declared in 2002. In Ghana, a shift to multiparty politics saw the political elite transition between parties with relative peace, thus establishing a democratic political settlement. Furthermore, Ghana's investment in strengthening civil society allowed citizens to express their grievances and engage with the government through democratic processes.

While political and economic liberalisation was a sort of opportunity in the Ghanaian case in terms of stability, the opposite was true in Ivory Coast. Dependency on natural resources relates to economic success and precarity in both countries, and this has in turn consistently undermined socioeconomic redistribution between northern and southern regions and reinforced inequalities. The institutionalisation of ethnicity in Ivory Coast moved starkly away from the country's history of ethnic balance, and was in contrast to the nationalisation of politics in Ghana, which continued to promote ethno-regional balances in representation. The Ivory Coast experience presents a cautionary tale for Ghana, where serious economic stress may strain this implicit bargain. Ghana's context of a two-party political system presents a risk to stability because it provides a platform for a 'winner-takes-all' mentality in political contests.

Within the country at regional level, economic and social inequality between the north and south of Ghana interplay with traditional chieftaincy structures. Inter- and intra-group conflict in the north reflects historical legacies of majority–minority group inequality established in colonial times. This has fuelled localised communal violence linked to minority groups' emancipatory claims for decision-making power, land and identity. Identity has played an important role in the way that conflict narratives have been constructed in both contexts, and the formalisation and politicisation of these identities – ethnic, religious and linguistic – leading to rigid boundaries of belonging that have fuelled violent group mobilisation.

The zero-sum logic of power in politics within Ivory Coast and Ghana has perpetuated violence of different kinds. In both countries, traditional land ownership disputes and electoral violence intersect as politicians manipulate political narratives to gain support. This has particular resonance in Ivory Coast where politicians have successively achieved shifts in land ownership through policy and law. Political interests are then directly linked to land struggles and feed into cycles of protracted conflict, particularly in western Ivory Coast and northern Ghana. In Ivory Coast, regional, inter-ethnic and nationalist tensions with roots in conflicts over land ownership have been fuelled strategically in the context of elite power struggles, and are associated with violent civil war in the early 2000s. These factors, as well as a lack of accountability for war crimes perpetuated in the context of civil war, are further associated with electoral violence in recent years. The relatively peaceful electoral process in 2015 was promising, and the two-term election of President Alassane Ouattara (2010–present) has enabled a timeline that may bring about longer-term change. In Ghana, low-level electoral violence manifests itself across the country, as political elites compete for centres of power. Elites have been complicit in inciting violence and intimidation to ensure their political success, which also fuels a governance approach that focuses on short- to mid-term goals confined by electoral cycles and not longer-term structural change in the conditions that fuel inter-group competition and violence, particularly in the north.

Efforts to address and mitigate violence have occurred in direct and indirect forms in Ivory Coast and Ghana, including explicit violence reduction measures in response to conflict, as well as political, economic and social action to prevent or reduce future violence. In Ivory Coast, the government has made progress in security sector reform, handing over security functions from the military to the police; but effectiveness is hampered by a highly centralised governance structure, which constrains operations at local level (UNSC 2016). Ivory Coast has also had success in disarming tens of thousands of former combatants who fought during the civil war. However, efforts have been one-sided and focused predominantly on combatants affiliated with former president Laurent Gbagbo (2000–10). Without even-handed

disarmament, the risk remains that new groups coming together in an uncontrolled fashion could use weapons and harm collective security. Ghana's successful reform of the security sector following the transition from military government to elected representatives in 1992 was critical for the maintenance and consolidation of democracy. However, while reforms were successful in suppressing the abusive political influence of the military, reform lacked transparency or public input, which led to the military being perceived as non-partisan. Furthermore, the police force was neglected and there was little reform of the legal system, which led to a sense that security forces could act with impunity.

Creating and sustaining effective civil society organisations (CSOs) and independent governance institutions (IGIs) is seen as a safeguard to peace and democracy in Ghana, which reflects deepening democratic institutionalisation in the country. In Ghana, courts of law have gained popular and elite acceptance as legitimate avenues for settling differences between contending political factions; but in Ivory Coast the relative under-development of these institutions is a major challenge to attempts at democratic consolidation and prevention or resolution of violence. Committees and commissions of enquiry to investigate conflicts with the aim of finding a resolution have also been important features of both conflict environments. But despite the investment in this process, the lack of published findings from the report of the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims has hampered momentum in Ivory Coast. The commission's mandate is to register all unidentified victims of the Ivorian crisis and their entitled beneficiaries, and propose compensation measures to repair harm suffered or restore property to victims; it has compensated 316,954 victims for the exactions committed during the civil strife in the country between 1990 and 2011.

Ghana's constitutional provisions and other features of the country's political settlement, including those to ensure regional/ethnic balance and prevent the formation of parties along ethnic or regional lines, seem to be an important conflict-prevention strategy. In addition, the empowerment of minority and marginalised ethnic groups within substantive local decision-making structures has provided platforms for the interests of these groups to be brought into the broader political sphere. The strength of localised structures and strong social networks in Ghana has meant that when the state retracted or weakened, this was countered with alternative sources of social cohesion, whereby horizontal solidarities were strengthened. At the same time, pockets of localised insecurity and violence highlight associations among horizontal inequalities, uneven governance arrangements and violence in the context of an otherwise largely peaceful national settlement.

## **Conclusions and further recommendations**

AMV research has shown that a central assumption that underlies attempts to develop a normative set of goals around reducing violence and building peace is that violent conflict is caused by a common set of drivers, failures, situations and processes related to development. A high-level 'best practice' consensus has emerged that reducing violence therefore requires building resilience through a set of key policy interventions, namely those that create legitimate institutions (often through the crafting of political settlements), those that establish mechanisms to increase access to justice and security systems, and those that reduce poverty by extending employment and other economic opportunities (Lind *et al.* 2016: 3).

These goals imply that violent places need to evolve to be more similar, in terms of governance, justice and security and economic characteristics, to places that are already peaceful and stable. However, just as no single pathway or set of circumstances leads to violence, there is no single pathway to building and sustaining peace. While patterns of violence may appear similar across different contexts, violence dynamics, and therefore appropriate and effective means of addressing and mitigating violence, are highly context-dependent; efforts to address and mitigate them must be sensitive to dynamics at the

national and sub-national levels. The optimal design of institutions or programmatic approaches is therefore never an absolute that can be transported from one context to another as a whole or with equal efficacy. Rather, approaches need to be flexible in response to political conditions and trends, and must take into account framings and perceptions of these by different stakeholders in places where violence is a way of life (Lind *et al.* 2016).

At the same time, it is also important to understand how particular dynamics that emerge in different settings and on different scales can coalesce in relation to common themes, topics, actors and processes. Understanding, in comparative or contrastive perspective, a range of ways in which violence patterns are, have been or can be associated with, for example, historical processes of state-making, key groups of actors, types of social and political change, horizontal inequalities (across ethnic groups, regions, etc.) and other factors can give substantive insights into why ostensibly different factors in different settings are associated with similar outcomes; or how ostensibly similar circumstances are associated with divergent outcomes. This approach facilitates the identification of a range of experiences, challenges and practices that can be useful in identifying ‘best fit’ strategies that can be tested in and adapted to specific needs with regards to addressing particular problems and violence settings.

As highlighted by Lind *et al.* (2016), understanding the landscape of violent conflict is increasingly complicated by transnational flows of money, arms and people. Different types of violence are often interlinked, and emerging forms of violent conflict are diffuse, involve new configurations of actors, and entail changing roles for international, state and non-state actors, including members of conflict-affected communities. For national and international stakeholders who are responsible for making choices about where to concentrate conflict resolution/mitigation resources, we advise that investing in expertise and knowledge of specific conflicts and conflict dynamics, inclusive of views ‘from below’ and ‘from within’ conflicts, is important and worthwhile, particularly around the micro-dynamics of conflict and localised conflict systems.

Such research reveals important fault lines and dimensions along which conflict is likely to occur, and can help illuminate entry points and opportunities for violence mitigation and achieving justice. Successful policies and interventions, as detailed in the rest of the report, are dependent on such knowledge and insights. They can help guide strategies for creating inclusive policies, settlements and platforms for sustainable social dialogue that feed into long-term goals of creating legitimate and democratic institutions. This strengthens access to justice for all and extends resource access, economic opportunities and employment in ways that address persistent inequalities and historical patterns of injustice and exclusion.

Several key findings emerge from our comparative analysis at national and regional cluster levels that bear directly on insights for addressing SDG 16 targets. While some of these are regionally specific recommendations, others represent broader cross-regional insights that inform efforts aimed at achieving long-term goals of mitigating violence and sustaining peace:

- An overarching policy proposition demands the creation of strong institutions that have the capacity to effectively mediate violence events where they occur. For Kenya and Uganda, and more broadly, a promising focus would be on building a judiciary that is removed from elite capture, and election management bodies that can be relied on to mediate elections in ways that strengthen democratic processes rather than polarise society.
- Security sector reform is a critical intervening process in how the state mediates violence when it occurs across groups of actors, whether perpetrators are proxy, sponsored political militias or national forces responding to radicalisation and/or extremist attacks. Half-hearted security reform processes that focus on building

capacities and capabilities rather than transforming attitudes towards and perceptions of security provision can fundamentally fail to transform state–society relations.

Rather, it falls back on and reproduces problematic historical relationships between security forces and regimes on the one hand and citizens on the other hand. As a result, in Uganda for example, reform processes are cosmetic, while in Kenya significant prior gains are slowly being eroded. In Ghana and Ivory Coast, failures and limitations of security sector reform processes underscore the need for such reforms to be enacted beside policing and judicial reforms, and that exceptional transparency is required to gain public trust in such efforts.

- An understanding of the differential effects of violent conflict and post-conflict settlement on women and girls is also of central importance to the task of creating secure and inclusive societies. Foregrounding how women's bodily autonomy is threatened by violence means focusing on women's experiences of actors and violence. Furthermore, paying attention to how masculinities and femininities are used in the service of regimes to establish the legitimacy of violence as a language to claim space creates a robust approach to understanding how intersectional identities are forged and what to account for in resourcing work to reduce violence. Gender-informed strategies for identifying vulnerabilities and building social and economic inclusion are needed to improve the safety, health and wellbeing of men, women and children in conflict-affected settings.
- For sustained peace and democracy, militaries must be subject to, without reserve, the democratically elected government and hold a strong attachment to the values of the state. In Ivory Coast for example, this requires the army to undergo continued reforms, training and adequate administration. A depoliticised, ethnically inclusive and neutral army would be one focused on its primary mission of safeguarding national security, which is integral in regions where the military during conflict has been implicated in or held directly responsible for crimes against civilians based on ethnicity, nationality and religion.
- Particularly in the East African countries analysed, but broadly relevant due to the proliferation of securitisation and counter-terrorism discourses informing policy, the growth of violent extremist groups has complicated state- and nation-making processes by subsuming and co-opting legitimate demands for equity and territorial integrity. State responses to countering violent extremism can mask larger democratisation demands in society. In effect, terror and extremism become metaphors for opposition and dissenting voices, and the interplay between regime security, patronage and counter-terrorism debates is important. This can justify widespread economic violence sustained by the state in the name of countering extremism. In this way these two forms of violence can be interrelated, and it is essential that policy responses do not externalise the debate on conflict management, which is key to state and national cohesion.
- Likewise, post-conflict reconciliation initiatives should ensure that the material and justice needs of civilian victims of war-time violence and military crimes are adequately addressed, should invite popular dialogue and should make findings and conclusions publicly available. Trials and accountability efforts should address atrocities committed by all sides in violent conflict and be attuned to the needs of particular post-conflict contexts, which would help to legitimise, and thus justify popular trust in, these measures and maximise the reconstruction of respect for rule of law.
- In settings of post-conflict recovery and where economic conditions lead to large groups of disaffected and underemployed people, employment and development projects are critical to ensuring that disarmed combatants and economically disadvantaged young people in particular find sufficient alternatives and future nonviolent pathways. This should not be purely a response to their 'destabilising potential', but rather should acknowledge their right to security, development and political participation in the future of their societies.

- The prevalence and protracted nature of land-related disputes rooted in the evolution of socio-political and economic relations between autochthonous and migrant communities and politicised ethnicities or regional sub-populations remain major obstacles to rural livelihood and interpersonal security across the countries included in this analysis. Effective land reform policies can both consolidate progress toward sustainable peace and help to sustain peace over the long term.
- Drawing on the experience of Ghana, the creation and sustenance of effective, transparent and independent CSOs and IGIs can support democratic institutionalisation. Additionally, measures that ensure regional/ethnic balance in public positions and prevent the formation of parties on ethnic or regional lines can address some of the risks linked with the perception of zero-sum political contests that can be associated with electoral violence and other, more protracted, forms of violent conflict. Resolutions to conflicts that arise in such contexts may be found in ‘unconventional’ or indigenous approaches, given that they are grounded in a traditional source that may already be widely trusted in a particular region or among particular social groups and may promote a more dialogic and conciliatory approach than the courts, which can be polarising. However, it is critical that these processes not be essentialised or instrumentalised, and that space for women and young people be made explicit. Regardless of the approach taken, it is vital that approaches to institutionalising democracy do not simply strive to build a new national identity discourse to replace older divisive narratives of belonging and exclusion. Rather, efforts to institutionalise democracy should aim to directly address historical sources of structural violence that often intersect with pathways of direct violence and dismantle barriers to equitable participation in social and political life.

# 1 Introduction

The 2011 World Development Report on *Conflict, Security and Development* states that, 'repeated cycles of organized criminal violence and civil conflict that threaten development locally and regionally and are responsible for much of the global deficit in meeting the Millennium Development Goals' (World Bank 2011: 46). As a result, peace and security emerged as a 'core concern' in the development of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda (Werner 2015: 348), and in recent years a remarkable high-level consensus has emerged around the basic elements of an approach to reduce violence across contexts. These include: (1) the need to create legitimate institutions, often through efforts to craft political settlements; (2) strengthening access to justice; (3) extending economic opportunities and employment, especially for young people; and (4) fostering societal resilience, through institutions as well as by considering the sustainability of interventions (Lind *et al.* 2016). Flowing from these ideas, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16 aims to 'promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels' by meeting targets that range from reduction of violence and related death rates everywhere to reducing corruption and bribery in all their forms, ending all forms of legal discrimination and developing effective, accountable and transparent institutions (UNDP 2016a).

Clearly, making progress towards SDG 16 entails significant challenges. At a fundamental level, concepts such as 'peace', 'security', 'legitimacy', 'good governance' and even 'justice' are all highly contested and continue to carry differing implications and stakes for policymakers across international, national and sub-national levels and in different contexts of violence. They mean different things in different settings, making them hard to define and measure. Multi-stakeholder discussions on international security indicators bring to the fore questions regarding intrusion on the sovereignty of individual states (Lucey 2015). Further, due to the variety of forms, manifestations and rapidly changing dynamics and correlates of violent conflict, the 'dichotomy between conflict and non-conflict countries' and regions is overly simplistic and can be misleading (UNDP 2016b: 4).

As a result, discussions about concrete steps to building peace can be hindered by overly generalised objectives and prescriptions; for example, on the need to build 'inclusive institutions at all levels', paradoxically coupled with the formulation of overly restrictive metrics and indicators for progress (Werner 2015: 346). Other challenges include funding shortfalls; persistent insecurities and disparities in wealth and power in many countries; legacies of policies and agreements that have weakened state capacities for implementing programmes aimed at achieving good governance; widespread distrust of states and their security apparatuses; and associated challenges with achieving accountability on the part of police, military and, increasingly, private security forces (Zuber 2016).

Rather than identifying a standard formula or approach for peace-building, Addressing and Mitigating Violence (AMV) research has suggested that issues such as those described above are of profound significance. There is no one-size-fits-all method of reducing violence. Violence dynamics, and therefore appropriate and effective means to address and mitigate violence, are highly contextual at national and sub-national levels, and the optimal design of institutions is never an absolute. Rather, it changes in response to political conditions and trends, and stakeholders' framings of these in places where violence is a way of life and a currency of politics (Lind *et al.* 2016). In place of uniform approaches, we recognise that reducing violence requires identifying 'best fit' political and institutional arrangements, based on detailed analysis of violence reduction efforts in particular places (World Bank 2011).

As part of our continuing work on AMV, this report develops evidence-based insights into contextual dimensions of violence and practices on reducing violence, from multiple perspectives and at multiple levels of governance. In presenting our analytic narrative we are

particularly interested, first, in the intersection of three crucial dimensions of violence over time: (1) the incidence, types and overarching patterns of violence documented in and across the focal countries and regions, including sub-national and international geographies of violence; (2) key actors and institutions implicated in trajectories of violence and peace; and (3) processes of political change, including (but not limited to) violence reduction efforts. Across all four cases, the politicisation of ethnicity; sub-national variation in political power, inclusion, development and growth; and the variable types and consequences of violence across different groups and communities, are common threads that shape the trajectories of violence and the success and efficacy of mitigation and management strategies. Second, our cross-regional analysis assesses the role of trans-border, cross-regional and international processes in spanning systems of violence and mitigation, including legacies of colonisation and de-colonisation, influences of international peace-building initiatives, transnational actors and flows, and broad trends in extractionist development.

The focus of our analysis is on two blocks of neighbouring countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have diverging violence trajectories and differing experiences of addressing violence: Kenya and Uganda in East Africa; and Ghana and Ivory Coast in West Africa. Using analyses of secondary literature and of data (from 1997) compiled by the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), we combine mixed-method case studies with process tracing and tiered comparison. This approach facilitates an understanding of the role of multiple factors, including governance and the evolution of institutions and justice mechanisms over time, in facilitating the emergence of violence and reducing violence at multiple levels, from sub-national to cross-regional.

Using this approach, we can examine and assess causal and constitutive relations between characteristics and factors of violence and violence reduction efforts. At the same time, this enables us to consider (to the extent possible) historical trajectories, different positionalities, and understandings and motivations of different actors and groups on different jurisdictional levels. This opens space to critically evaluate dominant assumptions about the causes of and solutions to violence in and across the different focal settings. In conclusion, we use our analyses to identify a suite of evidence-informed practical lessons and policy propositions that we believe can make an important contribution to progress towards SDG 16.

Flowing from our analyses, we offer a number of cross-case, country- and region-specific recommendations for making short- and mid-term progress. These recommendations, discussed in depth in Sections 6 and 7, span themes of: security sector reform; political and military accountability as part of strengthening trust across sectors; democratic institutionalisation; addressing gendered experiences of violence and post-conflict settlement; relationships between state violence and violent extremism and recovery and reconciliation processes; and the importance of equitable land reform.

For national and international stakeholders who are responsible for making choices about where to concentrate conflict resolution and mitigation resources, we advise investing in expertise and knowledge of specific conflicts and conflict dynamics, and particularly around the micro-dynamics of conflict and localised conflict systems, fault lines and dimensions along which conflict is likely to occur. This can illuminate entry points and opportunities for inclusive settlements, platforms for sustainable social dialogue, and new approaches to violence mitigation.

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Case selection

The geographic focus of this report is a sub-sample of sub-Saharan African countries and regions: Kenya and Uganda in East Africa; and Ghana and Ivory Coast in West Africa. In selecting focal countries, we were interested in identifying ‘regional clusters’ of countries that share borders and which have been exposed to similar regional-level historical, social and political processes, yet have experienced divergent historical trajectories or contemporary profiles of violence and conflict on a national level.

### 2.2 Analytic approach

Our analytic approach is called ‘process tracing’ or ‘analytic narrative’. Process tracing was selected for three primary reasons. First, it allows us to examine and assess causal and constitutive relations between characteristics and factors of violence and violence reduction efforts; while, second, considering different positionalities, understandings and motivations of different actors and groups. Third, it facilitates the critical evaluation of dominant assumptions about the causes and solutions to mitigate violence in each case and across the sample. This approach may take a positivist, interpretive or combined stance, and links events or phenomena in a case to develop a process-oriented explanation of a particular outcome or set of outcomes (della Porta and Keating 2008; Vennesson 2008). In this report, we apply a combined positivist-interpretive approach to process tracing at three levels: case analysis, regional comparative analysis and cross-regional comparative analysis.

The first level is case analysis that focuses on the intersection of three dimensions of violence and violence mitigation at the national level in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast, and how relationships across these three dimensions have changed over time. As mentioned in the introduction, these dimensions are: (1) the incidence, types and overarching patterns of violence documented; (2) key actors and institutions implicated in trajectories of violence and peace; and (3) processes of political change, including violence reduction efforts. For each of the four selected countries, contributors to this report prepared concise case studies that draw on quantitative and qualitative analyses of violence trend data compiled since 1997, and secondary evidence about relationships between aspects of governance and the incidence and characteristics of violence within each country.

The second level involves comparative analysis focused on the intersection of three dimensions of violence at the regional level, within regional clusters. We are interested in historical trajectories in the focal countries and regions, and in understanding how these are associated with changing sub-national and sub-regional geographies of violence. The third level involves cross-regional comparison between the two regional clusters. The cross-regional analysis is used to identify more general patterns in violence and violence mitigation, and to assess the role of trans-border, cross-regional and international processes in violence and its mitigation. This includes consideration of a number of key variables identified from the literature, including the influences of transnational actors and flows (e.g. the influence of militant organisations such as al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab, the growth of nationalist movements, the trade in arms, trends in large-scale resource investments and extractionist development); and associations drawn between horizontal inequalities and violence. Regional and cross-regional analyses will focus on broad issues of governance and justice mechanisms to better understand how institutional factors, as well as political processes and alliances, might contribute to parallel or divergent trajectories of violence.

One of the principal reasons for comparative research is to explain how different factors in different settings are associated similar outcomes, or how ostensibly similar situations are associated with divergent outcomes (Mair 2008). The approach described above allows us to

examine and assess causal and constitutive relations between characteristics and factors of violence and violence reduction efforts across jurisdictional levels. It facilitates analytic consideration of different positionalities and motivations of different actors and groups, and critical evaluation of dominant assumptions about the causes and solutions to mitigate violence in each case and across cases and regions.

## 2.3 Data sources

Our mixed-method analyses draw on two primary sources of data. First, analyses of secondary literature on (1) trajectories of violence in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast and (2) transnational processes of violence and mitigation, are used to explore and contextualise historical trajectories of violence and conflict mitigation.

Second, quantitative and spatial analyses of violence events and actors are based on data compiled by ACLED. These are collected and coded from published resources and those vetted by local source partners. Sources include, for example, media reports, non-governmental organisation (NGO)/civil society reports (primarily focused on human rights abuses), and intergovernmental agency and governmental reports. ACLED codes political violence only (not criminal), but this includes identity-based conflict (e.g. intra- and inter-ethnic related violence). Analyses of ACLED data presented in this report are based on data from ACLED's Version 6, which codes for event type and actor type (discussed below), and covers all political violence and social unrest recorded in Africa from 1997 to 2015 inclusive.<sup>1</sup>

Using these two complementary sources of evidence, we can explore these issues with more empirical precision, historical depth and processual richness than would be possible with either data source alone.

## 2.4 Key terms and concepts

### 2.4.1 The state: state-making and state forces

Several key terms and concepts are central to the analysis in this report. Conceptually, the report situates the trajectories of state-making in all countries as an important foundation for understanding the trends in violence and violent actors between 1997 and 2015, which forms the broad time span that this report covers. In tracing the trajectory of state formation, identity is viewed intersectionally through citizenship, ethnicity, gender and class; land is conceptualised as an economic resource, as well as an important marker of how belonging is understood; elections and their management are understood as moments of rupture, and therefore contested spaces. State forces here refer to security sector institutions such as the police and military, while political elites serve as important scaffolding. Understanding the mobilisation of violence through these prisms offers a nuanced understanding of marginalisation, (in)security and (in)justice as a sub-set of factors that animate violent conflict.

### 2.4.2 Ethnicity, identity and politics

The report will also discuss ethnicity, and the politicisation of ethnic identity, at length. Although ethnicity is an important identity marker in many countries, people have multiple identities relating to religion, class, region of origin, occupation and gender. None of these identities exists in isolation and they are intricately linked in ways that construct different meanings within and between members of different communities (Langer 2010). Mamdani (2002) outlines that political violence in postcolonial Africa is intertwined with the political construction of identity. Ethnicity becomes a legal and political identity when a political power

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<sup>1</sup> These data are available publicly online at [www.acleddata.com/data/version-6-data-1997-2015/](http://www.acleddata.com/data/version-6-data-1997-2015/).

or authority identifies subjects ethnically and discriminates between them. In turn, ethnicity is constructed as a legal and political identity that is no longer consensual but rather enforced by the organs of the state, and distinctions are made between ethnic groups considered indigenous and those not. The state can use this power and demarcation to grant and deny access to rights considered 'customary', including land ownership.

### 2.4.3 ACLED data

In references to quantitative data, the report draws on the ACLED dataset and its terminology. The ACLED Project codes reported information according to exact location, date, and other characteristics of political violence events, focusing on a range of actions by political agents, including governments, rebels, militias, communal groups, political parties, rioters, protesters and civilians in African countries (Raleigh and Dowd 2016). ACLED uses specific terms to identify particular types of violence events and actors involved in them. For the purposes of consistency in this report, we have chosen to retain ACLED terminology, which accompanies figures and appears in the text. However, the precise meaning of the terms used by ACLED is not always self-evident. For clarity of discussion, we present key terms, definitions and empirical limitations for ACLED event and actor categorisations below.

The most relevant event categories are battles, violence against civilians, riots and protests and remote violence:

- **Battles** are defined as 'violent clashes between at least two armed groups' and are distinguished by whether or not control of a location is changed or unchanged as a consequence of the event (ACLED 2016a). For example, battles may involve no transfer of territory (e.g. an attack on military forces in which the forces hold their ground and do not surrender or abandon territory), or may involve territorial gains by either government or non-state actors.
- **Violence against civilians** involves violent attacks on unarmed civilians (Raleigh and Dowd 2016). This category is assigned when there is evidence that civilians were either deliberately targeted or were the only victims of an attack. Unfortunately, because of limitations on data availability, events in which military or other armed actors are targeted and civilian casualties occur are generally coded as 'battles', as it is difficult to accurately determine the rate of civilian casualties. As a result, some fatalities included in battle counts may include civilians, but these cannot be disaggregated (ACLED 2016a).
- **Riots** (violent demonstrations) and **protests** (non-violent demonstrations) often involve a spontaneous action by unorganised, unaffiliated members of society.
- **Remote violence** refers to events in which the tool for engaging in violent conflict does not require the physical presence of the perpetrator, such as shelling, aerial bombardment, or improvised explosive devices (IEDs)/remote-controlled IEDs. Remote violence can involve the targeting of either armed combatants or non-combatants (i.e. civilians). In this report, except where explicitly stated, remote violence against civilians has been aggregated into the violence against civilians category above (ACLED 2016a).

In ACLED datasets, politically violent actor categories include rebels, militias and other organised political groups who interact over issues of political authority such as territorial control, government control, access to resources, etc. (Raleigh and Dowd 2016). The most relevant actor categories in this report are state forces, rebel forces, political militias, communal militias, rioters, external forces and unidentified armed groups:

- **State forces** are defined as internationally recognised regimes in assumed control of a state (ACLED 2016a).
- **Rebel forces** are political organisations whose goal is to counter an established national governing regime by violent acts. Rebel groups have a stated political

agenda for national power, either through regime replacement or separatism, are acknowledged beyond the ranks of immediate members, and use violence as their primary means to pursue political goals (ACLED 2016a).

- **Political militias** are a diverse set of actors who are often established for a specific purpose or during a specific period to further a political goal by violence. These organisations are not seeking the removal of national power, but are typically supported, armed by, or allied with a political elite and act towards a goal these elites or larger political movements have defined. Militias may operate in conjunction, or in alliance, with a recognised government, governor, military leader, rebel organisation or opposition group.
- **Communal militias** are defined as armed and violent groups organised around a collective, common feature, including community, ethnicity, region, religion or, in exceptional cases, livelihood. An armed group claiming to operate on behalf of a larger identity community may be associated with that community, but not represent it. Identity militias may have a noted role in the community, such as serving as long-term policing units. Where reports refer to armed groups specifically identified by their ethnic, religious or other communal identity, events are attributed to this aggregate category. Importantly, the aggregate category of 'x Ethnic Militia' (e.g. 'Karamajong Ethnic Militia') may refer to multiple, diffuse groups or communities from among this ethnic group, mobilised and engaged in discrete campaigns or acts of violence. For the purposes of this analysis, however, these potentially diffuse sub-units within the wider identity group are treated as a single analytical category.
- **Rioters** are individuals who engage in violent demonstrations or spontaneous acts of disorganised violence. Rioters are, by definition, violent and may engage in a wide variety of violent acts, including destruction of property, engagement with other armed groups or violence against unarmed individuals (ACLED 2016a).
- **External forces** are defined as small categories of 'other' actors, including hired mercenaries, private security firms, or external (formal) international or intergovernmental forces, such as neighbouring military forces or peacekeeping forces (ACLED 2016a).
- **Unidentified armed groups** are coded in the data when no specific group is identified as responsible, or as claiming responsibility, for a particular act of violence. These groups are coded as political militias, and they are used in the analysis on the basis that their activity affects the wider conflict and security environment, and that their very anonymity is often leveraged as a strategic tool for political agents, elites or established, named violent actors to deflect responsibility for an action, while still benefiting from its consequences (e.g. by denying any role in the targeting of political opposition supporters, while benefiting from the harassment and repression of those supporters). Importantly, this aggregate category may mask a large number of diffuse, diverse and discrete armed actors: multiple agents may be active under this collective label (Raleigh and Dowd 2016).

## 2.5 Structure of the report

In this report, we present an evidence-based analytic narrative in order to provide insights into contextual dimensions of violence and practices of reducing violence in the national contexts of Kenya, Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast. We do so by examining trajectories of violence in these countries and within the regional contexts of East and West Africa. The cross-regional analysis highlights common theses across regional contexts, particularly in relation to trans-border, cross-regional and international factors that cut across broad-scale processes of violence and violence mitigation.

In Sections 3 and 4, we briefly compare and contrast analytic accounts of trajectories of violence in Kenya and Uganda (Section 3) and Ghana and Ivory Coast (Section 4). These sub-sections focus on the intersection of: (1) overarching patterns of violence documented in

the focal countries and clusters, including sub-national geographies of violence; (2) key actors, institutions and ideas implicated in trajectories of violence and peace; and (3) historical processes of political change. These sub-sections address questions of what factors have been particularly salient in each country, what factors have been at play across the two national contexts within each cluster, and identify and explain common and divergent patterns and processes.

In Section 5, we focus on how trajectories discussed in the two previous sub-sections are associated with contemporary geographies and dynamics of violent conflict in the East and West African regions respectively. The section focuses on the types and continuing patterns of violence documented in each regional cluster; contemporary transnational geographies of violence; and key actors and institutions in the two regional clusters.

Section 6 focuses on cross-regional violence and mitigation dynamics. It addresses ways in which common themes and threads related to violence trajectories from the East and West Africa clusters are associated with trans-border, cross-regional and international factors in broad processes of violence and mitigation, and points to lessons learned in relation to these.

In the concluding section, we draw from the analytic narrative presented in Sections 3–6 to critically evaluate dominant assumptions about the causes of, and solutions to, violence in and across the different settings and from a cross-regional perspective. We ask whether or not, and to what extent, normative approaches to addressing and mitigating violence in Africa address the issues that we identify in our analyses. Drawing on the results of our analyses, we identify practical lessons and policy propositions that we believe can make an important contribution to progress toward SDG 16.

### **3 Trajectories of violence in Kenya and Uganda: identity, land and state-making**

In Kenya and Uganda, political life is ethnically and geographically diverse. Understanding patterns of violence and conflict, and accompanying peace-building efforts, can be complicated by the fact that explanations are often contested from a number of perspectives, and with a number of competing narratives and claims. Factors that have historically shaped violence trajectories in Kenya and Uganda, including legacies of British rule and colonial administration, the politicisation of identity (and the ethnicisation of politics), the appropriation and redistribution of land and other natural resources, and attempts at political settlement and peace-building, ought to be understood against a dynamic history of state-making and associated themes of identity, marginalisation, (in)security and (in)justice.

State-making provides an important lens for understanding the nature of violence trajectories, and offers insights into why some forms of violence are more prevalent than others given the different political trajectories of the two countries. It also frames connections between patterns of violent conflict, different actors in violence, and processes of political change over time, both within the two countries and when these cut across shared borders.

The following section illustrates that Kenya and Uganda's experiences with conflict have largely stemmed from 'conversations' on nation- and state-building, which sought to determine the terms by which the society would live together (see Olonisakin and Muteru 2014).<sup>2</sup> As illustrated below, identity and/or ethnicity-based contestations reflect a crisis in state- and nation-making. In leveraging land or territory as a key basis for making demands on the state, and articulating these claims with reference to ethnic identity, these trajectories reflect the failure of both states to create a consensus on belonging in the contemporary nation state, and illustrate some of the tensions, contradictions and competitive incentives inherent in the state-making process itself. Moreover, this lack of consensus has not been ameliorated by the introduction of multiparty democracy and elections: as longitudinal trends demonstrate, contestation over representation, power and inclusion, which are deeply rooted in Kenya and Uganda's histories, manifests itself in the contemporary period in spikes in violence surrounding election cycles, frequent elite-sponsored militia violence, and violent confrontations with the state itself.

#### **3.1 State-making and trajectories of conflict in Kenya**

In colonial Kenya, the establishment of plantation estates entailed the expropriation of productive lands and labour from the indigenous population in areas amenable to white settlement. The British instrumentalisation of 'tribes' as administrative units and leaders within the colony centred on the notion of internally homogenous indigenous blocs, with clearly defined territorial boundaries, as vital to governing the indigenous population in a locally valid and politically harmonious way (Apthorpe 1968: 18; Lonsdale and Berman 1979). In the search for suitable ethnic frameworks, ethnic groups and territories, complete in many cases with traditional rulers or 'warrant chiefs', emerged (Osaghae 2006). For example, the Baluhya of western Kenya emerged as a 'tribe' in the form of a colonial administrative unit between 1935 and 1945. Likewise the Kalenjin 'tribe' was an amalgamation of ten different ethnic groups that were grouped together on the basis of shared cultural and linguistic similarities (Okech 2013; Osaghae 2006).

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<sup>2</sup> The term conversation as used here is adapted from Olonisakin and Muteru (2014:6), to refer to wide-ranging interactions among groups and individuals in societies particularly in contexts where power asymmetry is rife, not least between populations and those in positions of authority.

### **Box 3.1 Political legacies of British colonial rule in East Africa**

The significance of legacies of British colonial administration in Kenya and Uganda to understanding subsequent dynamics of state-making and patterns of violent conflict cannot be overstated. It is important to highlight that European colonial administration was a form of foreign domination and did not aim to facilitate the development of strong, independent and secure nation states, but to enact economically profitable and efficiently governable colonies (e.g. Kenya) and protectorates (e.g. Uganda) (Lwanga-Lunyiigo 1987).

Although it entailed modes of direct and indirect governance to varying degrees, ‘indirect rule’ is the term that describes the mode of administration the British Empire favoured in sub-Saharan Africa. It was based on the idea that indigenous political categories, as viewed through the eyes of colonial administrators, should be preserved and deployed in the service of the colony (Broch-Due 2004). In the process, the Crown often directly controlled external relations, security and taxation, while indigenous representatives and institutions were incorporated into a structure of internal colonial domination through indirect legal-administrative institutions (Lange 2004: 906). In practice, this implied a process of social and ideological transformation at local level. Flexible customary governance arrangements became codified and prescriptive, yet retained associations with indigenous, ethnic, customary or traditional beliefs and governance arrangements through imposed notions of discrete tribal social identity (Ranger 1983). Aphorpe (1968) notes that in some cases, ‘the colonial regimes created tribes as we think of them today’ as administrative units over territories delineated by administrators (Aphorpe 1968: 18).

Implemented in different ways in Kenya and Uganda, the legacy of indirect rule has subsequently had dramatic but varying impacts on postcolonial political development and stability (Lange 2004). Osaghae (2006) contends that the application of the so-called ‘ethnic principle’ in establishing the colonial state was ‘by far the most deliberate and consequential of all colonial acts of state construction’ (Osaghae 2006: 7). Mamdani (2002) argues that when the political authority and the law it enforces identify subjects ethnically and discriminate between them, then ethnicity turns into a legal and political identity. Ethnicity as a cultural identity is consensual, but when ethnicity becomes a political identity, it is enforced by the legal and administrative organs of the state. These organs make a distinction between ethnic groups, between those considered indigenous and those not; the former are given right of access to rights considered ‘customary’, such as the right to use land, but the latter are denied these same rights. Consequently, these reified identity categories serve as the bases of claims made upon the state, and an often divisive and polarising vocabulary through which these claims are articulated, feeding into cycles of violent confrontation.

Consequently, the history of state formation in Kenya was heavily shaped by foregrounding identity as a means of negotiating access to resources. The politicisation of indigeneity by the colonial state through a ‘divide and rule’ strategy set in motion a process that animated distinctions, both indigenous and imposed, and polarised them. Some authors attribute this process with setting the context for much political violence in Africa, in colonial and postcolonial contexts (Abubakar and Hall 2011; Mamdani 2001; Nyukuri 1997).

In light of this politicised ethnicity, it follows that in Kenya, the nationalist struggle against the colonial establishment was championed within what were basically ‘distinct ethnic unions’ such as the Kikuyu Central Association, the Ukambani Members Association, the Luhya Union, the Young Kavirondo Association among others (Nyukuri 1997: 7). The post-colonial government of Kenya therefore inherited a number of problems, including the alien land and agricultural policies that the British had put in place. At independence, the fear of large, more recognised communities that were considered to have ‘benefited’ disproportionately from colonial arrangements came to the fore.

The agitation for a federal (*majimbo*) government emerged from this context. Its proponents conceived of it as a federal system of government, which meant that the federal states, or *jimbos*, would be created along geographical and ethnic constituencies (Okech 2013, 2015). The key concerns of *majimbo* proponents were access to economic opportunities and redistribution of some of the land white settlers had formerly owned. Most of the land in

question was in the Rift Valley, an area historically settled by the Kalenjin and Maasai (Oyugi 2002). The Maasai were part of the problematic 1904 agreement that saw them systematically dispossessed of their land to create room for British settlers in more fertile areas (Hughes 2006). This was in addition to post-First and Second World War soldier settlement schemes that further alienated the Kikuyu, Nandi, Kipsigi, Sabaot and Kamba, who were driven away from 'European-only' land (Ochieng' and Saxon 1990: 34). When the Mau Mau land freedom struggle was initiated, its main goal was to reclaim the farming land of the Agikuyu that was the 'white highlands'. The colonial government attempted to deal with this problem by purchasing land from the Maasai and resettling the Agikuyu in the Rift Valley, which only heightened rural discontent (Ochieng' and Saxon 1990).

The coastal region has also been the site of historical land dispossession, which can be traced to three interrelated processes that have had an impact on efforts to address land tenure questions in Kenya more generally. First, was the acquisition of land for the creation of a protectorate in the pre-colonial period; second, the imposition of English property law with titling and private property rights, which provided a juridical context for land appropriation; and third, the land reform process in the immediate post-independence period (Kanyinga 2000). On the coast, in particular, economic and political exigencies guided the establishment of settlement schemes by creating a distinction between land for agricultural production and land for settlement. Politically, the need to manage violent conflict arising from widespread landlessness drove settlement efforts. However, in practice, land expropriation in the Coast region, instead of resolving indigenous communities' land scarcity, led to the acquisition of land for and by non-locals at the expense of historically dispossessed communities (Kanyinga 2000).

In addressing the land question, the post-colonial government co-opted and mobilised kingpins from the smaller ethnic groups and in 1962 created the Million-Acre Settlement Scheme, wherein land was redistributed on a 'willing buyer, willing seller' basis (Okech 2013). Oyugi (2002) suggests that the political leverage the government of Jomo Kenyatta (1963–78) created for the Kikuyu, Embu and Meru facilitated the formation of many land-buying companies and thereafter began the large-scale resettlement of the Kikuyu in the arable Rift Valley. These were the same areas that the Kalenjin and the Maasai had historically occupied. While it is evident that the Kikuyu were the most organised and strategic in the acquisition of land, other communities such as the Luo, Kisii, and Luhya also acquired land in the areas bordering the Rift Valley.

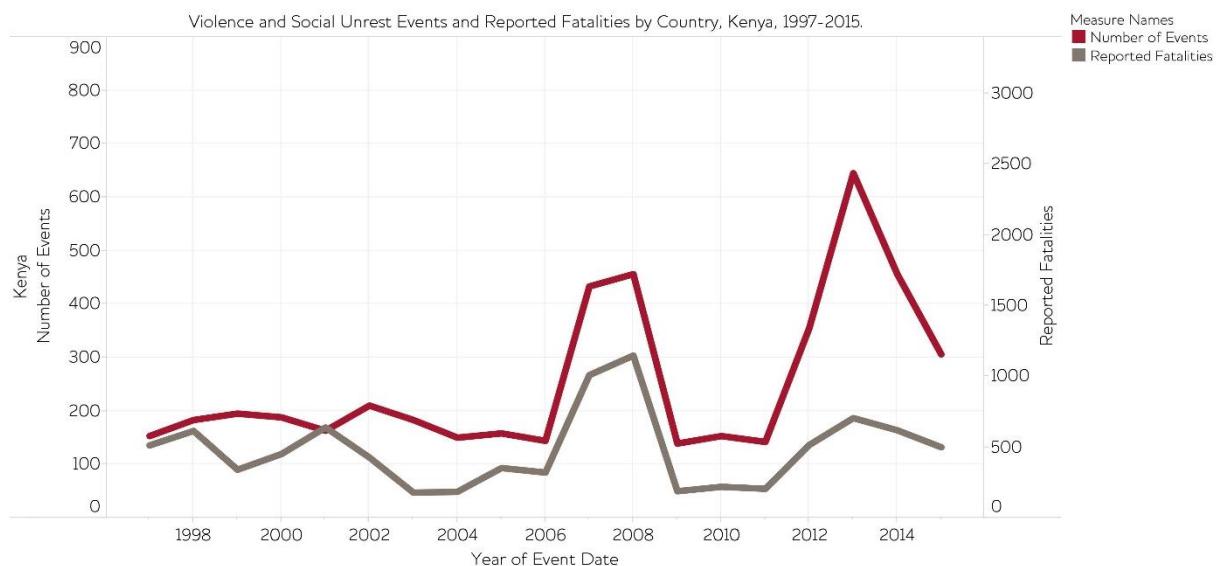
The institutionalisation of political patronage as a means to claim land rights has been a factor in the redistribution, acquisition and settlement of local landless communities as well. The discrimination has been evident in the provision of land titles to non-indigenous communities, while locals who have occupied and used land are unable to claim ownership through juridical means, which supersedes occupation. Over the years, local communities have adopted counter-patronage strategies, which include resisting forced evictions, to ascertain ownership rights and enforce redistribution of land, but these have not resolved the tensions that land dispossession has created in this region (Okech 2015).

In 1992, the repeal of section 2a of the constitution reverted Kenya to a multiparty state. This led to the re-emergence of debates over land and federalism in the form of *majimbo* beside election-related violence. Clashes in 1991 on the eve of the first multiparty elections were as a result of the interpretation of the democratic concept in raw majority terms, implying rule by the ethnic group (or groups) with the largest number of people (Amisi 1997). Ethnic kingpins from the Kalenjin and Maasai communities sold violence as the best way to benefit from the political system, particularly in relation to disputes over land that had gone unresolved since the colonial era in areas predominantly occupied by these groups. Many 'migrants' were left homeless and were unable to acquire national identity cards or access voting cards, which would have allowed them to participate in the general elections. Clashes that pitted the

Kalenjin against the Luo, Luhya and Kikuyu communities were designed to frighten and intimidate non-Kalenjins in the area into supporting the regime. These incidents of violence, which continued into the post-election period, claimed an estimated 1,500 lives and displaced at least 300,000 people (Misol, Hogendoorn and Nowrojee 2002).

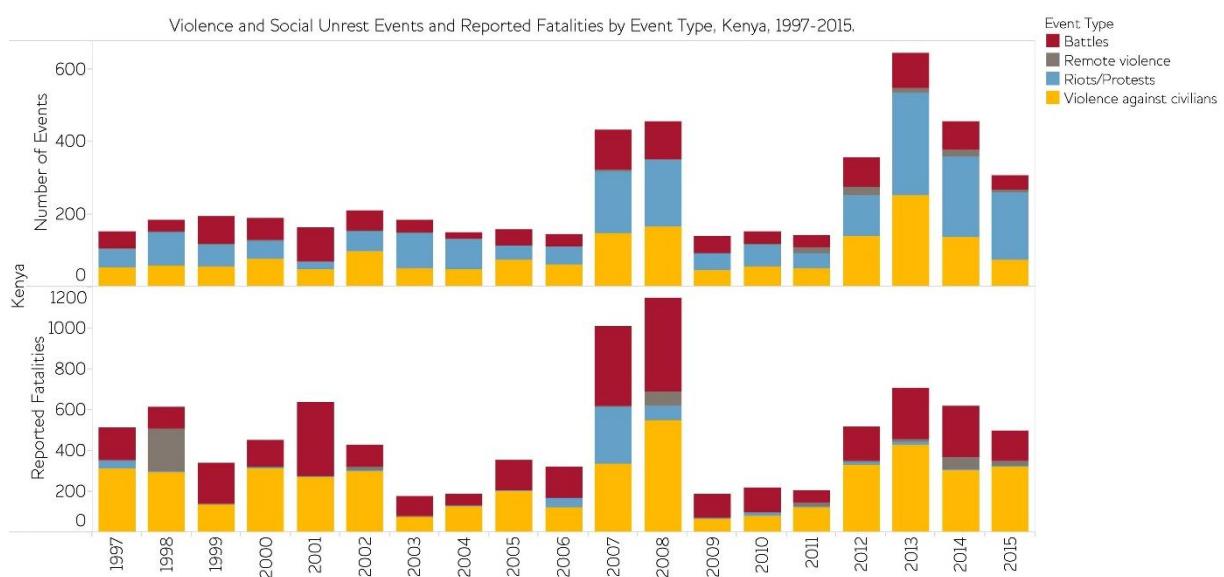
Figure 3.1 provides a summary timeline of the number of violence events and reported fatalities in Kenya between 1997 and 2015 based on ACLED analyses.

### **Figure 3.1 Violence and social unrest events and reported fatalities, Kenya (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

### **Figure 3.2 Violence and social unrest events and reported fatalities by event type, Kenya (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

The data illustrate the highly contested nature of electoral cycles in Kenyan politics, demonstrating spikes in violence around election periods in 2001, when reported fatalities spiked; and in 2007–08 and 2013, when violence events and reported fatalities increased. This pattern attests to the cyclical nature of violence in Kenya: despite a relatively high ‘baseline’ level of violence at all times, conflict periodically spikes in intense waves of violence, interspersed with relative lulls. In periods of election-related violence, levels of all types of violence typically increase, but an increase in the level of anti-civilian violence in key electoral periods is particularly notable (see Figure 3.2). These events involve incidents in which violent groups directly target civilians, and attest to the vulnerability of civilians during critical periods of political competition and contestation in Kenya.

The targeting of civilians was particularly prevalent in the election-related violence of 2007–08, and has had long-term impacts on recovery, resettlement and peace-building. Between December 2007 and February 2008, government reports indicate that post-election violence displaced 663,921 people and destroyed about 78,254 houses nationwide. An additional 640 households fled into Uganda. A total of 350,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) sought refuge in 118 camps, whereas about 331,921 IDPs were integrated into communities across the country (KHRC 2011).

In May 2008, the government launched an IDP resettlement programme, *Operation Rudi Nyumbani*, to resettle IDPs displaced by the post-election violence. However, a Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) audit of the programme revealed major gaps in conceptualisation and delivery, including those related to the heavily gendered dimension of internal displacement, which is associated with landlessness, unemployment and poor compensation for labour, vulnerability to gender-based violence, susceptibility to HIV infection, and a disproportionate gendered burden of caring for family members living with HIV/AIDS (KHRC 2011: 14–16).

Furthermore, although the levels of violence experienced in the 2007–08 period have not been repeated, several more recent critical political junctures have been accompanied by violence, including the 2010 referendum on the constitution, and the 2013 elections. These episodes of violence have rarely played out on the national stage, but pockets of insecurity and violence reflect the varied sub-national geography of conflict in Kenya. In particular, localised violence over the process of devolution, demarcation of county boundaries, *de facto* designation of majority groups within those counties, and high stakes of resources bestowed upon the new county governments, reflect enduring weaknesses in the state- and nation-building processes in Kenya (Lind 2014).

Ultimately, the ethnicisation of politics in Kenya intersects with concerns over economic interests and unequal socioeconomic development in the country. Whenever they have taken place in Kenya, clashes motivated by ethnic cleavages have always been instigated by group-level exclusions, fear of loss of political power, and the consequences that might accompany such an eventuality. The use of the state as an instrument of material acquisition has meant that those who have benefited over the years from the structure of access mobilise all resources available to sustain the regime in power (Oyugi 2002). In identifying land or territory as a key resource or basis for making demands for independence, these groups reflect the failure of countries in East Africa to create a consensus of belonging within the bounds of nation statehood (Okech 2015). The intersection of this politicisation of ethnicity, and ethnicisation of politics, with the mobilisation of other identity categories, including religious identities that violent extremist groups leverage (discussed in Section 5), demonstrates the volatility and mutability of this political logic.

In thinking about the repercussions of violence events generated by the politicisation of ethnicity in Kenya’s history, it is easy to generalise and speak about communities as a group. However, there are specific repercussions for women rooted in how gender identity is used to order and sustain the patriarchal state. This is seen in formal laws and policies, as well as

unwritten communal norms that relegate women to second-class citizenship. Some of the most obvious ways this has occurred in Kenya has been through dispossession in relation to land and sexual violence. At the national level, the lack of land reform policies before 1994 meant that gender-biased decisions on land management and dispute resolution institutions resulted in landlessness for a majority of women.

Women's ability to inherit property from their parents under law only changed in 1994 due to demands for the government to take visible action on gender equity. Changes in the law, however, have not meant a transformation of communities' attitudes to women's ownership and control of matrimonial and inherited land. The impact of displacement is connected to livelihoods and therefore land ownership and control, with 80 per cent of rural women responsible for small-scale farming activities, which accounts for 64 per cent of agricultural production, but with limited ownership and control over the land they work and live on (Kameri-Mbote 2003). Therefore, the land dispossession that has been a recurring feature of political crises since 1992 is complicated by socio-cultural factors that render women peripheral to land compensation claims.

Sexual violence has also been a feature of the processes of state formation in Kenya. For example, between December 2007 and February 2008, 1,171 cases of sexual violence were registered in public hospitals, 80 per cent of which were cases of rape (CREAW 2008). As is often the case, this figure is likely to drastically underestimate the true number of cases due to non-reporting (CIPEV 2008: 349). The 2008 Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence (CIPEV) also documented witness accounts of how security forces engaged in sexual violation of girls and women at the height of the post-election violence. In the course of its investigations, CIPEV received various accounts of how some security officers, notably police, deliberately refused to record reported sexual violence crimes (CIPEV 2008: 256). These human rights violations point to accountability deficits in policing, with the violations further widening the distrust between the police and the citizens.

Violence trends are therefore shaped by contestation between citizens and regimes, and the frameworks that are used to legitimate and facilitate these conversations. This understanding offers important foundational insights into why some forms of violence are more prevalent than others in the two countries. For example, despite its profound tensions, conflict in Kenya has primarily centred on militia-based violence, which has sought to re-negotiate the terms of political participation *within* a single nation state. Sporadic calls for coastal and historical claims on northeastern secession notwithstanding, and in contrast to Uganda and Ivory Coast, Kenyan governance practices have produced greater incentives to influence positions of power, and access to and control over resources within existing state structures, than they have produced genuine challenges to national integrity. As detailed in the section below, this has not been the case in Uganda.

### **3.2 State-making and trajectories of conflict in Uganda**

Multiple structural factors underpin violent conflict in Uganda. These include: the competitive nature of politics among elites over the power to access, manage and control the distribution of national resources; colonial legacies of intra- and inter-ethnic stratifications in socioeconomic and governance structures, especially between northern and eastern regions; marginalisation of minority communities; and militarism and militarisation of governance institutions and responses to political and civil forces, as well as internal conflicts (see Baker 2001; Barongo 1987; Collier 1999; Goodfellow and Lindemann 2013; Johannessen 2006; Mukherjee 1985; Opongo 2011; Sjögren 2013). Militarisation here is not restricted to the ideological sense, wherein military values and behaviours dominate political and socioeconomic aspects of the state; but also refers to how militarised forms of violence exacerbate inequality, ethnic divisions, and political and gendered violence.

The state of Uganda as it exists today has its roots in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with larger kingdom states in the south-central region such as Buganda arising and expanding territorially by amalgamating existing kingdoms and chiefdoms. The process was by no means peaceful; it was characterised by violent inter- and intra-clan incursions, despoilment, lengthy rebellions and political violence. In pre-colonial Uganda, violence was exercised vertically in non-stratified societies organised hierarchically around a king or other leader, and horizontally in stratified societies often referred to as 'stateless'. Stratified societies in Uganda included the Buganda, Banyankore, Batoro, Banyoro and Basoga. Non-stratified societies included, but were not limited to, the Acholi and Karamojong in the north and Bakonjo and Bamba in the south. In addition, while centralised vertical violence could be monopolised and controlled, it was equally easily appropriable either by kings or by the British colonial authorities who, for example, used the Baganda as sub-imperialists to expand their rule using violence (Kasozi 1994; Webster, Ogot and Chrétien 1992).

Broadly, the outcome of this process was the emergence of highly centralised states with efficient administrative mechanisms and military entities (Cohen 1989: 282–90). In the same period, in northern Uganda, less-centralised gerontocratic states emerged with less elaborate structures and largely resisted stratification, a factor attributed to constant social dislocation due to seasonal and drought-induced migrations (Webster *et al.* 1992). The process of state formation in Uganda was first interrupted when the state of Buganda contested duplicitous treaties with the Imperial British East Africa Company as it sought to expand Britain's political rather than commercial 'spheres of influence', and subsequently during the military conquest that saw the rest of Uganda declared a protectorate (Uzoigwe 1985). The eventual impact of this conquest was the creation of a colonial state, but also an artificial state entity, composed of states that were incongruous at manifold political, socioeconomic and cultural levels. This not only interfered with innate state formation processes, but would also lead to instability in the long term (Boahen 1985).

Another example of the disruptive nature of this process, which has contemporary reverberations in violence patterns, is expropriation of land. For example, during the colonial period, the Karamojong lost a considerable portion of their land through pacification, redrawing of boundaries between Kenya and Sudan that left much of their grazing regions outside Uganda, and their expulsion from newly formed game parks, reserves and protected forests. In response, Karamojong people were forced to sell their livestock, which were also confiscated to pay taxes imposed by the British. During the regime of Idi Amin (1972–79) more land was lost to establish army barracks in the foothills and valley of Mount Moroto. To prevent contact between the people of Karamoja and neighbouring communities, buffer zones were created out of their dry season grazing areas. The increased concentration of cattle in smaller areas further depleted resources; as early as 1940, soil erosion was identified as a problem. Given these different state policies, the entire land area of Karamoja became divided between a forest reserve, a game reserve, a controlled hunting area, a national park, buffer zones and a military region. The total alienation of the local Karamojong communities from the resources they once used, revered, and regulated using customary controls set the stage for the Karamojong to seek short-term individual survival strategies. As governments sought political measures to deal with ecological problems, the resulting social crises increasingly drove many Karamojong out of Karamoja (Muhereza 1998).

The post-colonial government therefore inherited several major challenges, and almost immediately, tensions arose between the newly independent state and existing traditional kingdoms. As prime minister, Milton Obote (1962–66)'s violent strategies to achieve this and bolster his rule, involved creating paramilitary units, suspending the constitution, and arbitrarily arresting dissenters, especially ministers and supporters of pluralists (Chick 1970; Engholm and Mazrui 1967). Furthermore, the bloody coup against Obote's government in January 1971 that Amin led further entrenched state repression as the military regime unleashed violence and terror against real or perceived opponents. Amin's reliance on the

military to secure his regime and his strategy of institutionalising violence as a means of governing society, rather than creating a resilient political system, had far-reaching consequences. Civilians became victims of soldiers who perpetrated violence with impunity (Boyle 2015).

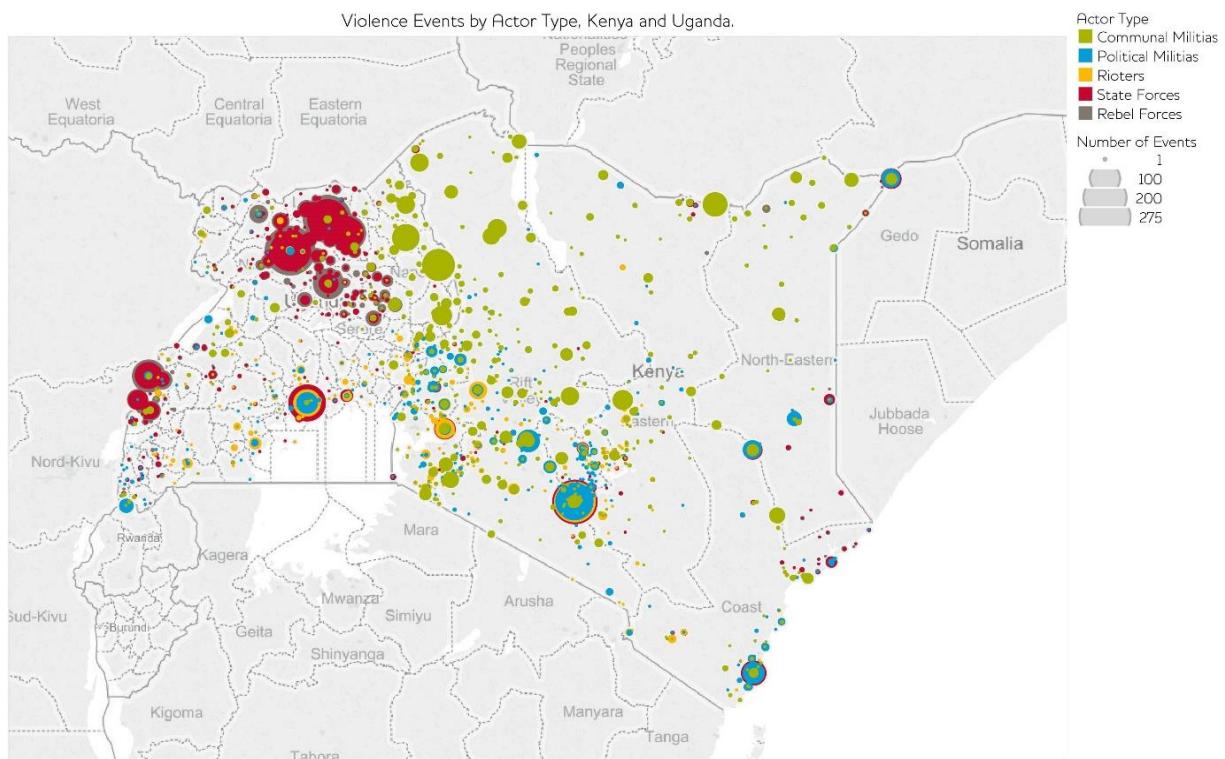
Similarly, at the inception of the Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement (NRM) rule after a brutal and protracted armed struggle during Obote's deposition, Museveni's regime had to contend with multiple rebel groups based in the state and in neighbouring countries. This historical legacy of civil war and volatile regime shifts, capped by the NRM's rise to power at a time when political control was highly fragmented among competing forces, partly explains Uganda and Kenya's divergent conflict trajectories in relation to civil war. In contrast to Kenya, where violence has primarily been targeted at negotiating access to position and power within the existing regime, Uganda's history attests to the disputed nature of the regime itself, thereby making control over the entire state the ultimate prize (Raleigh 2014).

Historical processes have contemporary repercussions across the spectrum of violence in Uganda. As in Kenya, contestation over access to and control over land, has proved to be at the centre of this instability, often negotiated through violent means and leveraged as a basis for claim-making on the state. In the past two years, land-related issues have accounted for the highest number of reports to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Supporting Access to Justice, Fostering Equity and Peace programme (SAFE) programme (USAID 2016). Although the number of fatalities in some of the areas that generate conflict are hard to verify, factors include: tensions arising from boundary disputes between families, communities and, at times, administrative authorities; tensions between pastoralists and agricultural farmers over grazing, as well as between pastoralists over access to water and pasture; human–wildlife conflict; and evictions by state authorities, especially in mining areas. These tensions, and sometimes open conflicts, are underpinned by various economic, institutional and social factors that escalate land conflicts by reinforcing land scarcity, and thus amplify pre-existing ethnic, gender, ethnic, and income-related insecurities and inequalities.

The legacy of state formation is also apparent in the geography of contemporary episodes of violence. Although violent conflicts have occurred throughout the country, there has been a marked concentration of violence, and high-intensity violence in particular, in the north of the region (see Figure 3.3), mirroring the north–south divide that has long been a fault line of how power is organised in Uganda. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) emerged in the 1980s as a rebel group that sought to overthrow the government, claiming to represent the marginalised northern Acholi population and to be seeking redress for their grievances (Allen and Vlassenroot 2010). In common with Kenya, the logic of political competition incentivised the articulation of claims on the state and attempts to renegotiate – or seize – power from it, primarily in ethno-regional terms, with conflict coalescing along Uganda's long-standing north–south cleavage.

Despite this macro-level division, northern civilians suffered greatly under the brutality of the LRA, which was known for forced conscription and abduction, particularly of children and young adults. The state's response, however, served to further alienate these same civilians: not only were state forces accused of heavy-handedness and human rights abuses in their own engagement with civilians, but their failure to prioritise civilian protection more generally over the course of the conflict left non-combatants vulnerable to reprisal killings (HURIFO 2002; Bussmann 2015). The LRA insurgency has abated in the past decade in Uganda, although the group continues to pose a significant threat, particularly to civilians, in regions as far afield as the Central African Republic (CAR). This diffusion of violence attests to the highly interconnected regional violence systems in East and Central Africa, and the Great Lakes region in particular.

**Figure 3.3 Violence events by actor type and location, Kenya and Uganda**



Source: ACLED.

Contemporary unrest in Uganda, however, continues to centre on issues of inclusion, representation, and the highly politicised and restricted nature of access to power. Uganda has gradually shifted from a situation of high-intensity civil war, to one in which riots and protests have become the predominant form of socio-political unrest. In 2015 alone, 159 discrete riots and protests were recorded in Uganda, compared to one event recorded in 1997. Riots and protests in urban areas have increased at the fastest rate, as densely populated urban centres are often sites of opposition support, and provide opportunities for collective action. Social unrest has centred on issues of access to and control over land and resources, as well as political representation of opposition figures in a *de jure* multiparty system, but in which *de facto* power is concentrated, controlled, and circumscribed by the regime through legal manoeuvring (Goodfellow 2014). The persistence of social unrest and violent contestation over political inclusion is significant: although the form and manifestation of these confrontations has transformed since the height of the civil war in the mid-2000s, underlying issues of representation, power, and access to resources continue to fuel (sometimes violent) social unrest in important ways.

A number of factors have hindered peace-building efforts, not the least of which is that security agencies in Uganda lack autonomy. Often, decisions on security issues are not systematically determined by clearly delineated processes of agenda setting, policy formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation. Instead, decisions are often influenced by the presidency and close associates, and characterised by informality, *ad hoc* responses, and quick-fix approaches (Mutengesa and Hendrickson 2008).

As in Kenya, therefore, violent conflict is driven by contestations between citizens, regimes and the frameworks that are used to legitimate and facilitate these conversations. Politicised ethnicity is a contemporary manifestation of a centuries-long process of state-making and nation-building, in which ethno-regional identities remain a powerful means by which to articulate claims on the state, and express perceptions of grievance, marginalisation and

exclusion. The legacy of these processes is also apparent in tensions over land and resources, in pervasive intercommunal violence in peripheral areas, and in social unrest over the terms and nature of elected representation and power.

### **3.3 Conclusions**

The nature of state-making in Uganda and Kenya, viewed from a historical perspective, provides an important foundation for understanding the nature of violence and actors in both countries. It offers insights into why some forms of violence are more prevalent than others, given their different political trajectories. The political polarisation of social factors such as ethnicity, religion and identity politics have deep roots in Kenyan and Ugandan conflict dynamics, as they have consistently served as bases for claims made on resources and against regimes (Bunker 2014; Dartnell 2006; Salehyan 2009).

Seen through this lens, Uganda and Kenya share several key features of conflict, including: the salience of politicised ethnicity, and corresponding volatility of ethnicised politics; the invocation of these identities, often in relation to regional pockets of marginalisation and inequality; and the state-making processes that have underpinned often violent contestation over contemporary elected representation and power in a system of institutions that are not seen as wholly credible, effective or legitimate. As discussed above, violence in Kenya and Uganda stems from a lack of consensus on the nature of the relationship between state and society, and the tensions and contradictions inherent in the state-making process.

The two countries diverge, however, in the form and function the resulting violence takes: Uganda's history is replete with episodes of violent, high-intensity civil war that sought to overthrow and replace sitting regimes; while Kenya's domestic politics have been largely characterised by internal and factional fighting over the nature and configuration of power within a regime. While Uganda is not currently experiencing a huge internal insurgency, it is worth recalling that this violence has in effect been exported to neighbouring states, with the displacement of the LRA; while contemporary manifestations of social unrest – centring on issues of representation, inclusion, and regime power – demonstrate continuity in the underlying conditions that fuel them.

In both countries, violence emerged due to the lack of consensus on the nature of the state on the one hand, and state capabilities on the other. Scholars note the inability of the state in both cases to discharge basic functions, such as maintaining peace and security, acting as a neutral arbiter in competing public claims, providing public goods and amenities, or becoming an engine of development. This has driven processes of violence (KHRC 2011: 14; Bunker 2005; Dartnell 2006; Salehyan 2009). Furthermore, both cases highlight the role of the state as a crucial actor in conflict, and the necessity of moving beyond structural and institutional explanations when considering the historical inter-structural social relations that can drive violence and peace-building within countries and across the region.

# **4 Trajectories of violence in Ghana and Ivory Coast: shared characteristics and divergent development trajectories**

As in Kenya and Uganda, Ghana and Ivory Coast are both politically, economically, ethnically and demographically diverse countries, with very different profiles of conflict, and experiences of past and present political life. These are conditions that have historically shaped violence trajectories in Ghana and Ivory Coast, including their colonial histories and respective development trajectories. Both countries set out at independence with a one-party, authoritarian system of governance, but thereafter their paths diverged, particularly in their experiences of peace and conflict. These divergent pathways, however, have coalesced around certain shared characteristics, including: the significance of sub-national geography in shaping regional difference, inequality and perceptions of marginalisation and exclusion; the salience of identity as a factor in determining access to, and control over, resources, power and representation; and the centrality of land, political violence and peace-building processes.

By exploring the history of state-making, we can identify processes, systems, relationships and structures that have shaped contemporary violence, linking it to antecedents; and contributed to successes in peace-building and conflict management, pointing to the evolution and transformation of these processes over time. State-building has been an inherently violent, contradictory and competitive process in Ghana and Ivory Coast: the process of building political and economic structures has interacted with macroeconomic factors in ways that have broken and bridged societal and political institutions. Exploring these histories provides important insights into the structural drivers of different forms of contemporary violence and instability in the two countries.

## **4.1 State-making and trajectories of conflict in Ghana**

Colonial legacies influenced by geography and economic opportunity have substantively contributed to an uneven patchwork of poverty and inequality across Ghana's territory. The reification of ethnic identities and systems of access, use and control of land continue to shape contemporary violence and peace-building efforts.

British colonial development policy treated northern Ghana as a labour reservoir for the mines and cocoa farms of the southern regions. This consequently limited investment in education, transportation and economic development projects (Bening 1990). Underdevelopment of the north continued into the post-colonial era. On the eve of independence in 1957, the prime minister, Kwame Nkrumah of the Convention People's Party, declared that the country's mission was to 'prove to the world that Africa could conduct its own affairs' (Woronoff 1972: 34). Nkrumah's nationalist leadership aimed to establish clear lines of independence and self-determination for the country (Woronoff 1972; Broussalian 2011).

Ghana's post-independence strategy involved a number of discrete political and economic policies, including import substitution, industrialisation, exploitation of the cocoa industry, investment in an enabling environment for civil society and associational life, and 'Ghanaianisation', which involved expelling migrant workers who had come to Ghana to work in the productive southern regions (McCauley 2013). An explicit aim of Ghana's national development plan of 1959–64 was the construction of 'not less than 600 factories' in a time span of five years, to be financed through domestic agricultural support (Woronoff 1972: 173). The industrial development drive of the first post-independence government (1960–66)

failed to have an impact on addressing inequalities in the north, although the government paid some attention to providing educational infrastructure.

Deficit spending created a debt problem closely linked to ensuing political swings: seven regime changes, four of which resulted from coups, took place during the period corresponding to Félix Houphouët-Boigny (1960–93)'s stable political rule in neighbouring Ivory Coast. The economic hardship of the first two decades of independence fuelled scepticism of the industry-driven model, and the political coups that followed were not only rooted in disagreements over economic policy, but in some cases were also violent. Different interest groups therefore moved in and out of government favour. At the same time space was granted to civil society to raise issues of accountability and to respond politically with demands on the state.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Ghana had many attributes that suggested the potential for violent conflict: militarisation of the state and politics, loss of institutional control of the military, a collapse of systems of governance, depletion of state legitimacy and capacity, and a serious and protracted economic crisis (Hutchful 2003). Nevertheless, no violent social divisions at a national level emerged during the period of economic stagnation and militarised control of the state. Instead, structural adjustment and economic liberalisation under the military regime of Jerry Rawlings (1979–92) saw broad-based austerity remedy the debt burden, which created an opportunity for relative stability, growth and the evolution of democratic institutions (Langer 2008). The Rawlings regime also undertook to strengthen decentralisation, with the aim of contributing to stability, also to consolidate a populist, rural support base for the regime (Siegle and O'Mahony 2006). Under Rawlings, multiparty elections were held in 1992, from which he and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) gained democratically elected legitimacy. Democratic norms emerged with no fewer than five political parties contesting the election, from which the New Patriotic Party (NPP) emerged as the strongest force. The 2000 elections saw a transfer of power to an opposition party, the NPP, for the first time in nearly 20 years, which occurred with only a few isolated incidents of violence.

A number of factors have contributed to Ghana's relative peace. Of note is that Ghanaian interest groups – defined largely along ideological and class lines rather than ethno-regional ones – have expressed grievances in terms of class, labour and economic interests rather than ethnicity or nationality (Hutchful 2003). Civil society has also been allowed to raise issues of accountability, and to promote civic education and democratic norms. This in part relates to inclusive political representation and inter-ethnic participation being constitutionally mandated within political parties. The National Service Scheme – which began in 1969 and wherein graduating tertiary students undertake a year's compulsory service in government positions outside of their home town – has also facilitated cross-context learning at national level, with explicit aims being nation-building through volunteerism and the development of empathy for the rural poor (Sikah 2000). Furthermore, the construction of interest groups along class lines relates to the policies of political leaders and the economic policies of Nkrumah and Rawlings, which directed wealth towards southern and urban centres (as opposed to ethnic groups) and perpetuated class inequality (Siegle and O'Mahony 2006; Boone 2003). As Jonsson (2007) outlines, state institution-building, if it is exclusive, creates the foundations for class formation. In Ghana, at the national level socioeconomic inequalities have informed how different classes have accessed the state system.

During the Rawlings era, however, the developmental north-south divide actually worsened in terms of the incidence of poverty (Songsore 2003). Soon after taking over from the Rawlings government in 2001, the NPP government, headed by John Kufuor (2000–08), acknowledged in its main development policy document, the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the problematic nature of the existing regional developmental disparities between north and south, and criticised previous governments' investment policies for creating and maintaining Ghana's regional inequalities (Langer 2007).

While overall Ghana is a peaceful and democratic country, several serious episodes of intra- and inter-ethnic conflict and clashes have occurred in Northern region. These ethnic conflicts and tensions ‘arise from several years of relegation of certain ethnic groups, so-called “minority” groups, to the status of “second-rate citizens” in the traditional and political administration of the region’ (Brukum 1995: 138). The most serious episode of inter-ethnic violence occurred in 1994 between the Nanumba and Kokomba and resulted in approximately 2,000 casualties. Despite this, conflicts within Northern region have not had far-reaching consequences at the national level (Agyeman 1998), and these remain largely localised, if occasionally high-intensity, episodes of instability.

The case of Ghana illustrates that while conflicts may feed into poverty, poverty *per se* does not cause conflict. According to the Ghana Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the Upper West Region is the second poorest in the country, yet it has not witnessed the violent outbreaks of conflict recorded in Upper East and Northern regions (Akudugu and Kendie 2010). Oelbaum (2010) argues that Ghana’s violent and consuming 1994 Guinea Fowl War was not caused primarily by the increasing marginalisation of economic agents in the region, but rather by pressures related to increasing opportunities for income generation, poverty reduction and national integration under economic reform. These gains created friction in a region with a ranked ethnic system and put local patronage networks under strain.

Ethnicity in Ghana is complex and multifaceted, representing a group of overlapping characteristics: language, culture and, for groups indigenous to the modern territorial unit, a ‘traditional’ place of residence (Nugent and Lentz 2000). Regional and religious identities also often overlap in Ghana: for example, the country’s predominantly Akan southern population is largely Christian, with a greater concentration of Muslim adherents in the more ethnically heterogeneous Northern region (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante 2003, quoting the 2000 census). Although ethnicity is an important identity marker in many countries, people have multiple identities relating to religion, region of origin, occupation and gender, which are inextricably interlinked (Langer 2010). Where ethnicity becomes a political identity, Mamdani (2002) argues that it becomes enforceable by organs of the state that can make distinctions regarding who is considered indigenous and therefore entitled to claims to ‘customary’ rights.

Throughout the post-independence period, most Ghanaian regimes have attempted to maintain certain ethno-regional balances in representation, based on a desire to attenuate northern exclusion and foster a sense of national unity. Nkrumah confronted ethno-regional tensions in the immediate pre-independence period. His strategies to contain divisive ethno-regional forces and promote national integration have to some extent become institutionalised, formally and informally. In particular, against the backdrop of the emergence of ethno-regional political parties, Nkrumah introduced the Avoidance of Discrimination Act in December 1957, which prohibited the formation of political parties along ethnic, regional or religious lines. While the opposition at the time strongly opposed the Act, since then successive Ghanaian political elites have recognised the centrifugal potential of ethnic, religious or regional political parties. Consequently, the 1969, 1979 and 1992 Constitutions and the 2000 Political Parties Act all contain provisions aimed at curbing ethnic electoral politics and ensuring that political parties are national in character (Gyimah-Boadi and Asante 2006; Langer 2008).

The Directive Principle of State Policy as contained in Articles 35(5) and 35(6)(a) of the current 1992 Constitution provides for the formulation of inclusive policies and development strategies in the country that benefit everyone and do not discriminate on the basis of religion, ethnicity, gender or regional alignments. Subsequently, Ghanaian regimes have pursued partial efforts to include northerners in ruling councils and ministerial appointments under military and civilian administrations. Although ‘southerners’ have persistently controlled most of the ministerial positions and have actually been, as a group, somewhat overrepresented in proportion to their relative demographic size, each consecutive Ghanaian

government – civilian and military – has had a reasonable representation of ‘northerners’ (Shepherd *et al.* 2005).

However, the long-term sustainability of an elite consensus over the distribution of government posts to northern elites as a way to bridge north–south socioeconomic inequality is questionable, especially in the context of growing competition in the Ghanaian economic and political arenas. Among northern elites, complaints about the inherent anti-meritocratic and anti-competitive nature of appointments to public posts highlight strains in this implicit bargain (Shepherd *et al.* 2005).

Regional north–south divides are further complicated by the complexity of ethnic and other identities, and the dynamics of inter-ethnic conflict within the north itself. Causes of inter-ethnic conflict in Northern region can be traced to the system of indirect rule introduced under the colonial administration of Northern Ghana in 1932. The policy in the north meant that multiple, unassimilated ethnic groups were grouped under centralised chiefs in an effort to rationalise indigenous social and political structures for administrative purposes (Kwaku Mbowura 2014). Numerous culturally and ethnically disconnected groups such as the Nawuri, Nchumuru, Mo and Vagla, were grouped under the Gonja chiefs; large numbers of Konkombas and Chakosis were made subjects of the Dagomba kingdom; the Frafra and B’Moba of the paramount chief of the Mamprusi; and the Dagarti and Sisala in the Wala District of the Wala chiefs (Ladouceur 1979: 43).

The amalgamation of smaller states and ‘minority ethnic groups’ through a process of ‘territorialisation’ led to the creation of chieftaincy titles in jurisdictions where they had never existed. The near eradication of traditional boundaries allowed chiefs to consolidate their power over subsumed groups through paramount chiefs. As a result of this, many ethnic groups lost their sovereignty and a premium was placed on chiefs’ ability to present favourable developments as belonging to their customary domain (Awedoba 2009). In formalising ethnically segregated ‘traditional’ political structures, colonial policy restricted the flexibility necessary for mutuality and coexistence, allowing domination to become more exploitative. Groups were brought into closer contact, but on very unequal terms, and prejudices against minority peoples as socially inferior became more acute (Jonsson 2007).

Post-colonial governments have upheld this colonial political superstructure. The 1979 constitution created a policy of vesting the land in the institutions of chieftaincy for communal use. This was not acceptable to groups that were not represented in the institutions of chieftaincy. Despite state land being specified for development projects such as rice farms, these groups generally felt more comfortable with ultimate state control. As Jonsson (2007: 16) outlines, although all Ghanaian citizens are equally entitled to state resources ‘minorities [have] found themselves excluded, both symbolically and practically through the income from leases, when control of the land was placed in the hands of the majority groups’.

Claims to paramountcy and related control of land and resources are primary causes of conflict between ethnic groups in contemporary Ghana, beside intra-ethnic conflicts arising from disputes over succession of the paramountcy (Kwaku Mbowura 2014). The current highest chieftaincy institution, the National House of Chiefs, was created by the 1971 Chieftaincy Act introduced under the broadly ‘pro-chief’ government of Kofi Abrefa Busia (1969–72) and reaffirmed by the 1992 Constitution, with a small difference of emphasis that came to have major consequences for tensions in the region.

The 1992 Constitution sought to insulate the institution from the state to ensure the political neutrality and hence survival and prestige of chieftaincy. It forbade the state appointment of chiefs (Article 270, paragraph 2a) and the active participation of chiefs in party politics (Article 276, 1), and conferred on the National House of Chiefs the right of recognition of any chief, which had previously rested with the state (Article 270, 3b). If a minority group failed to get the desired recognition for their chief through their traditional council, all of which are

majority controlled in the north, they could no longer turn to the government directly. To minority group chiefs the situation resembled that of the colonial period: once again the lower traditional courts through which a legal case had to pass could be closed off through delays or the refusal of majority chiefs to take the case forward.

The government's analysis, written into the 1992 constitution, was that in the interest of legitimacy, the state had to be seen to be neutral and to represent the interests of all citizens, and chiefs had to be depoliticised to function as the guardians of society's values. Local drivers of inter-ethnic conflict, however, can be seen to derive from state policies, including making theoretical land rights and other state resources dependent on access to chieftaincy institutions – controlled by majority chiefs thus promoting ethnic competition (Jonsson 2007). The process of decentralisation and creation of districts has also produced tensions, rather than reduced them: since 1989, the number and power of sub-national districts has steadily increased.

Central government attempts to incentivise local authorities to shore up the power of the centre have meant that districts have become sites of state resource-channelling, tax collection and employment generation for educated elites, all through districts that are often ethnically defined (Siegle and O'Mahony 2006). This dynamic has created strong incentives for achieving ethnic dominance in order to legitimise and secure a new district (Drucker-Brown 1995). There are parallels to this process in the systems of devolution, decentralisation and district creation that have taken place in Kenya and Uganda, which have often been sites of competition and contestation, accompanied by localised violence, and used as resources to be distributed and controlled within a wider political settlement and bargaining process.

We may therefore relate major conflicts in the north of Ghana to political inequalities in the region, between centralised and minority ethnic groups, and are underpinned by broader north-south inequality. The political process has reinforced inherent contradictions in land ownership and chieftaincy as opposed to transforming these structures.

## 4.2 State-making and trajectories of conflict in Ivory Coast

When Ivory Coast became independent in August 1960, a one-party system was installed and the Democratic Party of Ivory Coast (PDCI) took control of the state institutions. The PDCI held *de facto* control over the Ivorian political system between 1960 and 1999 (Langer 2005). Throughout this period, Ivory Coast maintained close economic, political and military ties with France, promoting an export-oriented economy that depended critically on open markets and foreign interdependence.

Houphouët-Boigny' vision of an independent Ivory Coast demanded that economic development come first, before political reform (Foster and Zolberg 1971). An important feature of the colonial and post-colonial Ivorian economy was its reliance on foreign labour. Migrant labour increased to meet the requirements of the commercial agricultural sector. Houphouët-Boigny ended the colonial practice of using forced labour, but maintained a policy of attracting foreign workers. Taking advantage of uncertainty over land rights in Ivory Coast, promises of land and opportunity were made to migrants in exchange for their labour. Under the system of *tutorat* – 'guardianship of the soil' – migrants gained access to land in exchange for offering their labour and/or annual payments to indigenous inhabitants who retained moral authority over the land (Klaus and Mitchell 2015).

Within this process, Houphouët-Boigny forsook nationalism, instead favouring economic sectors that offered the best route to growth. He also secured advantages for his closest constituents: commercial farmers and members of his Baoulé ethnic group (McCauley 2013). Despite ethno-regional competition for lands and jobs, development policies generated enough revenues to appease major interest groups (Charbonneau 2012). Ivory Coast's

development strategy therefore relied on co-opting regional and social identity groups with related patronage benefits that encouraged loyalty to the president, including through political participation in state institutions, which was formally balanced across ethnic groups (Boone 2007; Bakary 1984).

Economically, Ivory Coast favoured agricultural, growth-oriented policies, which produced economic expansion and facilitated political stability, in contrast to Ghana's unrest during this period. Houphouët-Boigny's development plans, between the 1960s and 1980s, emphasised an export economy underpinned by foreign labour, and internal migration offset potential threats to collective peace by co-opting potential challenges from diverse identity groups. In this sense, Houphouët-Boigny's economic vision can be viewed as a short- to medium-term success in terms of collective peace, as tensions were offset by astute cultivation of patronage relationships. Furthermore, the continued reliance on French military support suppressed the militarisation of governance and the possibility of a coup during this period (Charbonneau 2012).

The impact of this political settlement, which can also be seen as a colonial legacy of 'assimilation', meant that through its institution-building strategy the regime retained centralised power and avoided creating points of access to state power and resources at a local level. The colonial practice of forced migration and postcolonial land and production policies created new rural communities in southern Ivory Coast, which were marked by low levels of social cohesion and a weakening of local or indigenous political structures. The regime's centralised governance system restricted the emergence of coherent or well-grounded local politics and constituencies within these regions (Siegle and O'Mahony 2006). As a result, compared to Ghana, participation and decision-making in Ivory Coast became relatively inactive and exclusive at the local level. Where Ivorians were less connected to their community in everyday interactions, the focus of politics shifted to their individual abilities to access powerful patrons within their own ethnic group, amplifying the potential for politicised ethnic relations (Boone 2003).

Falling commodity prices in the 1980s led to an economic crisis. In Ivory Coast, heavy aid conditionality drastically reduced the government's policy space, and consequently its ability to proactively address rising poverty levels and disaffection. For example, the 1981 structural adjustment agreement with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), and policies linked to privatisation, trade liberalisation and the sale of state institutions, vastly reduced the government's sphere of influence in the economy and ability to tackle poverty and inequality. The consequences of this included high economic instability, increased agricultural poverty, a decline in the quality of education and the health system, and decreasing standards of living and purchasing power for the poor due to currency devaluation (Kingston *et al.* 2011; World Bank 1993).

Although the regime in Ivory Coast initially sought to moderate underlying identity group interests through a wide-reaching political settlement and process of patronage-linked buy-in, tensions ultimately erupted in the absence of extensive patronage resources. As huge debt levels and large-scale privatisation vastly reduced the resources available to the state, competition for shrinking resources intensified and their potential to assuage competitive and violent contestation declined. This changing context dramatically heightened the stakes of elections, which in turn destabilised the country's nascent democratic system, leading to large-scale violence. McCauley (2013) argues that this increased social tensions between locals and foreigners, as well as internal migrants in the southern regions, and at the same time denied parties the ability to appeal to economic reform as a possible basis of support.

In April 1990, the economic crisis resulted in major demonstrations by the officially illegal political opposition. In an attempt to restore social and political stability, Houphouët-Boigny abandoned one-party rule and legalised opposition parties, subsequently winning the elections by a considerable margin. The main opposition party, the Ivorian Popular Front

(FPI) headed by Gbagbo ‘initiated a political campaign around the message that the PDCI was a partial regime which had systematically favoured the interests of particular Ivorian ethnic groups – Baoulé and groups from the North – and of foreigners’ (Crook 1997: 222). In 1993, Houphouët-Boigny’s successor Henri Konan Bédié (1993–99) also actively sought to mobilise ethnicity and Ivorian citizenship to gain popular support.

The political climate thus shifted from a pro-migrant stance under Houphouët-Boigny, to ultra-nationalism in the 1990s. This was fuelled by electoral reform in 1994 that restricted voting rights and candidacy claims for the position of president – on grounds related to Ouattara’s identity as a northerner and a Muslim, which were perceived as a threat to the state’s hegemony – and in turn threatened to disenfranchise an important part of the northern population (Langer 2007). This was followed by the 1998 Land Law, which declared that only Ivorian citizens could own land. Contentious land claims mounted between those who made the land productive through agriculture (e.g. Malians, Burkinabes, northern Ivorians) and indigenous southern Ivorian citizens (Klaus and Mitchell 2015). Given that migrants from the north of the country, as well as the foreign migrants from Burkina Faso, Mali and Guinea, belonged predominantly to the northern ethnic groups – the Mandé and Voltaic – communal tensions were increasingly perceived as a conflict between north and south (Dembélé 2003). This amplification of intercommunal tensions interplayed with the elite power struggle, which led to the further scapegoating of migrant communities from the north and neighbouring countries in order to dissipate tensions around the economic crisis away from the government. Ultimately, violence was catalysed at the national level across identity lines.

A growing northern consciousness further contributed to the escalation of ethnic tensions at the beginning of the 1990s. The distribution in 1992 of an anonymous document, *Le Chart du Grand Nord* (Charter of the North), illustrated the changing attitudes of northerners regarding the socio-political system. The charter demanded ‘fuller recognition of the Muslim religion... more efforts to reduce regional inequalities, greater political recognition of the north’s political loyalty during the upheavals of the 1980s and (most worryingly) an end to Baoule nepotism in recruitment to public jobs’ (Crook 1997: 226).

The course of Ivory Coast’s early state-building suggests that economic decline and competition for leadership would not have turned into an important political crisis if the government – irrespective of the political party in power – had not alienated an important part of the population living in Ivory Coast. The crisis of the 1990s proved to be explosive in a country with a large number of transboundary ethnic groups and whose national identity was ill defined. The criteria for defining a ‘pure’ Ivorian created important tensions and led to a polarisation of society between the core ethnic groups and transboundary ones.

Over the past 15 years, the resulting construction and reinforcing of inequalities between groups – both perceived and actual – have underpinned tension, frustration and anger in Ivorian society and violence at national and regional levels. Ivory Coast’s conflict trajectory, however, cannot be attributed to poverty alone, but demands an understanding of the way in which markers of exclusion, inequality and poverty interact with political power dynamics and access to resources in specific contexts. Ivory Coast’s violent disintegration at the end of the 1990s demonstrates that the simultaneous presence of political inequality driven by an elite power play and socioeconomic inequalities at inter-group level can produce a national volatile socio-political situation. This contrasts with the containment of violence in Ghana, which was largely isolated within the northern region.

Critically, in Ivory Coast a relatively unified northern consciousness emerged in response to divisive political narratives and economic policies. This unity was largely absent in Ghana, due to the heterogeneity of Ghana’s own Northern region and the prominence of intra-regional, inter-ethnic conflict. Ultimately, the ways in which collective action, consciousness and solidarity are mobilised along lines of identity such as the nation state, ethnicity or land, for example, have important implications for the emergence of violence. In both countries,

understanding the incentives of different actors to mobilise violence and the narratives that these grow from is critical in order to provide strategies to address their manifestation.

### 4.3 Conclusions

The north–south issue, a historical dependency on one main commodity (cocoa), the economic crisis and structural adjustment programmes created the basis for similar crises in Ghana and Ivory Coast. However, they followed different paths because the political process and political settlement were different in the two cases. Houphouët-Boigny left a long politico-economic legacy and a settlement that could not work following his death, given the changing economic conditions. While political and economic liberalisation was a sort of opportunity in the Ghanaian case in terms of stability – if not in terms of equality between north and south – the situation was the opposite in Ivory Coast. Dependency on natural resources affects the economic success and precarity of both countries, and this has in turn consistently undermined socioeconomic redistribution between northern and southern regions and reinforced inequalities.

The interplay of economic instability with zero-sum political power dynamics (formal and informal) fuelled conflict in both countries. In Ivory Coast, the changing economic context intersected with an elite power struggle and dramatically heightened the stakes in the country's elections, which in turn destabilised the country's emergent democratic system and led to large-scale violence. In Ghana, a shift to multiparty politics saw the political elite transition between parties with relative peace, thereby establishing a democratic political settlement. Furthermore, strengthening civil society allowed citizens to express their grievances and engage with the government through democratic processes. The institutionalisation of ethnicity in Ivory Coast moved starkly away from the country's history of ethnic balance, and was in contrast to the nationalisation of politics in Ghana, which has continued to promote ethno-regional balances in representation. Learning from the experience of Ivory Coast, there is necessary caution in Ghana where serious economic stress may strain this implicit bargain. The context in Ghana of a two-party political system presents a risk to stability as it provides a platform for a winner-takes-all mentality.

At the intra-country regional level, economic and social inequality between the north and south of Ghana interplay with traditional chieftaincy structures. Inter- and intra-group conflict in northern Ghana reflect historical legacies of majority–minority group inequality established in colonial times. This has fuelled localised intercommunal violence linked to minority groups' emancipatory claims over decision-making power, land and identity. Identity has played an important role in the way that conflict narratives have been constructed in Ghana and Ivory Coast, and the formalisation and politicisation of these identities – ethnic, religious and linguistic – which has led to rigid boundaries of belonging that have fuelled violent group mobilisation. The profoundly different institutional features in both countries may explain why political entrepreneurs have not turned to autochthony (opposition to the strangers or migrants) as a strategy to mobilise groups at the national level. Thus, while historical and structural forces can create fertile conditions for autochthony discourses, institutional differences at the national level also highlight why political elites were able to mobilise these discourses more easily in the Ivorian political context than in the Ghanaian one.

# **5 Contemporary geographies and dynamics of violent conflict in East and West Africa**

Levels of violence have varied over time, and increased access to reports of violence in recent years – with the greater digitisation and dissemination of national- and local-level source data – may contribute to increased violence records in the post-2000 period. However, longitudinal data over the period of analysis attests to marked variability in violence across all four countries.

## **5.1 The landscape of violent conflict in Kenya and Uganda**

Contemporary violence in Kenya and Uganda, as argued previously, are linked to country-specific state-making processes and contestations. Given the different historical trajectories of these countries, it therefore follows that violence exhibits different patterns and dynamics in each one. Levels of violence in general have varied over time. Kenya has witnessed pronounced spikes in violent episodes, centred on national electoral contests in 2007–08 and 2013, in addition to the increased activity of Al-Shabaab since late 2011. Violence levels in Uganda have, by contrast, fallen considerably in the past ten years, as the LRA has become less active in the country, although new forms of violence have emerged, including urban rioting and political militia violence.

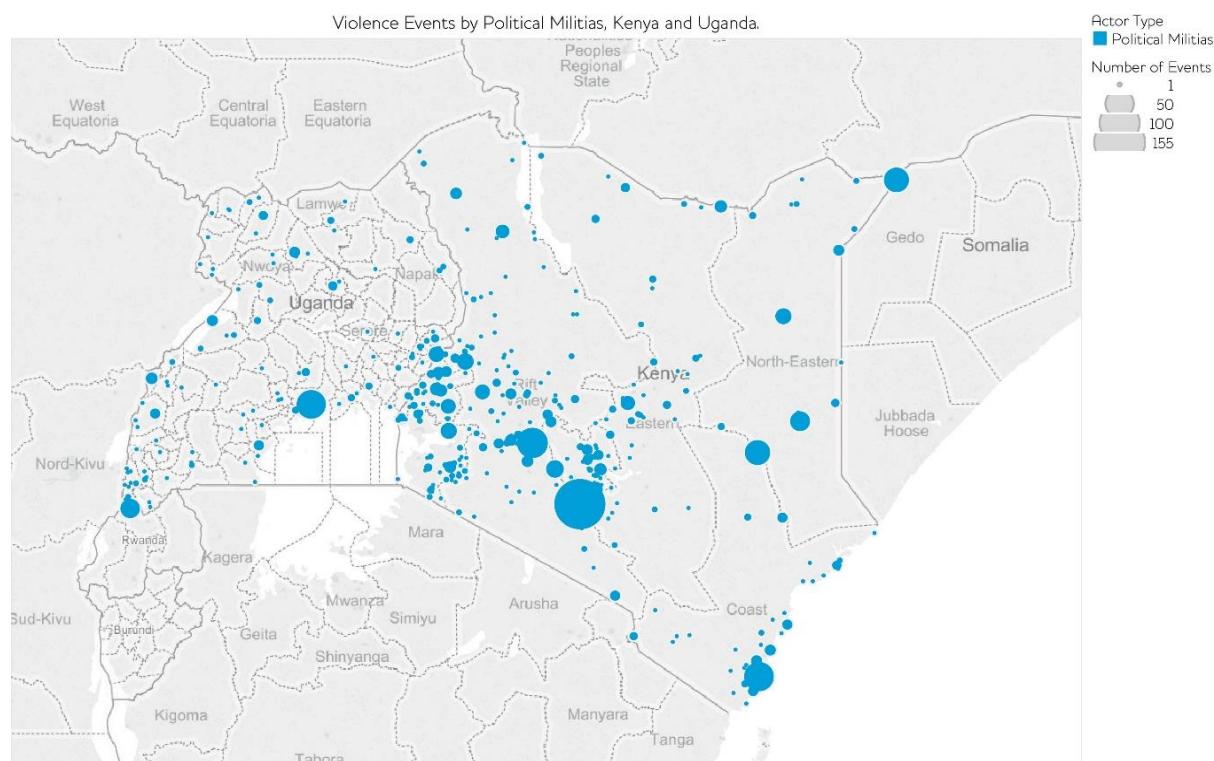
In each country, a range of internal dynamics influence the proliferation of certain actors and forms of violence. However, collectively as a sub-region, trends in types of violence, the incidence of violence and the types of actors involved in violence revolve around the same set of factors described at the beginning of this report: citizenship and identity, land as a productive asset and a resource through which claims for belonging are made, and elections as occasions for contestations over access to benefits accrued from the state. In addition, both countries demonstrate the discursive role of terrorism in increasing the levels of force security forces use on civilians and/or subaltern groups. It is on the basis of these shared factors and unique political trajectories that certain actors take pre-eminence over others in certain countries. The proximity of Uganda and Kenya to each other has also contributed to shared violence events and actors.

### **5.1.1 Political militias and electoral violence**

Three factors broadly shape the proliferation of political militias in Kenya and Uganda: (1) tactics of regimes to manage power; (2) political groups' interests in challenging a regime's inability to develop inclusive socioeconomic programmes; and (3) groups' interest in capitalising on structural weaknesses such as weak policing and socioeconomic disparities to enhance criminal economies, often in collusion with and/or against the state. These factors oscillate and do not always operate individually. Sometimes, all factors coalesce depending on the political moment. In both countries, political militias have long-standing histories, although their activity levels and the intensity of violence associated with them is markedly higher in Kenya than Uganda.

As Figure 5.1 illustrates, political militia violence in Uganda is clustered in the south-central region of the country – with the highest incidence in the capital Kampala – and along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Rwanda in the southwest. In Kenya, the profile of political militia violence is more visible around populous areas in the south of the country, the highest incidence being in the capital Nairobi, followed by several locations in the southwest; Coast Province, and Mombasa in particular, is the second most highly active site. Political militia violence is less common in the northeast, although repeated attacks in a smaller number of locations point to persistent risk of political militia violence in some sites in this area.

**Figure 5.1 Violence events by political militias in Kenya and Uganda (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

### Political militias in Kenya

In Kenya, the history of political militias can be traced to the Land Freedom Movement (Mau Mau), which can be theorised as a civil militia. The Mau Mau emerged to challenge land dispossession brought about by British minority rule. In the post-independence period, civil militias evolved as 'youth wings' in the context of the ruling political party, the Kenya African National Union. These groups largely comprised young men and were financed primarily to use violence to scuttle opposition politics. Over the years, political militias have continued to originate from regime interests in using violence and violent masculinities as a route to managing political dissent and threatening alternative political voices.

These youth wings took on the demographic features of the regions in which they were located. Consequently, post-1992, groups such as Kalenjin Warriors and Maasai Morans proliferated in the Rift Valley, which was the site of the first 'land clashes' that were engineered to displace voters. By 1997, these groups were being formally trained in Mombasa where they were deployed to cause violence and displacement (Amisi 1997; Oloo 2010). To counter state-sponsored militias, which were being used to curtail plural politics, opposition parties created their own groups as 'security' measures, such as Jeshi la Embakasi, Baghdad Boys and Amachuma (Oloo 2010). The net effect was that when 'youth wings' had outlived their political usefulness, rather than disbanding, the groups turned to crime, but with the (tacit) sanction of state officials, resulting in the emergence of various self-styled militias groups (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 Political militias in Kenya**

Group	Area of operation
Mungiki	Nairobi, Central Kenya, Rift Valley
Sabaot Land Defence Force	Mount Elgon
Sungu Sungu, Chinkororo, Amachuma	Kisii, Nyamira, Transmara
Taliban, Jeshi la Mzee, Jeshi la Embakasi	Nairobi
Baghdad Boys	Kisumu/Nairobi
Kosovo Boys	Nairobi

While most of the groups highlighted began as monolithic units, some later disbanded and fractured. Baghdad Boys splintered into several groups, including Taliban, as the biggest and most influential group, China Squad, Nyalenda Base, Chief Squad, Nyamasaria Massive and Kenda Kenda. These groups were re-mobilised in 2007–08 during the post-election crisis. As noted in Section 3 of this report, elections and electoral processes are important events when the struggle for democratisation is waged in Kenya and Uganda. They are opportunities to mobilise ethno-nationalist sentiment in order to corral sub-national grievances over exclusion; and the zero-sum approach to political contests and the regional perception of the state as a site for material gain means that elections are almost always associated with violence.

### **Box 5.1 Complexities of multi-stakeholder political violence in the 2007–08 post-election crisis**

The 2007–08 post-election crisis in Kenya is a salient example of the complex, multi-stakeholder nature of electoral violence. It involved a coordinated, sponsored campaign of violence against targeted communities enacted by state forces and prominent communal and political militias. This crisis produced specific forms of casualties, beyond deaths. Between December 2007 and February 2008, 1,171 cases of sexual violence were registered in public hospitals; 80 per cent of these cases were rapes, 9 per cent physical assaults, 7 per cent domestic violence and 4 per cent were labelled as ‘immoral’ attacks. These were just the reported cases. But people did not always report cases of violence because they: feared the police would attack them (32 per cent); feared they would be attacked again (24 per cent); thought nothing would be done (45 per cent); could not identify the rapist (31 per cent); did not know where to report the incident; had been asked not to report the matter (34 per cent); or did not know how to do so (27 per cent) (CIPEV 2008).

In addition to communal and political militias, the Kenya Police Force (KPF) was implicated in this violence and human rights violations. A 2008 Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) noted that the heavy-handed police response resulted in the deaths of 405 people across the country. The General Service Unit, KPF and the Administration Police Service were culpable of extra-judicial killings and, by extension, use of excessive force in quelling the violence (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2011). The 2008 CIPEV report also documents witness accounts of how security forces sexually violated girls and women at the height of the post-election violence. In the course of its investigations, CIPEV received various accounts of how security officers – notably KPF officers – deliberately refused to record sexual violence crimes (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2011). These human rights violations pointed to accountability deficits in policing and the violations further widened distrust between the police and the citizens. A national survey on torture in 2011 by the Independent Medico-Legal Unit (IMLU) found that 54 per cent of documented cases of torture were caused by the members of the KPF while 7 per cent were caused by the Administration Police Service (IMLU 2011). The need remains to transform an inherited colonial police force that is against the people into a legitimate national police force that protects the people, and which they own.

The contestations surrounding electoral processes in these two countries have led to two key dynamics in relation to central actors. The first is that casting a vote is not seen as the

exclusive determinant of citizen's electoral choice, because elections are performances of choice but do not validate citizen's votes. When incumbents make the pre-election environment insecure for competitors, they limit any potential for a fair contest based on national vote canvassing. In Kenya, during the contested presidential elections in 2007 and 2013, serious irregularities shaped the election management process (voter registration, vote counting and tallying), meaning that the declaration of a final candidate led to the perception that the interests of the regime and the political elite were more important than citizen's voices.

Two Kenyan groups merit particular attention given their extensive campaigns of violence, as well as the force of state-led responses against them: Mungiki, whose activities gained prominence in the early 1990s; and the Sabaot Land Defence Force (SLDF), which emerged in 2005. Both groups share certain similarities in their origins and evolution. They initially claimed to challenge the socioeconomic exclusion their communities faced, but these interests later morphed from community ones into those of individuals within the groups. They also developed sophisticated operational and administrative structures, and used elements of African spirituality as key to their mobilisation strategies.

The rise of Mungiki in Kenya coincided with a return to multiparty democracy and accompanying state-sponsored ethnic violence across sections of the country between 1991 and 1994. Scholars argue that this political environment provided Mungiki with fertile ground to recruit from the large numbers of displaced people (Kagwanja 2006; Ruteere 2008). Ruteere notes that while Mungiki's presence was initially strongest among displaced Kikuyu it quickly spread to the low-income areas of Nairobi, particularly in informal settlements where it established a stronghold due to a crisis in public security (Oloo 2010).

At the height of its existence, Mungiki had 2 million members (of whom, approximately 400,000 were women), predominantly comprising urban poor, displaced and landless people, with each member paying KSh3,000 (about US\$35 in 2010) per month in dues (Oloo 2010). In 2000 in Maragua, for instance, the group was said to have had more than 200 platoons spread across ten branches and 33 sub-branches. Each platoon comprised ten militiamen, each with a personal registration number (CIPEV 2008). The group used oath taking as a means to manage membership and loyalty. In a highly sophisticated structure that included defence, public relations and foreign relations units, decentralised into cell structures, the group used robberies, control of *matatu* (taxi bus) routes through transport levies, protection fees, levying taxes for the provision of basic services in peri-urban areas and executions as the core means of sustaining its activities.

While the political transition may have provided an incubator for the movement to grow, the politics of vigilantism and violence in which Mungiki became implicated made it difficult for the movement to be characterised as part of a global agenda or a voice of the masses. Political movements deepened their patron-client relations with various political elites (Kenya Human Rights Commission 2011). During their time in office, Daniel arap Moi (1978–2002) and Mwai Kibaki (2002–13) adopted an ambiguous relationship with the group. This involved either allowing the group's activities to go unfettered in exchange for their mobilisation capacity for political ends, such as the 2005–06 constitutional referendum campaign, or cracking down on them. In 2006, the extent of Mungiki's impunity and public atrocities led to the creation of a police hit squad, Kwekwe, comprising 14 officers reinforced by colleagues from other units, to dismantle the group. A 2007 Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) report suggested that the police may have executed about 500 suspected Mungiki adherents between June and October 2007 (KNCHR 2007).

The SLDF is one of the most heavily armed militia groups in western Kenya. It launched attacks in the Mount Elgon region in the mid-2000s that resulted in 600 deaths and the displacement of close to 60,000 people (Oloo 2010). It is argued that the group was established to challenge the resettlement process in the Chepyuk scheme (Oteba 2015),

which had been established in 1971 to resettle the Sabaot, who had been pushed off their lands by the British in colonial Kenya. The government began Chepyuk Phase I (1971–74), but a growing population, poor preparations, lack of title deeds and corruption led to dissatisfaction. The SLDF evolved into a quasi-government in Mount Elgon, running a parallel administration system based on racketeering, taxation and protection rings. In 2006, the SLDF was estimated to have forcibly recruited 650 school-age children (under 18), with parents either paying a fee of KSh10,000 (US\$150) or giving children up to the cause (Omach 2010). Like Mungiki, the SLDF had a military, spiritual and political wing, with former police officers and military personnel providing training. The militia used sophisticated weapons in its operations, such as machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades, hand grenades, land mines and rocket launchers, raising questions about their sources. The SLDF's guerrilla operations resulted in the government deploying the army to contain the group in early 2008. By August 2008, the military had recovered a total of 95 guns and more than 700 rounds of ammunition from the SLDF (Oloo 2010). Since then there have only been sporadic reports of sustained SLDF activity in the region.

The SLDF and Mungiki represent the expansive mobilisation of violence for political and economic gains within sophisticated structures across different parts of the country. Both groups illustrate the interplay between socioeconomic grievances as a starting point for organisations, identity as a basis for mobilisation, and the mutation into political brokers with violence as a key determinant of the power that they wield in communities as well as with politicians. The use of cultural and religious modes as a means to bind members to the groups' aims and objectives, as well as to project their objectives, which are shaped by much more than economic gains, allowed both groups to mutate into quasi-military outfits while soliciting public support by usurping narratives of exclusion and religious or minority persecution.

### **Political militias in Uganda**

Uganda, like Kenya, has also had a long history of militias dating back to the 1990s, and most of these groups have been linked to the government through the ruling NRM and police force. However, the dynamics that have given rise to political militias and their relationship to the regime differ slightly. This difference is informed by the history of militarism in Uganda, which meant that by the time the NRM came to power in 1986, the country had many rival groups such as the Uganda Freedom Movement, Federal Democratic Army, Uganda National Rescue Front and the Former Uganda National Army, which had participated in the rebellion between 1996 and 1998 against the government at the same time as the NRM (Omach 2010).

When the NRM took power in 1986, various armed groups controlled different areas of the country using intimidation, coercion and violence, especially in the south. The NRM's approach to managing this environment was to conduct political education programmes, which recruited cadres to carry out political mobilisation and basic military training. Scholars argue that the political education programmes entrenched a culture of militarism and that, rather than stalling the rise of vigilantes and militias, encouraged their formation and led to the emergence of local defence units and home guard militias (Omach 2010).

These groups, like those in Kenya, have become useful during moments of political crisis. For instance, in 2002 the Ugandan army launched *Operation Iron Fist* against LRA bases in southern Sudan, which drove the LRA back into northern Uganda, intensifying Sudan's proxy conflict with the Sudan People's Liberation Army there. By 2003, the LRA had entered Lango and Teso sub-regions, and with an inadequate army presence to protect civilians, local political leaders in Teso and Lango responded by establishing the Arrow Group and Amuka (Rhino) Brigade militias to protect their communities (Omach 2010). These militias were composed of former soldiers, paramilitary police special forces and rebels, as well as civilians and politicians. The government, for its part, endorsed and co-opted these militias by

providing support in the form of training and arms, and directing their operations. The militias were gradually co-opted into various national security groups, such as special police constables, anti-stock theft units and the national police (Omach 2010).

In the past 15 years, various political militias have emerged, often operating during election periods, with the state taking little action against them. Analysts point out that the grip that the current regime has on the military and police means that groups of this nature would not operate or exist unless the regime endorsed them for specific goals. For instance, in 2005, unidentified vigilantes were reported to have attacked the High Court in Kampala during a bail hearing for 14 people accused of treason, whereupon the 14 suspects were re-arrested by the vigilantes after the court granted them bail. The government did not condemn the raid (Omach 2010). Similarly, the loose network of poorly armed vigilantes referred to as Kiboko Squad has resurfaced multiple times over the past ten years. The network has been involved in violent incidents such as dispersing protesters at the Electoral Commission, and others protesting over the sale of large tracts of land in the Sambisa Forest, and allegedly attacking opposition leader Kizza Besigye (Muhumuza 2010).

Ahead of the February 2016 elections, police were noted to be recruiting and training unemployed youths called 'crime preventers'; reportedly, the government recruited 200,000 crime preventers from a population of 1.5 million people in Lango sub-region. One of the reasons put forward by the administration for the recruitment of crime preventers was the need for more policing as the state security services were not sufficient. The opposition, on the other hand, saw these groups as a way for the government to intimidate and harass the opposition ahead of the elections. However, opposition parties have also created youth wings, showing a similar trajectory to that in Kenya, to counter the insecurity created by militias viewed as allied to the regime.

As a result of the dynamics described in this section, it is often difficult to distinguish between state forces and political militias in Kenya and Uganda, given the role of the state and specific regimes in the evolution of militias. Political militias in both countries have become an important part of the political campaign period, particularly at moments when the elections are intensely competitive. Consequently, the attribution of casualties and violent incidents to militia groups alone can be misleading, when the state has played an active role in sponsoring, establishing and perpetuating some militia forces. Politically, militias not only end up serving the purpose of disrupting a free and fair environment for campaigns, but also create an environment of fear and insecurity, which contributes to citizens' choices being manipulated. When freedom of movement for political candidates and voters is restricted, political militias are available for hire by politicians and security forces use excessive force in response to citizen protests, and violence becomes a legitimate means of determining who gets heard, when and how, it affects the conditions surrounding elections. In this way, violence expressed through protests and political militias, before and after elections, has become a means by which citizens make their voices heard and political opportunists capitalise on societal fractures and fears. This was the case with the SLDF in Kenya, which endorsed specific parliamentary candidates and thereby scared off other potential candidates (Oloo 2010: 171).

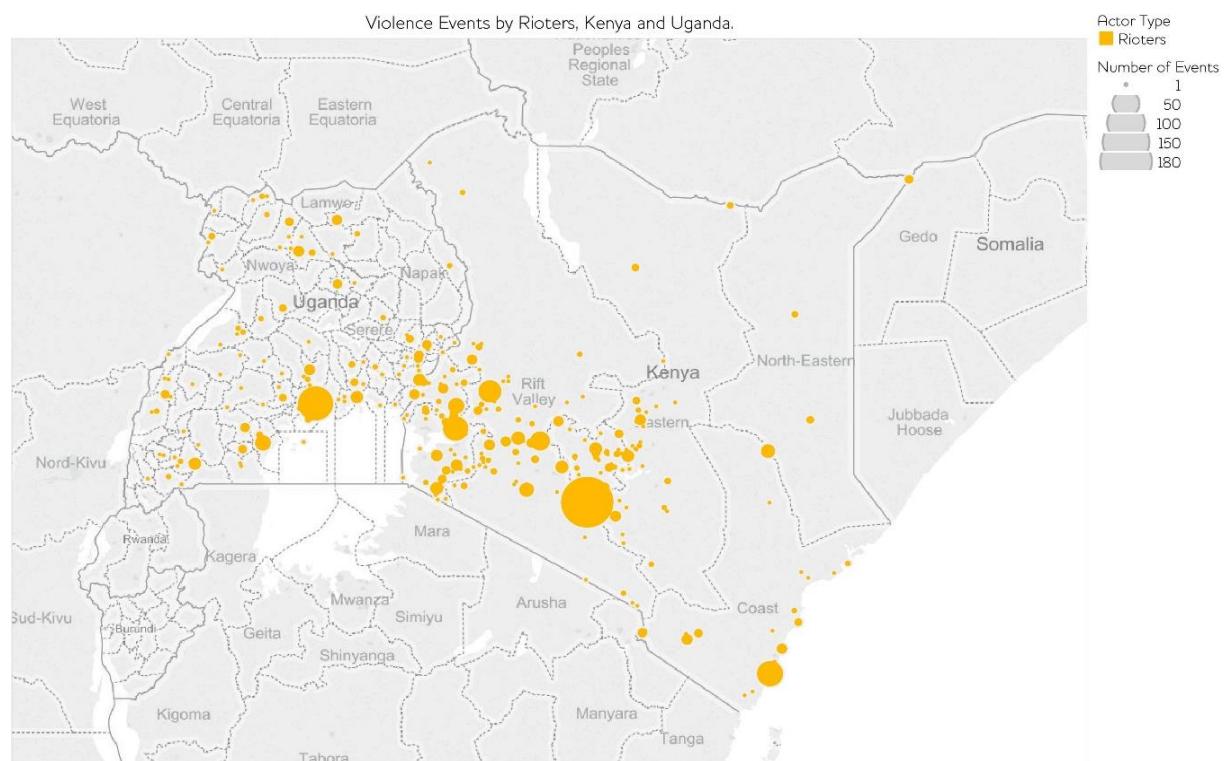
It is also notable that when a sitting regime mobilises political militias in its service, whether or not they are called youth wings of political parties or crime preventers, this mobilisation may be framed as a solution to unemployment and thus often serves to co-opt the political choices of young men in particular. There are risks associated with constructing poor, urban and/or rural masculinities, and narrowly viewing their marginality through the prism of violence, criminality and (in)security. Sustaining violent masculinities in this way also has an impact on the production of young women's identities in these communities, which are framed by insecurity and fear of violence.

## 5.1.2 Riots and protests

Kenya saw a rise in protests associated with periods of contested elections especially during general elections in 2007–08 and 2013, and with a wider increase in protesting and rioting as the means of articulating and acting on grievances in social and political life. Across all incidents of recorded violence and social unrest in Kenya since 1997, rioting and protesting is the category that has increased most significantly over time, which reflects a change in how populations engage (sometimes violently) in political contestation and demonstration. In 2013, for example, 284 discrete riots/protests were recorded in Kenya, compared to just 22 in 2001. By and large, however, these are not high-intensity events associated with large numbers of reported fatalities: with the exception of the post-election violence in 2007–08, when rioters constituted a sizeable number of fatalities, most riots or protests in Kenya are non-fatal.

In addition to exhibiting specific trajectories over time, social unrest of this kind also has a distinct geography. As Figure 5.2 illustrates, rioting is heavily concentrated in urban areas in both countries, with Kampala, Nairobi and Mombasa witnessing the highest levels of unrest.

**Figure 5.2 Violence events by rioters, Kenya and Uganda (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

Protests are often associated with responses to perceived injustice and service delivery demands with new regimes. Service delivery demands here refer to pressure citizens place on the state to deliver basic goods and services, as well as commitments to provide fair wages and social justice more generally. A wave of such protests occurred in 2013, around the general election period, and again in 2015, revealing a consistency in the nature of livelihood demands over taxation, salaries, land, unemployment and corruption. A brief timeline of major protests in Kenya over this period demonstrates the persistence of these points, as well as the diverse flashpoints around which these grievances are articulated:

**Table 5.2 Major protests in Kenya 2013**

Date	Protest
March 2013	Protests over a Supreme Court ruling on contested presidential elections, largely in Nairobi
May 2013	Civil society protests over an increase in the salaries of members of Parliament (MPs). The MPs were demanding a monthly salary of US\$10,000
June 2013	National protests against the imposition of value added tax (VAT) on basic food items such as flour. The list was subsequently amended to exempt 400 items from the tax, which included unprocessed milk, soya beans, raw groundnuts, live animals, meat, eggs, vegetables, fruits and nuts, cereals and fertilisers. However, once some of these goods were processed, the tax would apply
July 2013	24-day teachers' strike. The government reached a deal with the teachers' union to pay KSh13.5bn (around US\$133m) in increased salaries, and to provide hardship and commuter allowances, backdated to July 2012
October 2013	Justice for Liz: a 16-year-old girl was walking home from her grandfather's funeral in Busia when six men attacked and raped her, then threw her, unconscious, into a six-metre deep toilet pit. After the incident was reported, the police arrested the suspects and made them mow the police station lawn before releasing them; 300 demonstrators delivered a petition to the police inspector general's office in Nairobi demanding justice
December 2013	Protests by journalists and others in the media against the Kenya Information and Communications (Amendment) Bill 2013, which would create a 'quasi-government' complaints commission to handle grievances made against journalists or media companies. Media outlets would face fines between KSh1m and KSh20m (US\$1,000–20,000) if they failed to respect government standards and a code of conduct. Individual journalists could also be fined up to KSh500,000 (US\$5,000) fine and banned from reporting Elsewhere, operations were affected in several public hospitals across the country as health workers protested over planned devolution of their pay to counties; 2,300 doctors went on a three-week strike over wage disputes and poor working conditions
January 2015	Demonstrators protested over the limited availability of jobs offered by a power company; they blocked the road leading to a work site in Kargi, in Marsabit county in north-central Kenya, for several days, and briefly held a supply truck driver hostage
May 2015	A resident was shot and killed, when a group resisted forced eviction by the police in Mombasa; two days of protests followed
September 2015	Teachers who had been striking for two weeks over late payment of salaries took part in a coordinated series of protests in central Nairobi
November 2015	Residents in Garissa, in the east of the country, protested over frequent water supply problems

In Uganda, the main actors in protests include police and rioters, who are primarily students, taxi drivers, opposition supporters and traders. Tensions primarily arose after the Supreme Court dismissed an opposition petition to nullify the result of disputed elections that saw President Yoweri Museveni, who has been in power since 1986, re-elected for another five-year term. Post-election conflicts were characterised by frequent clashes between protesters and police forces. The number of recorded riots or protests and deaths in 2016 doubled from 11 recorded events and 15 deaths in 2006. This implies that not only have the elections become more contested, and contestations around general and local elections associated with flare-ups of conflicts, but also that the chances of the conflict turning violent have increased as the state deploys more police and military forces to disperse demonstrators and rioters.

Inequitable access to political resources and territory shapes the typology of protests in rural areas. A case in point is the conflict in Rwenzori district, especially among the Bakonjo and Bamba communities. At the core of these communities, and within the wider Rwenzori struggle for recognition in the Toro kingdom, is the question of inequality. This is not only about the distribution of power that enables access to political power, especially at the centre, and the quest for allocation of resources but also more importantly is the contestation for dignity and social status (Syahuka-Muhindo and Titeca 2016).

The deployment of the military and police further exacerbates conflict, because they not only often use excessive force but are also usually perceived as biased and propagating the state's interests. Indeed, as noted in previous studies, security agencies in Uganda lack autonomy especially from other organs of the state, such as the presidency and legislature, and from external actors whose interests influence the responses of the state security system and often determine their agenda and outcomes (Mutengesa and Hendrickson 2008).

The fact that protests serve as a legitimate means to communicate citizens' dissatisfaction with the state, and that state responses tend to lead to fewer fatalities, indicates particular levels of freedoms such as those of association in Kenya that may be stifled in Uganda. In addition, the fact that protests in both countries are not confined to urban centres shows that the concerns, mobilisation and methods used to address them cut across communities in both countries.

### **5.1.3 Communal violence**

One form of violence that is frequent and widespread in both countries is violence by communally mobilised militias, which causes insecurity for populations across Uganda and Kenya. Between 1997 and 2015, 2,302 discrete violence events involving communal militias were coded, with an estimated 10,104 reported fatalities in both countries. These high levels attest to the diversity of security threats that communities and citizens face, particularly in rural and peripheral areas in both countries. In Kenya, according to the ACLED dataset communal militia groups are involved in more reported fatalities than any other actor.<sup>3</sup> While communal militia events in Uganda are relatively lower in number than those in Kenya, the ratio of reported fatalities to events in Uganda is higher, suggesting a greater level of lethal use of force.

The emergence of communal militias as actors in Eastern Africa is fuelled in large part by ineffective state responses to marginalisation. The socioeconomic exclusion of communities in peripheral parts of Kenya and Uganda where communal militias are prevalent is a key driver in the evolution of militia groups in these regions. This section of the report focuses on two case studies. The first is the Karamoja cluster, which is a security and development concern that Kenya and Uganda share. The second case examines the Marsabit/Moyale conflict, which connects communities in northeastern Kenya and southern Ethiopia. For the purposes of this report, we will examine the drivers of violence in Moyale in Kenya, to the exclusion of Ethiopia.

A number of similarities characterise the emergence of communal militias in these areas. First, Karamoja and Moyale are semi-arid environments, where people lead largely pastoral and minimal agro-pastoral livelihoods. This means that ecological factors play a significant role in communities' lives, resulting in violent contestations over pasture, water and land borders. Second, both areas have communities that share linguistic, cultural and family ties that are split between two countries due to colonial-era border arrangements. However, the management of trading and cross-border livelihood dynamics has continued unabated,

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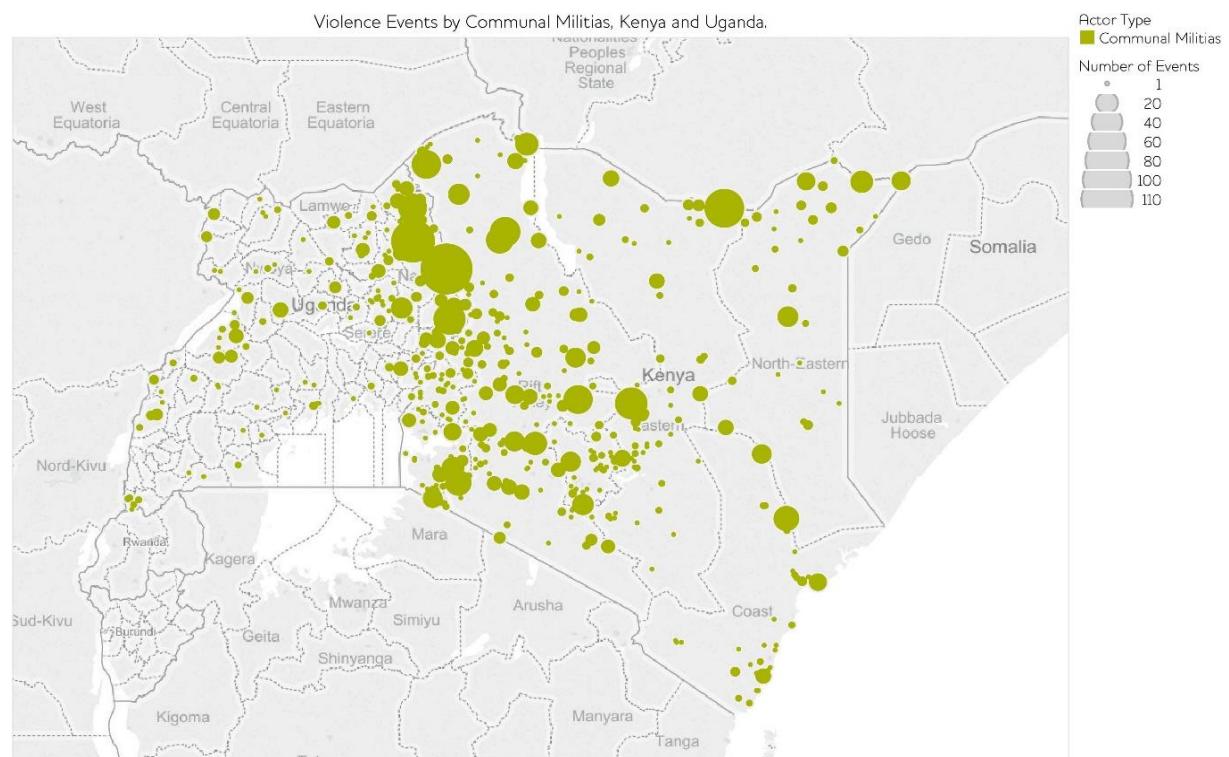
<sup>3</sup> Other categories include state and rebel forces, political militias, rioters and external forces.

largely because of the porosity of borders and the relative exclusion of these regions from mainstream governance arrangements by regimes at the centre.

However, poor management of citizen exclusion in Moyale and the Karamoja cluster results in a slow response to violence events when they occur. In fact, regimes in Kenya and Uganda have historically outsourced local conflict management to traditional structures. Local communities have therefore relied on informal systems of protection that involve a combination of clan systems and militias. These structures only work under circumstances that recognise their absolute nature. When corruption and inequalities along gender and ethnic lines have seeped into their management, they have eroded their legitimacy. Finally, weaknesses in state capacity – specifically the creation of a holistic socioeconomic and political programme – have exacerbated rather than abated the politicisation of ethnic and clan tensions to the benefit of local political elite. State weaknesses become more pronounced when violence emanating from bordering countries – in this case, Kenya and Ethiopia – becomes difficult to contain, as was evident from clashes in Moyale in 2013, which are discussed below.

In Kenya, communal violence is widespread, but is most prominent in the former Rift Valley province. This area now constitutes a series of different counties under the devolved governance system. The northeastern part of the country along the border with Ethiopia and Somalia, and Coast Province, are also sites of communal violence linked to systemic exclusion. In Uganda, communal militia violence is heavily concentrated within the Karamoja cluster in the northeast, and this has historically spilled over into northwest Kenya (see Figure 5.3). In both countries, violence in this area is associated with a range of historical factors such as land ownership, settlement and skewed state investments in these regions, as discussed below.

**Figure 5.3 Violence events by communal militias, Kenya and Uganda (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

## **Communal violence in Moyale**

The Moyale conflict, like Karamoja, shares the challenge of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons escalating violence events. Marsabit county borders Ethiopia to the north, Wajir county to the east, Isiolo county to the south, Samburu county to the southwest, and Turkana county to the west. Marsabit is composed of four sub-counties – Laisamis, Saku, North Horr and Moyale – and occupies part of the driest region in the country, the Chalbi desert belt (Saferworld 2015). Marsabit is home to a number of ethnic groups such as Gabra, Rendille, Borana, Samburu, Turkana, Burji, Dasanetch, Wata, and Somali communities (Saferworld 2015). Pastoralism is therefore the main form of land use, with arable farming limited to 3 per cent of the county's total land area, largely around Mount Marsabit.

A number of root and proximate causes to the violence events characterise intra-communal clashes in Moyale, which are found in a combination of factors in colonial and post-colonial state-making processes. Moyale, which is in northern Kenya, has a particular history of dispossession, which has its roots in colonial policies that were entrenched by the post-colonial government. The British colonial government designated the Northern Frontier District as a closed area through the Outlying District Ordinance of 1902, which restricted residents' movement and therefore their relationship to the centre to the region. Additional legislation, such as the Special Districts (Administration) Ordinance of 1934 and the Stock Theft and Produce Ordinance of 1933, gave colonial administrators extensive powers to arrest, restrain, detain and seize the property of those they termed as 'hostile tribes' (KHRC n.d.: 80).

During the Lancaster House talks on Kenya's independence and constitution, between 1960 and 1963, secession of the Northern Frontier District to Somalia to join Greater Somalia was broached. Greater Somalia would span Somalia, Somaliland, Ogaden in Ethiopia, North Eastern Kenya and Djibouti (Castagno 1964; Turton 1972). The failure to grant the demand for secession led to the continued pursuit of independence by the Northern Province People's Progressive Party through violence. These were named *Shifta* (bandit) wars and provided an excuse for the government to continue draconian colonial laws, in addition to adopting new legislation that gave independent Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta (1963–78), the power to rule the region by decree, as well as enlarging emergency powers. The government imposed emergency rule in the region, which was only lifted in 1992 (KHRC n.d: 22; Wanambisi 1984; Mburu 1999: 99).

The impact of historical juridical and applied segregation of North Eastern Kenya has had specific ramifications. First, the insistence on vetting border communities as a security measure has created opportunities for corruption, because government authorities rely on local elders to determine the authenticity of the claimants for identity cards, a process that has become open to manipulation. Second, rapid urbanisation from 2008 to date has increased communal competition over scarce resources, resulting in pastoral and clan-related conflicts. Such conflicts are heightened by reinforcements from actors in other countries such as Ethiopia, who come with better arms, aided by weak border management and complicated by shared communal ties (USAID n.d). Third, an unexpected result of the pariah status that successive regimes have conferred on the region is increased cross-border commerce. Moyale is a strategic gateway that allows trans-clan and trans-national trade networks for the movement of goods and people between Ethiopia and Kenya (Saferworld 2015).

Conflicts in the county have been predominantly between the Gabra and Borana communities. Violent conflicts between the Gabra/Garre and the Borana communities in Ethiopia and Kenya are cyclical, but peaked after the Turbi massacre in 2005 (Mwangi 2006). The conflicts involve a range of legal, political and economic dynamics, which extend from local to national and regional dimensions between Ethiopia and Kenya. Locally, competition over grazing land and water for livestock, and sporadic cases of cattle rustling

and revenge killings, have driven conflict between these two communities. However, these have morphed into competition over administrative boundaries drawn in the immediate post-colonial period, which informed participation in the national government through representation in Parliament. Related to administrative boundaries is the assertion that the towns of Turbi and Forole, which were rezoned from Moyale constituency, should be part of the area (Saferworld 2015: 4).

An additional factor is increasing competition over infrastructure development, most notably the Lamu Port Southern Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) project, which it is anticipated will increase the value of land along the Marsabit–Moyale highway (Saferworld 2015: 5). The rapid development of urban settlements, which are likely to result in higher economic returns, has also led to clashes between the Gabra and Borana communities. The economic dominance of the Borana community is a further contributing factor, which has resulted in growing resentment from smaller communities such as the Rendille, Gabra and Burji, even though the Gabra and the Borana have historically been seen as one community, sharing settlements and pasture. However, the perception of inferiority by the Gabra has led to a gradual challenge to the idea of Borana ‘supremacy’ by smaller communities mobilising to through a movement during local Kenya National Union of Teacher’s elections that sought to block Borana teachers from winning elective positions (Saferworld 2015: 2).

During the 2013 general elections, the Redille, Gabra and Burji formed the REGABU alliance and succeeded in winning most political seats in the county, except for the Saku and Moyale parliamentary seats, which Borana won (Saferworld 2015: 2). The voting alliances and the results led to tensions and violence events over access to grazing land and water, but aggravated by local ethno-political alliances. In December 2013, these tensions erupted into open violence, which lasted until February 2014. At least 23 people were reported to have been killed, 100 homes destroyed, and 8,521 households displaced (Saferworld 2015). In December 2015, the Kenyan and Ethiopian governments launched an inter-governmental response, reaching a KSh20bn (around US\$200m) deal to end conflict along the border and spur development. The ‘Marsabit County/Kenya-Borana Zone/Ethiopia Integrated Cross-border and Area-based Programme’, sponsored by United Nations agencies, was intended as a ‘peace through development’ project that would increase mineral resources, meat and livestock trade to create jobs for young people and communities living on the border, improving their economy and access to health and education (Chebet and Bett 2015).

Communal militias in Kenya and Uganda, and the violence events that their activities generate, capitalise on a number of structural state weaknesses. The first weakness is connected to policing, evident in poor training, infrastructure and incentives. Two examples from Kenya illustrate the extent of the problem. In November 2012, 42 Kenyan police officers were killed during a police operation in Suguta Valley that was intended to address an escalation in cattle rustling between the Samburu and Turkana communities (Amnesty International 2013; Ronoh 2014). Subsequent investigations into the incident revealed that most of the officers involved in the operation were new recruits, and that nobody had been in clear command of the operation, nor had adequate equipment been provided (Amnesty International 2013; Ronoh 2014). In 2014, 19 Administration Police Service officers were killed in Kapendo Baringo county in Kenya during a disarmament mission. High levels of corruption within the police force and in border management led to the proliferation of unlicensed arms in the hands of civilians.

Second, the net result of these weaknesses is the opportunistic co-option of the military into the management of national and human security questions, often resulting in the use of measures that can only be subject to military codes of conduct, thereby limiting civilian oversight. Third, generalised insecurity of this nature results in organised criminal gangs using insecurity as a means to extract goods from the population and in some instances to create peripheral criminal economies. There is a thin line between communal militias

pursuing what they construe as social justice for their communities and individuals finding opportunities to thrive economically from the arms trade and government-established amnesty programmes under the banner of communal militias. Fourth, conflicts in neighbouring countries play a role in escalating the activities of communal militias. Regional conflicts have played a role in the Karamoja cluster due to protracted conflicts in Somalia and Sudan/South Sudan, as well as internal political conflicts in Uganda. In the case of Moyale, historical connections between communities across borders in Kenya and Ethiopia, and wider historical contestations over belonging, through the pan-Somali project and Ethiopia's Oromo independence struggles, fuel conflict and violence. Finally, the role of political elites in using violence and historical tensions for political expediency is an important proximate cause of the evolution of communal militias and violence events emerging from their activities.

### **Communal violence in the Karamoja cluster and cross-border violence**

Cross-border movement is a key livelihood strategy for transhumance pastoralists as they seek to take advantage of geographic and seasonal availability of resources, trade livestock and access better services (Pavanello 2009). As a result, patterns of violence can likewise span national borders. This is the case with regards to patterns of communal violence in the Karamoja cluster, a border area that stretches across northwestern Kenya, northeastern Uganda, southwestern Ethiopia and southeastern Sudan, and is home to several pastoralist groups that include the Pokot and Turkana from Kenya and the Dodos, Jie, Sabiny and several other Karamojong groups from Uganda. Violence in the Karamoja cluster is shaped by a combination of climatic and economic factors such as erratic rainfall and harsh environmental conditions, leading to conflicts over livestock, water and grazing resources (Saferworld 2010). Although this form of violence is typically not a national priority, its effects on communities, and civilian security, are nonetheless very serious: between 1998 and 2008, for example, cross-border attacks between these groups accounted for more than 800 deaths (UCDP 2016).

Communal violence associated with cattle raiding in Karamoja pre-dates the colonial era, but has escalated in terms of intensity of armed conflict and magnitude of loss of human life in the years since Ugandan independence (Otim 2004). While it is often portrayed in the media, government literature and civil society reports primarily as 'armed inter-ethnic violence' driven by resource scarcity and tradition, this narrative oversimplifies its deep association with state policies, particularly in relation to forced displacement, resettlement and securitisation, absent or distant state governance, the regional proliferation of small arms, a rapidly growing market economy that includes the commercialisation of cattle raiding, persistent livelihood insecurity, and uneven development (Agade 2010; Eaton 2010; Otim 2004).

The substitutability between modern firearms and cattle is an indication of the role arms-bearing has acquired in the material culture of pastoral nomads in East Africa, and the increasing fatalities associated with community militias reflect the role that contemporary lethal weapons play in cattle rustling. Arms have always formed part of the history of pastoralist livelihoods in Karamoja, but they have become more sophisticated and more easily acquired over the years. Breech-loading rifles sourced from Ethiopian, Arab and Swahili traders were common in the region as early as 1855. By 1910, small, private tactical armies operated in the Turkana borderlands between Ethiopia and Sudan and were primarily armed with single-shot rifles (Bainomugisha, Okello and Ngoya, 2007; Mburu 2002).

An increase in the number of arms circulating in Karamoja coincided with the ousting of the Amin government in 1971, when Karamajong raiders opportunistically looted the Moroto barracks for assault rifles (Otim 2004). These were added to in 1985 when Gen. Tito Okello's short-lived regime conscripted and armed a number of Karamajong in order to boost the size of the national military (Otim 2004). In the 1990s, the Museveni government did not adopt a

disarmament strategy immediately and by 2000, through raiding and dealing, there were approximately 150,000 illegally acquired guns in Karamoja (Mburu 2002). A similar pattern was at play across the border in Kenya, but with political influence playing a role in arming of pastoralist communities, in addition to illegal purchases, barter and raiding. According to Mburu (2002), throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the Kenyan government armed pro-government Turkana with Kalashnikovs, possibly sourced from bandits disarmed elsewhere (Mburu 2002: 8–9).

Regional conflict dynamics have also played a role in the increased militarisation of community militias in the region. These include the protracted conflict in Somalia – specifically the fallout from the Siad Barre regime that facilitated a greater flow of arms into Kenya – civil war in southern Sudan and conflict in northern Uganda. In July 1988, the Sudanese People's Liberation Army armed Turkana and Karamoja communities as part of their struggle for independence, due to the lack of human resources. The Sudanese government in Khartoum also provided more than 50,000 rifles to the Toposa community in the following decade (Mburu 2002).

Kenyan and Ugandan government responses to the violence in the Karamoja cluster have deepened a security-led approach rather than one that seeks to resolve structural drivers and the evolution in the nature of violence. It is an approach that oscillates between voluntary arms surrender in exchange for land, or an exchange of arms for money or cattle – in essence, an arms amnesty – or military occupation to coerce the surrender of weapons (Mburu 2002). For example, the Museveni regime in Uganda engaged in disarmament campaigns in 2002, 2004 and 2013 that involved the Uganda Peoples Defence Forces leading the process, thus militarising the response to the problem (Saferworld 2010). Some of the risks associated with this approach include: the potential to build rather than abate the thriving illegal arms trade in the sub-region; construing the community as under siege and thereby reinforcing the perception that it does not belong to the larger nation state; and finally, multiple occurrences of human rights abuses and extortion by military forces which have been reported during such disarmament activities.

These approaches also typically fail to address underlying structural weaknesses and conditions that fuel or facilitate intercommunal violence in the sub-region. These include factors that underlie poor state security provision and produce incentives for communities to arm themselves and take security into their own hands. Furthermore, poor training and a lack of resources and incentives for police services contribute to a system of corruption whereby non-state actors illegally acquire state firearms via the same security forces tasked with eradicating the trade in such arms. In addition, generalised insecurity of this nature results in organised criminal gangs using insecurity as a means to extract goods from the population and in some instances to create peripheral economies.

In contrast, initiatives such as the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme, which commits the Ugandan government to pursuing consultative weapons control, working with the communities and police, have the potential to make significant progress in controlling weapons in Karamoja, while reducing the risk of further human rights violations through forcible disarmament and cordon and search operations (Saferworld 2010: 42).

### **5.1.4 Rebel violence and regional conflict systems**

While the following analysis focuses on national-level, and sub-national within-country, conflict dynamics, several of the countries are part of highly integrated, regionalised conflict systems. In Uganda, the LRA has been active primarily outside Uganda since the end of the civil war there in 2006, with significant activity, and implications for civilian vulnerability, recorded in South Sudan, DRC, and more recently, CAR.

In Kenya, the activity of militant Islamist organisation Al-Shabaab cannot be easily reduced to a Somali import, as the group has deftly adapted its strategies, rhetoric, recruitment and targeting to the Kenyan conflict environment. Nevertheless, its concentration in the northeastern and coastal regions of the country, and taking advantage of porous borders with Somalia, attest to important regionalised conflict systems.

Violence associated with Al-Shabaab has been a dominant feature of Kenya's conflict profile in recent years: since 2009, the group has reportedly been involved in 220 discrete violence events, or just over 5 per cent of total violence recorded in Kenya in this time period. Kenya's history with violent Islamist groups can be traced back to the first bus park attack in 1975, and escalated in 1998 with al-Qaeda attacks on the United States (US) embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. These attacks must be set in the context of international global power politics and retaliations against US allies.

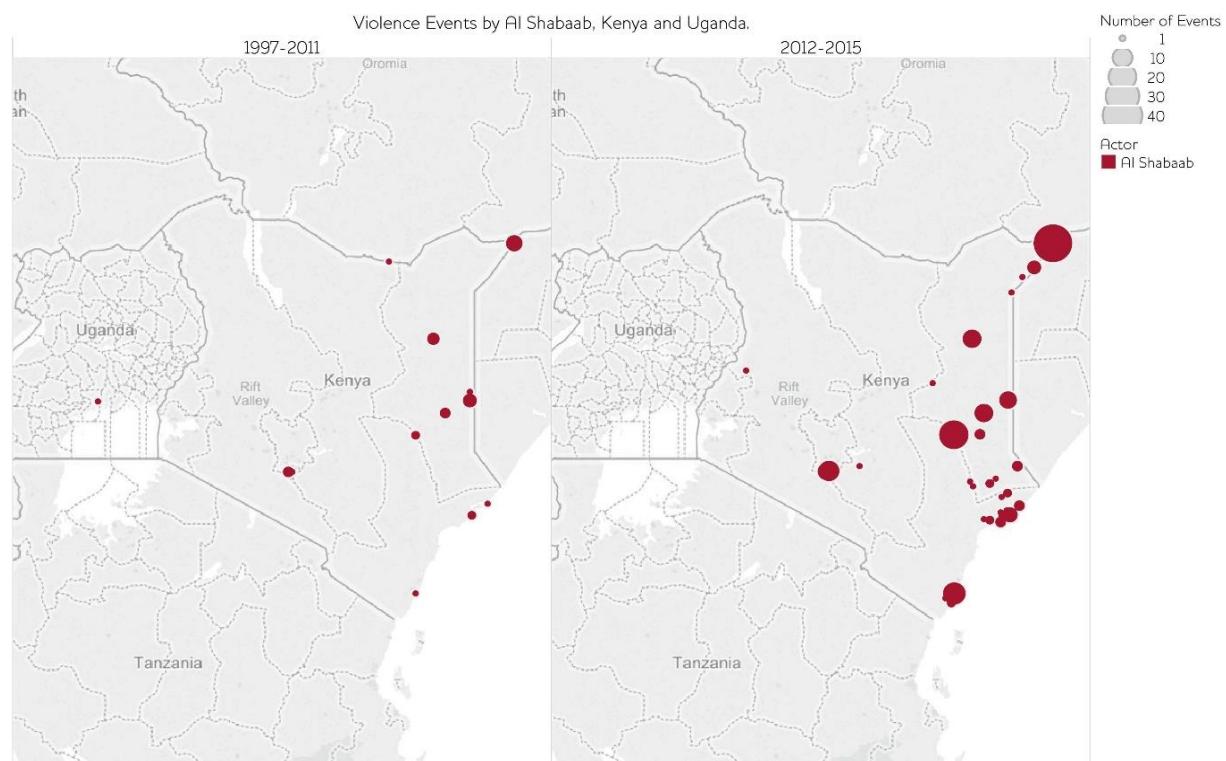
The rise of Al-Shabaab must also be situated in this global context and can be traced to the forced dissolution of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 2007. The ICU was a loose formation of Islamic judicial systems created in mid-2004 that managed to restore some sort of civil order in Somalia after years of a violent anarchy and received significant support from the Somali people (Wise 2011). The ICU took over most of southern Somalia in the second half of 2006 and was in direct opposition to the Transitional Federal Government, which was more palatable to actors internationally and in the sub-region (Wise 2011). Al-Shabaab was the militant wing of the ICU. In December 2006 and January 2007, the Somali government and Ethiopian forces, supported by international actors, rooted out the ICU, but Al-Shabaab retreated into the south (Wise 2011; National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) 2013).

Before Kenya's incursion into Somalia in 2011 during *Operation Linda Nchi*, research has shown that Kenya was hosting affiliated sleeper cells and forms of local radicalisation, rather than an overt Al-Shabaab presence. Figure 5.4 illustrates the increasing number and greater geographic range of Al-Shabaab violence in the region before 2012, and in the aftermath of the incursion into Somalia in 2011: 31 recorded events were attributed to Al-Shabaab in Kenya; between 2012 and 2015, that figure increased to 189.

The reason that Kenya is a site of Al-Shabaab violence is rooted in Al-Shabaab's claim to a historical pan-Somalia project, as well as in reaction to Kenya's military presence in Somalia. It has, however, found fertile ground for mobilisation in deep-rooted state–society tensions, including institutional weaknesses (Botha 2013; ICG 2014b). Since 2011 Al-Shabaab targets have been diverse, ranging from bars in downtown Nairobi, to crowded bus terminals and churches. The majority of the group's targets and resulting casualties have been civilians, at 25.9 per cent, with military targets constituting 22.4 per cent (START 2013: 2). Of the reported fatalities attributed to Al-Shabaab violence, even more are heavily weighted towards civilian targets: out of 891 reported fatalities, over 50 per cent (470) involved the direct targeting of civilians.

The September 2013 attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi was considered significant in comparison to previous attacks claimed by Al-Shabaab, due to the high-profile nature of the target, the number of casualties, and the fact that its execution revealed sophisticated preparation by the assailants. The attack resulted in a four-day siege that involved the police, army and other special security forces. It brought to light pre-existing structural and institutional weaknesses related to national security policy and strategy and the sectors charged with its delivery. These include inadequate resources and training, combined with poor morale and incentive structures for police, and limited coordination between security sector actors (Saferworld 2016).

**Figure 5.4 Violence events attributed to Al-Shabaab, Kenya and Uganda (1997–2011, 2012–15)**



Source: ACLED.

An attack that Al-Shabaab claimed in Mpeketoni, Lamu, in June 2014, which left more than 60 people dead, further illustrated the extent of the institutional weaknesses in the country. However, an additional feature of the attack was that it demonstrated how internal schisms related to political parties and ethnicity could be easily mobilised in support of violent extremism. This was clear in President Uhuru Kenyatta's initial claims that the Mpeketoni attack had little to do with Al-Shabaab, but was organised by local (Coastal) criminal gangs. Furthermore, the nature of the attack itself was highly targeted and planned to speak directly to ethnicised tensions over power and land in Kenya. Al-Shabaab deftly exploited disputes in Coast Province over indigenous and non-indigenous land ownership, by targeting predominantly Christian 'settler' populations, in contrast to indigenous, often Muslim, local populations (Lind and Dowd 2015).

The structural and institutional weaknesses point to the extent of required security sector reform, which had hitherto focused on the police but had failed to capture with the same veracity other parts of the sector. The intersection between internal security, border management and territorial integrity is the issue here. While insurgents leverage socioeconomic deprivation for recruitment and proselytising, this is enhanced by the absence of state machinery in certain sections of the country, which are often far from the centre and border other countries. This takes the form of a lack of basic service delivery such as education, water, health, sanitation, infrastructure and security. Some of the entry points that have been most vulnerable to extremists in Kenya have been on the coastal strip and in the north of the country. It is therefore important to understand the dynamics in these two areas in relation to topography, but also in relation to their providing an opportune environment for recruitment (Botha 2013).

Kenya's North East province and large sections of the coastal strip outside of the major towns exhibit low levels of socioeconomic development, largely due to successive years of regime neglect and political patronage. The proximity of Coast and North East provinces to Somalia, which has had a protracted internal civil conflict, means that Kenya has borne the brunt of Somalia's extended civil war, not only as a refugee-receiving country, but also through conflict-generated dynamics such as increased illegal sales of small arms and light weapons. Topographically, the coastal area also features small islands and forests that allow for easy access to the mainland with little risk of detection. These contextual factors have therefore facilitated the operations of extremist groups.

The absence of 'a unified national security policy for Kenya' that would create forces that respond to citizens, and foster an environment of trust and safety, is a major gap in security sector reform debates. While the constitution provides for broad-based consultation, the pre-determined nature of who is consulted and how has limited robust conversations on security sector reform and civil–military relations. Security reforms in Kenya have largely focused on the police, but must be extended to other security forces in the areas of skills, operational capabilities and adherence to the rule of law. The institutional culture within the police force remains resistant and unresponsive to a larger democratisation effort. Additionally, the justice sector, through the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, which is linked to the prisons, also requires attention. The slow pace at which investigations are conducted and concomitant weaknesses in professional practice underscore weaknesses in effective security management.

Finally, Kenya's parliamentary oversight committees have demonstrated limited ability to exercise accountability over security sector institutions, often deferring to political exigencies. The use of Parliament to pass a raft of amendments under the Security Laws Amendment Act 2014, to reverse freedoms secured by the 2010 constitution and increase the power of the executive to act without the necessary checks and balance, illustrates this (Government of Kenya 2014). Fundamentally, the government's response to insecurity caused by violent extremism fails to deal with the socioeconomic and political exclusions that have rendered sections of the country marginal and vulnerable to extremist radicalisation; while the institutions charged with addressing this growing phenomenon have demonstrated weaknesses that demand meaningful and lasting reform to render them transparent, credible, accountable and effective.

### **5.1.5 State-produced insecurity**

As is clear from the discussion of violence by non-state actors, state security forces are also key, active agents, not only in mediating violence, but also as forces that intersect with and catalyse the mutation of certain violent actors, and as independent agents of insecurity in their own right. The provision of security by state forces has mainly referred the Weberian coercive functions of the state, such as the monopoly of the means of violence and thus the capability to enforce extractive functions such as revenue collection, taxation or exploitation of resources, maintenance of law and order, and provision of judicial services, as well as security within and outside the territory (Weber 1946; Tilly 1975: 601–39). However, in common with other post-colonial states, Uganda and Kenya do not necessarily have total control over violence within their territory. Formal security forces have often been converted into forces to secure the regime, rather than those that have any form of legitimacy among citizens (Lindeman 2010).

The implication is that security forces have been vulnerable to political and elite manipulation (Brett 1995). For example, in Uganda, attempts to demobilise the military under the current regime have been superficial at best (Mutengesa 2013). Similarly, security forces have been mobilised for political ends: opposition candidate Kizza Besigye was arrested four times over eight consecutive days in the lead-up to the 2016 general elections, in addition to consistent state surveillance disguised as security provision (Conor 2016). A second and closely related

feature of security provision in both countries is the militarisation of civilian security forces and responses to insecurity. Third, endemic corruption and institutional indiscipline in the security forces negatively affect responses to insecurity and the legitimacy they are perceived to have (Tangri and Mwenda 2013).

State security forces, therefore, become a source of insecurity, often responding with heavy-handedness and excessive force. Numerous reports from Kenya and Uganda observe that the state, through the police and the military, has been involved in widespread violation of human rights including detention, torture, illegal detention, use of excessive force and extra-judicial killings (Burnett and Evans 2014; Rone, Kippenberg and Manby 2004; KHRC 2011). Furthermore, the absence of robust legal and regulatory mechanisms that enable the security agencies to act independently of the political elite – especially the presidency – underpins the ways in which security forces enable insecurity and foster violence.

Even where a sub-set of state and non-state actors has emerged to manage highly contested episodes such as elections and political conflict, and set out to help de-escalate violence, the political histories of Uganda and Kenya mean that electoral management bodies – such as the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission in Kenya and the Electoral Commission of Uganda – do not enjoy high levels of trust among a number of stakeholder groups, including opposition parties and civil society organisations, due to their composition, perceived lack of political independence and criticism over how they have carried out their mandates (Makulilo *et al.* 2015). That both Kenya and Uganda's 2013 and 2016 presidential elections were contested in court over how free, fair and democratic they were reflects the nature of elections as stage-managed democratic contests.

The emergence of state forces and institutions as key actors in mediating violence is also critical not only to examining their role as independent actors, but also to the formation and mutation of other violent actors. In this regard, the ways in which the state deploys securitisation through policy and military and security actors on the ground become critical to understanding relations of violent conflict in both countries.

## **5.2 The landscape of violent conflict in Ghana and Ivory Coast**

The analyses presented in Section 4 provide a lens through which to view the manifestations of violence and conflict that have occurred in Ivory Coast and Ghana, and a foundation for understanding their trajectories. In these analyses, it is important to consider the factors contributing to a situation conducive to violent conflict, and which key acts, events or their anticipation may set off or escalate violence or conflict – for example, elections or rapid changes in levels of unemployment.

### **5.2.1 Rebel violence and civil war**

The outbreak of civil war in Ivory Coast in 2002 was initially the result of a military coup that was initiated by Ivoirian soldiers who had left the country under Guei's regime. When Gbagbo became president in 2000, he did not have an inclusive approach that would motivate these soldiers to integrate into his system of government. From Burkina Faso, where they were thought to have political allies, these soldiers launched a coup in 2002 that escalated into a rebellion with a political identity, highlighting discrimination against and marginalisation of northerners and foreigners and the opposition Patriotic Movement of Ivory Coast (MPCI)

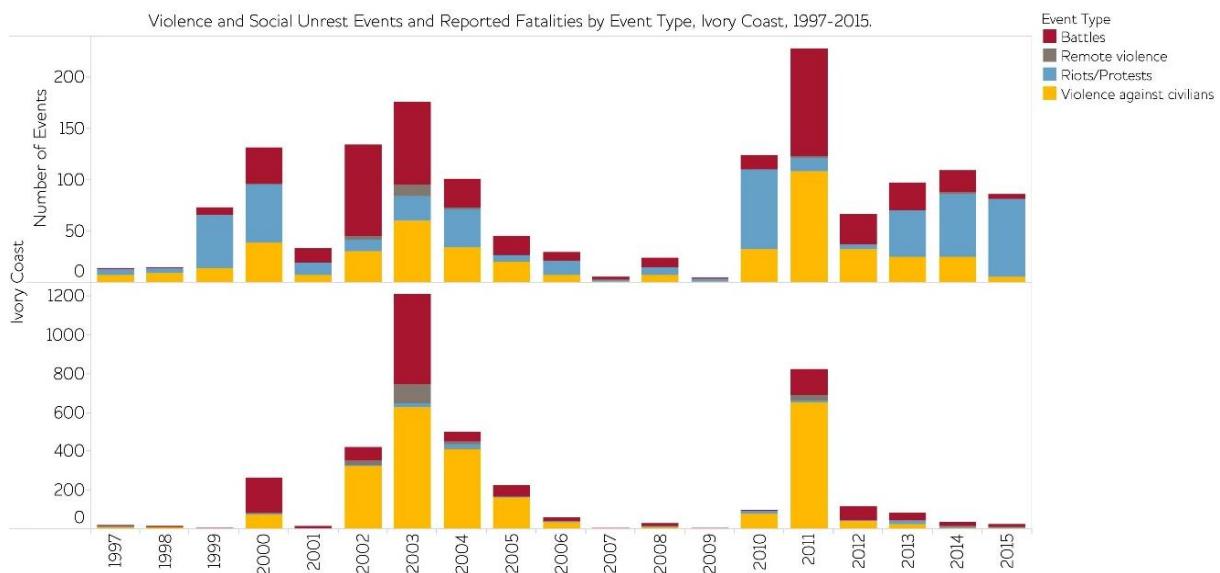
At the onset of the civil war and *de facto* division of Ivory Coast into two zones, tensions at local level between ethnic groups over land ownership, control of property, and *Ivoirité*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> *Ivoirité* refers to Bédié's policy of Ivorian nationalism, which created explicit advantages for those born in Ivory Coast of southern Ivoirian heritage, distinguishing 'pure' Ivorians from those of foreign descent (McCauley 2013).

exploded. This conflict led to the highest reported number of fatalities in the country at 1,210 in 2003 (see Figure 5.5). Ethnic fighting broke out in the far west between Yacoubas, who had supported Gen. Guei, and Guérés – who were closely related to the Bete, of which Gbagbo was a member – and the mass expulsion followed of Malinké Muslims and Burkinabes from the western cocoa zones by groups who were indigenous to the region and supported Gbagbo.

**Figure 5.5 Violence events and reported fatalities by event type, Ivory Coast (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

Violence against civilians was a punishing reality throughout the conflict. International organisations documented attacks on civilians based on their ethnicity, religion, nationality or suspected political affiliation. In the western region, large-scale summary executions were documented after government forces regained control of towns that the opposition had occupied (HRW 2003). As Figure 5.5 illustrates, civilian targeting peaked in 2003, with hundreds of fatalities recorded, but civilians continued to bear the disproportionate burden of the war for several more years, and again when unrest broke out in 2011. These episodes of violence were perpetrated by government and rebel forces, and included mass casualty attacks on immigrant workers living in border areas between the rebel-controlled north and the south; attacks in the far west against civilians seen as supporting Ouattara's Rally of the Republicans (RDR); and abuses by rebels against civilians, including members of civilian self-defence committees. Levels of violence, looting and sexual violence increased as provisions and funds available to rebel forces lessened over time from 2002 to 2003 (HRW 2003). Cases of sexual violence were documented, including rape and sexual slavery against women and girls by rebel forces and Liberian mercenaries, including those allied with either the government or rebel forces (HRW 2003). Acts of sexual violence were sometimes committed in front of family or community members (Blay-Tofey and Lee 2015).

For women and children from Ivory Coast who fled into neighbouring Ghana and Liberia when conflict erupted in 2002, conditions were unacceptable. Clean water was unavailable and health care completely non-existent as health centres lacked basic supplies and adequate staff. In western Ivory Coast the health care system had completely broken down as a result of fighting and staff departures. Maternal mortality was estimated at 597 deaths per 100,000 live births, with one in three women between the ages of 25 and 34 dying from obstetric complications, and more than half of all women giving birth without assistance from

qualified health personnel. It is estimated that 1 million primary schoolchildren and 250,000 secondary schoolchildren in Ivory Coast had their education interrupted during the 2002–05 period of the conflict (Whittington 2005).

The fighting, which began in September 2002, lasted 4–5 months, with the first formal peace accord, the Linas-Marcoussis Agreement, being signed in Paris in January 2003. By that time the opposition forces controlled about 60 per cent of the country, reaching down from the north, but no major towns and cities. Under the agreement Gbagbo remained as president of a government of reconciliation in which the opposition gained control of the Ministry for Defence and the Ministry for the Interior. French troops and later (in February 2004) a UN force undertook to keep the peace by forming a narrow peace belt across the centre of the country, in effect partitioning Ivory Coast.

Gbagbo's army had Mil Mi-24 helicopter gunships and other planes, which caused the death of many civilians in the rebel zone (Cook 2011). Tensions between Ivory Coast and France increased on 6 November 2004, after Ivorian air strikes killed nine French peacekeepers and an aid worker. In response, French forces attacked the airport in the administrative capital Yamoussoukro, destroying all of the aircraft in the Ivorian Air Force. Violent protests erupted in Abidjan and Yamoussoukro, and were marked by violence between Ivorians and French peacekeepers. Thousands of foreigners, especially French nationals, were evacuated from the two cities. French and international intervention infused complex neo-colonial narratives into the conflict, which Gbagbo used to present a narrative of the civil war as a second decolonisation, which worked to build solidarity among Ivorians for which these were sensitive issues (Charbonneau 2012).

The crisis in Ivory Coast led other countries to become involved in the conflict as many of their citizens were living and working there. President Blaise Compaoré of Burkina Faso had strong ties with the leader of Liberia, Charles Taylor, and both became active participants in the conflict, supporting the different rebellions in the north (Dozon 2000). France also played a greater role, with the deployment of additional military troops. A fragile resolution was mediated by Burkina Faso in 2007, and the government and New Forces rebels – a political coalition established in 2002 that represented the three rebel groups – signed a power-sharing deal. Under the deal, New Forces leader Guillaume Soro was appointed prime minister. The 2007 Ouagadougou Accords agreed on the need for elections, voter identification mechanisms and disarmament, paving the way for elections in 2010, which Gbagbo did not regard as a process intended to promote regime change, but rather to legitimise his authority.

Ultimately, the civil war in Ivory Coast reinforced the North–South identity polarisation within the country. Targeted mass casualty attacks against civilians on the basis of ethno-regional identities meant that they bore a disproportionate burden of violence long after formal hostilities had ended. Under the conflict-based political settlement that was created, the separation of the country with a peace belt reinforced the position and power of the leadership. The construction of the power-sharing agreement did not transform the motives that drove the political elite, who constructed new identity narratives against external interventionists to reinforce their legitimacy.

### **5.2.2 Political militias and electoral violence**

Within these protracted conflicts, electoral cycles have created arenas of conflict at local, regional and national scales. They act as triggers to violent outbreaks, driven by political elites and narratives of winner-takes-all political contests.

Following the introduction of multiparty democracy, Ivory Coast's civil war was in part catalysed by an elite power struggle that used politicised ethnicity narratives to gain political leadership. Within the peace process, the presidential election scheduled for 2005 was

pushed back on a number of occasions, with the government citing concerns over delays in voter registration and security. In 2009, Gbagbo accused the electoral commission of inflating the voter registration list with names of non-Ivorians. In February 2010, he dissolved the commission, which forced opposition parties to threaten to boycott the upcoming elections (Ogwang 2011).

In the lead-up to the elections, progress was made on the identification of Ivorian nationals, voter registration and elections. However, little progress was achieved in creating a central army command, or disarming militias and rebel forces. Additionally, the government faced hurdles to taking over rebel-controlled areas in the north (Ogwang 2011). Elections were finally organised in November 2010. However, the results became a source of dispute between Gbagbo and his challenger Ouattara.

The electoral dispute led to a cycle of violence and armed confrontations between the rebels and the army. The dispute was over the results the electoral commission announced, which found Ouattara to be the winner in a second round of voting for the presidency. Ouattara gained the support of runner-up and former president Henri Konan Bédié (1993–99) and went on to win the election with 54 per cent of votes cast. Gbagbo, whose stronghold was in the south of the country, rejected the results and refused to step down alleging that rigging in the opposition support base in the north had inflated votes for Ouattara. While the international community widely viewed Ouattara as the legitimate victor, Gbagbo held on to power until he was militarily defeated in April 2011. More than 3,000 people were killed during this period, many of them in Abidjan, the economic, political, and military epicentre of the crisis. However, the country's western region witnessed similar levels of violence; 385 people were killed there (CNE 2012).

While numerous factors can explain the disproportionately high levels of electoral violence in the western region, land grievances can be seen to have played a central role. As outlined in Section 2.2, contentious disputes over land had given rise to violent confrontations between indigenous people and migrants in the country's western cocoa regions since the introduction of multiparty elections in 1990. Klaus and Mitchell (2015) argue that land grievances provided the necessary conditions for elites to mobilise violent collective action. Gbagbo was able to indicate to his Ivorian supporters that elections signalled a threat of land loss from the opposition and the possibility of reclaiming land from migrants (ONUCI 2011). Gbagbo's message resonated among his indigenous supporters, largely because they had become a demographic minority (McGovern 2011). This message was reinforced by the previous actions politicians in Ivory Coast had taken to privilege access to land rights for groups who shared their ethnicity or politics, as shown in the Houphouët-Boigny and Bédié eras.

The regional and international communities continued to play a role in the dynamics of the conflict and its resolution. The UN had supervised the 2010 elections and reacted strongly in the international political sphere when Gbagbo refused to step down. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) approved the election results and suspended Ivory Coast from the organisation as a result of Gbagbo's actions. The Peace and Security Council of the African Union (AU) also recognised Ouattara as elected president. At an emergency summit on Ivory Coast in December 2010, ECOWAS endorsed the use of force if Gbagbo declined to cede power and also agreed to the international prosecution of those responsible for post-election deaths. However, there was charged debate between African heads of state over the use of military intervention by external actors. Ghana's president John Atta Mills (2009–12) declined to take sides after meeting with Ouattara and Gbagbo, citing concerns over Ghanaians living in Ivory Coast, an impending refugee crisis and business interests as a reason not to engage.

Bombande (2012) has argued that ECOWAS' broad shift from preventative democracy to promoting a military solution helped Gbagbo mobilise support, on the grounds that ECOWAS was attacking the FPI and supporters, as well as ordinary citizens, and suggested that

ECOWAS was divided between those who supported a military option and those who did not. The undermining of the ECOWAS process meant that violence was perpetuated as narratives could be manipulated at the local political level. Regional actors, operating through ECOWAS and a commitment to regional principles of good governance, could only promote security and stability in the region if dialogue, communication and debate were enabled in order to ensure that strategies were heard and shared, and agreements reached on the steps forward to take.

At the national level the crisis had led to an alliance between Ouattara and Soro's rebel New Forces, who had been promoting a military solution. In response to Gbagbo's refusal to find a peaceful solution to the crisis Ouattara gained legitimacy from African leaders and the UN to turn the rebel New Forces into a republican army (FRCI) and to use force to remove Gbagbo from power and build a government with Soro (Charbonneau 2012; UNSC 2011). Support from UN and French peacekeeping forces on the ground also contributed to the success of the FRCI. Gbagbo was apprehended in Abidjan in April 2011, leading military and police under his command to flee in large numbers, some joining the FRCI, others surrendering or moving to refugee camps. Despite ongoing conflict, in particular in the southwest as Gbagbo's forces fled to Liberia, space was created to formalise Ouattara's presidency (BBC 2016). Gbagbo and leader of the FPI youth wing Charles Blé Goudé have been put on trial at the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity; Blé Goudé's trial began in 2014 and Gbagbo's in 2016. Gbagbo has been charged with four counts of crimes against humanity including murder, sexual violence and persecution.

Human rights organisations argue that the post-election violence occurred following a decade of impunity for serious crimes. Despite grave crimes in violation of international law committed during the 2002–03 civil war and its aftermath, no one in the country was held to account for the violence. Those who were armed or who served in security forces were in effect immune from being held accountable for crimes they had committed. Violence against civilians was also a critical aspect of the post-election violence. In Abidjan and other major cities across eastern, central and western parts of the country protests over the outcome of the election were violently dispersed (HRW 2011; UNOCI 2011). Pro-Gbagbo security forces cleared communities in Abidjan and undertook targeted killings and disappearances of pro-Ouattara activists. Sexual violence was also recorded following major protest marches in Abidjan, as well as targeted rape and disappearances of women who were active Ouattara supporters (Amnesty International 2011; HRW 2011). In the New Forces-controlled western regions, violence against pro-Gbagbo supporters and campaigners included the burning of villages and food stores. Rape and sexual violence were also reported, often linked to ethnic identity. These events culminated in thousands of refugees fleeing across the border into Liberia, as a result of direct violence and the anticipation of abuse, remembering the 2002–03 conflict (HRW 2011).

Despite the establishment in 2011 of the Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission in wake of the conflict, the government has struggled to build trust and healing within the Ivorian population, which remains deeply divided. Of major concern to many is a perception of partial justice, with redress only being targeted at pro-Gbagbo forces, without Ouattara's military backers being meaningfully held to account for their actions (Bavier 2015; Adele 2015). After criticism over a lack of impartial justice, the ICC has committed to look into cases against the New Forces.

Ahead of the October 2015 elections, the composition of the major political parties shifted in a move towards peace and reconciliation that reinforced the 2010 coalition between Bédié's PDCI and Ouattara's Rally of the Republicans (RDR). The PDCI would support Ouattara's election bid and in exchange an informal agreement was made that the party would back a PDCI candidate in 2020 under a unified coalition party. Positioning Ouattara as a single candidate, however, created divisions within the PDCI–RDR coalition; the decision faced

opposition, including from former prime minister Charles Konan Banny (2005–07), which led to a number of former allies running as independent presidential candidates (UNSC 2015).

The October 2015 presidential election was pivotal in Ivory Coast's post-conflict democratic consolidation. Tensions over the election led the divided pro-Gbagbo opposition to boycott it, as they claimed there was corruption in the electoral system (VOA 2015). International observers, however, declared the elections to be free and fair, and their relatively peaceful conduct led to the re-election of Ouattara for a second and final term. This was an important milestone, the achievement of which was attributable to the acceptance by most stakeholders of the transparency and credibility of the elections (UNSC 2016). The Independent Electoral Commission has planned two electoral processes for late 2016, including a constitutional referendum and legislative elections. The referendum could help to address structural issues at the root of the Ivorian crisis – stretching back to the early 1990s – as one of the proposed amendments aims to revise Article 35 of the Constitution, which sets out the eligibility criteria for presidential candidates, including the requirement that both parents be Ivorian citizens by birth. This provision could also trigger debates within the ruling political coalition, given that some PDCI members were the architects of Article 35 (UNSC 2016).

Relatedly, in Ghana localised violence has affected elections and threatens the peace, security and stability of the country. Although confined to local level, these acts of violence have accompanied every election since 1993. ACLED data highlight that political militias carry out 24.59 per cent of all violence events in Ghana. Politics in Ghana over the past decades has witnessed sporadic violent actions associated with divisive partisan competition, and elections have mobilised and polarised the country in unstable ways (Fox *et al.* 2011). Ghana's two main political parties have consistently engaged in personal attacks on opposition figures, ethnic mobilisation and, to a lesser degree, violence. This can partly account for increases in violence around the 2000, 2004, 2008, 2012 and 2016 elections as reflected in Figure 5.5, above.

Violent mobilisation occurs before, during and after elections, and is characterised by threats, intimidation, physical assault and vandalism of electoral materials, as well as the use of hate speeches and incendiary language (Aning and Danso 2011). The violent manner in which the various political (and economic) undercurrents manifest themselves, particularly among the political classes and their supporters during election periods, include direct clashes between opposing local party supporters, burning and looting of property, and seizure of ballot boxes by 'macho men' and unemployed youths. These combined influences constitute a formidable threat to the growth and consolidation of the country's democracy (CODEO 2009). In Ghana's party system, 'foot soldiers' play a very important role in the partisan process. Political office seekers have increasingly come to rely on the mobilisation abilities of these young men and women (Abdallah and Odei-Afful 2011). The role of party foot soldiers in the democratic process is, therefore, very controversial and has been questioned. A 2011 Afrobarometer survey reported that the majority (81 per cent) of Ghanaians agreed that some of the activities of party foot soldiers had the potential to derail the country's democratic development (Resnick and Casale 2011).

Lund (2003) has blamed the recurrence of violence in the Bawku ethnic area in the north on the politicisation politicians have subjected it to. Since independence, and in particular since the return to multiparty politics, politicians have exploited long-standing historical grievances related to land and chieftaincy in ethnic terms in Northern region (Awedoba 2010; Bombande 2007). Others argue that political parties have aligned themselves to chieftaincy factions in order to gain sympathy and votes (Kendie 2010; Brukum 2007). For example, combatants in conflicts in Yendi and Bawku have been politicised in their relations with the NDC and the NPP. The Abudu faction in the Yendi conflict has always won sympathy from the NPP, while the NDC supports the Andani faction. In the 2004 election period, violence occurred when

the acquittal of the 15 men charged with killing the Andani paramount chief coincided with the electoral campaign. Similarly, in the Bawku conflict, the NPP allied with the ethnic Mamprusi faction and the NDC with the Kusasis. This political permutation of support for warring parties has not only magnified the dynamics of these conflicts, but has made their resolution very difficult (Amankwaah 2013).

Since the resumption of democracy in 1993, there has been an exceptionally large fiscal deficit almost every election year, followed by a painful fiscal adjustment afterwards; those in 1992, 1996, and 2008 were particularly destabilising (Diwan 2011; Prempeh and Kroon 2012). Ghana's ruling elites across governments have met broad distributional pressures with side payments – mainly to the civil service – as part of their strategy for maintaining their ruling coalition and winning elections (Whitfield 2011). The intensity of political competition and the winner-takes-all nature of elections raises the stakes to such an extent that the logic of political survival takes precedence over the national interest. Given that elections are scheduled for December 2016, this was a key concern for an IMF aid agreement in 2015, and government spending during this election year has been closely monitored. These tendencies in turn make it unlikely that elites will make the kinds of difficult decisions and long-term investments required to deliver structural transformation (Whitfield 2011). Fox *et al.* (2011) argue that the neo-patrimonial system of governance, which has increased pressure for politicians to assert control over distribution of resources, is leading to increasing concentration of economic resources in the hands of the political elite and their supporters, and ultimately perpetuating class inequality in the country.

In the context of Ghana's oil discovery in 2007, the country's destabilising politics and continuing weak institutional guarantees are said to pose serious risk to its stabilising, highly competitive democracy (Prempeh and Kroon 2012; Throup 2011). The worrying effect of petroleum politics on public life is reflected in the two main parties accusing each other of corrupt dealings over oil production contracts (Throup 2011: 9). Similarly, institutional oversight governing the emerging oil economy appears to be weak. In the face of growing citizen expectations that the country's oil wealth will positively transform the economy, the weak institutional oversight and the corroding patronage politics pose a threat to the country's long-term stability and progress (Oduro, Awal and Agyei 2014).

The zero-sum logic of power in politics within Ghana and Ivory Coast has perpetuated violence of different kinds. In Ghana, low-level electoral violence manifests itself across the country as political elites compete for centres of power. Elites have been complicit in inciting violence and intimidation to ensure their political success. This also fuels a governance approach that focuses on short- to medium-term goals confined by electoral cycles rather than on longer-term structural change of conditions that fuel inter-group competition and violence, particularly in the north. In Ivory Coast, the relatively peaceful electoral process in 2015 is promising, and the election of Ouattara for a second term has enabled a timeline for longer-term change. The split from Ouattara's presidential campaign of key PDCI allies and the persistent hard-line of the pro-Gbagbo FPI poses a threat to stability if political competition becomes polarised or narratives reinforce societal divisions.

Electoral politics and political exclusions in both countries remain deeply gendered, with the political spheres reinforcing the hegemonic power of masculinities. Darkwa (2011) argues that electoral violence against women, experienced in both contexts, is a manifestation of structural inequalities that women face in accessing political space and public life. It can be understood as a way of enforcing rules of participation with the threat, or reality, of punishing those that go against accepted patriarchal norms. Patriarchy, social inequalities and gender stereotyping are some of the root causes preventing women from participating in public and political life in Ghana and Ivory Coast. They need to be addressed beside policy reform to ensure greater political representation, and for women and other marginalised groups' voices

to be heard in addressing structural violence and extreme and systematic inequality that can lead to political violence (Fox *et al.* 2011).

In both countries, traditional land ownership disputes and electoral violence intersect as politicians manipulate political narratives to gain support. In Ivory Coast, this is particularly resonant where politicians have successively achieved shifts in land ownership through policy and law. Political interests are then directly linked to land struggles and feed into cycles of protracted conflict, particularly in western Ivory Coast and Ghana's Northern region.

### 5.2.3 Riots and protests

In Ghana, riots and protests account for the largest number of violence events in the period between 1997 and 2015 (ACLED data), the largest proportion of which occurred between 2012 and 2015. Until 2014, Ghana had one of Africa's fastest-growing economies based on its exports of gold, cocoa and oil. Economic growth was nearly 15 per cent in 2011, when prices were high for gold, cocoa and oil, but had fallen by 2015 to just 4 per cent (IMF 2015). Ghana is implementing a three-year aid deal with the IMF to restore fiscal balance. Ghanaians are wary of the conditions attached to IMF support, and opposition protests to the deal reflected a concern for perceived draconian controls (Reuters 2016).

The falling performance of the economy is blamed on mismanagement, which has led to sharp currency depreciation, deteriorating macroeconomic imbalance, rising inflation and interest rates, unemployment and lack of housing, and a power crisis. It has become a matter of serious concern to citizens and the government. As reflected in the 2014 and 2015 ACLED data, these developments, including hikes in public utilities tariffs in 2015, have angered citizens and precipitated civil action such as strikes by organised groups and multiple demonstrations to register displeasure about the current trend of events. These are important demands citizens are making on the state, and are underpinned by a strong civil society and normative commitment to democratic freedoms of association; however, this context also presents a risk to peace if the government does not engage with the public to resolve these issues.

As presented in Figure 5.5, above, spikes in riots and protests in 2012 and 2015 correspond with a highly contested election in 2012, and the lead-up to the 2016 elections. In 2012, politically motivated demonstrations centred on Accra, where opposition protesters gathered in response to alleged election fraud, both ahead of and following the elections; concern was targeted at the Electoral Commission (Fischer 2016). In light of a petition to the Supreme Court, the NPP made a public statement that it would not resort to violence, asserting that this would not be an effective means to improve democratic practice and reinforce the role of the courts (BBC 2012). In 2013, the Supreme Court dismissed the petition, and the election result was not overturned. In the presidential election scheduled for December 2016, President John Mahama is expected to face a close race against opposition leader Nana Akufo-Addo of the NPP. Voter registration exercises were ongoing throughout 2015 and were flashpoints for protest. Members of the opposition protested to demand a new electoral roll, claiming that the current roll was bloated with ineligible voters. Clashes with police took place as they acted to enforce a court injunction that banned opposition protesters from entering the offices of the Electoral Commission (Reuters 2015).

In Ivory Coast, public protest has become intertwined with expressions of anger and relates to civil expression and social unrest in the late 1990s, early 2000s, and the 2010 elections. Ivory Coast's experience of political protest has been embedded in violent realities and conflict narratives. Riots and protests played a significant role in social unrest starting in the 1990s and early 2000s. These were organised by Gbagbo's opposition FPI, in particular with the support of the Student Federation of Ivory Coast (FESCI). Following the outbreak of civil war in September 2002, former FESCI leaders – members of Blé Goudé's Young Patriots (COJEP) – organised regular protests in Abidjan in support of the Gbagbo regime.

The RDR organised protests in support of Ouattara's contested nomination as leader of the party and in response to many of its senior members being imprisoned in 1999 (IRIN 1999a; IRIN 1999b). In 2010–11 this became intertwined with post-election violence and oppression when pro-Ouattara protesters demonstrating over the controversy around election results were met with live ammunition and grenades. Earlier political violence had not met this level of aggression from the state, reportedly killing dozens (HRW 2011). The situation escalated in March 2011 when security forces loyal to Gbagbo used heavy weapons to disperse protesters. On 3 March in Abobo, they used heavy machine guns against a group of women who were demonstrating peacefully in support of Ouattara, killing seven and seriously wounding many others (UNOCI 2011).

Since 2013, public protests in Abidjan and across the country have taken place in response to the peace and reconciliation process led by Ouattara's government, including protests led by former combatants over the slow progress of reintegration programmes. In 2014 widespread discontent over unpaid benefits among thousands of former rebels, now officially integrated into the army, sparked off a series of demonstrations and blockades in Abidjan, as well as in other major towns (ICG 2012).

The wave of unrest highlights some of the obstacles facing Ivory Coast in the process of demobilising and reintegrating 97,000 former rebel combatants into society (ICG 2012: 4). Due to poor government coordination and inadequate funding, this process has made little progress, as rising unemployment and social exclusion among former rebels seem to confirm (Corey-Boulet 2013). Protests, however, have not been limited to former combatants; public service workers, including doctors and workers in the energy sector, staged separate protests in 2014 and 2015 to demand attention from the executive (ACLED 2014; UNSC 2015; UNSC 2016). The combination of former combatants and public service workers demonstrating at the same time reflects the combined pressure being placed on the government to address popular grievances.

Although political violence has been decreasing, and arguably the turn to protesting with minimal violent clashes reflects an acceptance of peaceful and democratic norms within the military and the population, the slowdown in the reintegration process and unrest among former combatants have raised serious doubts over the country's domestic stability. Ouattara has been criticised for not doing enough to heal deep ethnic and political divisions (ACLED 2014). In 2015 this was further reflected in protests against extortion by soldiers in communities, including recently when it resulted in violent clashes and a number of civilian deaths (UNSC 2016).

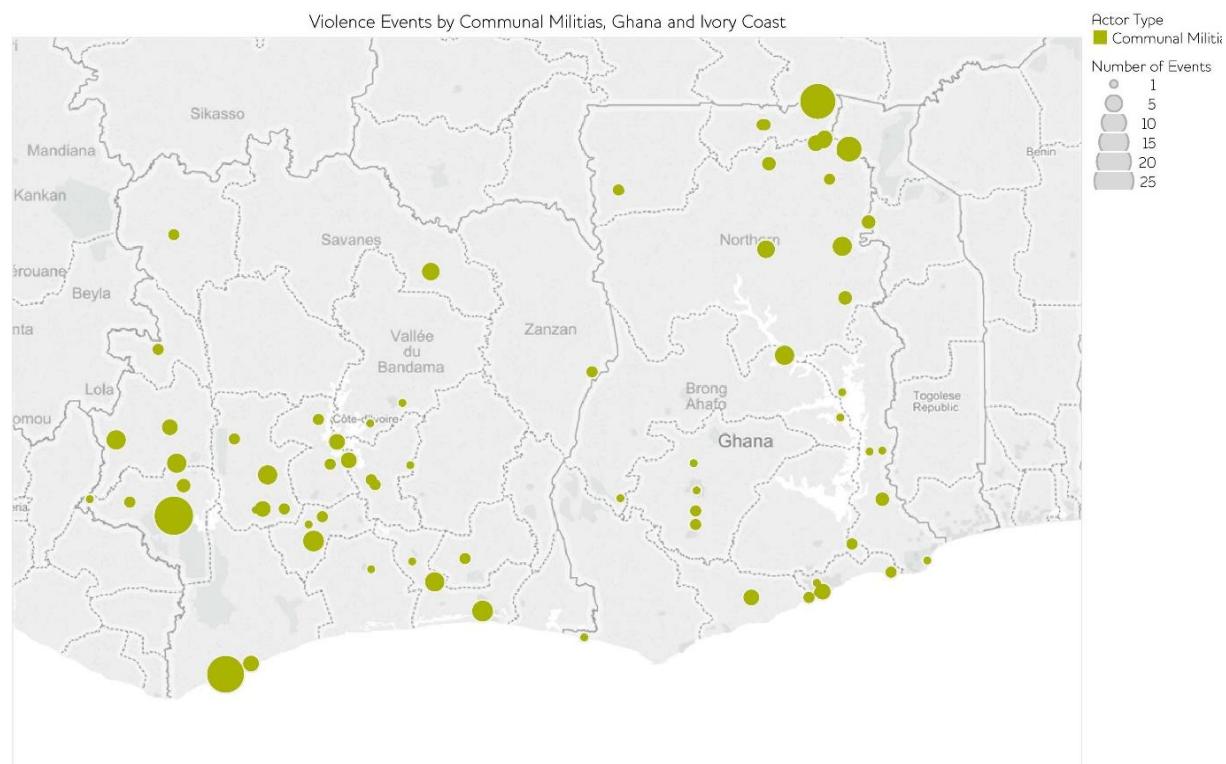
Protests can be seen in these contexts as a mechanism for citizens to express their concerns and to drive socioeconomic and political change. In Ivory Coast this reflects a change in the political settlement towards establishing legitimate actors who can be held to account. Within Ghana this has been an important foundation of democratic norms. However, in both contexts there is a risk that protest can manifest itself in the form of violence and rioting. A group that needs special attention and targeting in Ghana and Ivory Coast are young people. Due to high youth unemployment, many young people are easily mobilised and in Ivory Coast politicians and military leaders have manipulated them. In Ghana this has been more prevalent in the periods around elections when zero-sum politics take precedent and party foot soldiers are mobilised to secure votes. The process of claiming of incentives offered by political elites for this service has erupted into riots when these have not been secured, as well as clashes between factions from different parties when results have been announced (Fox *et al.* 2011). In Ivory Coast, this has been the case in relation to the repressive response of the military, and most recently in relation to demands for compensation that had been promised for participating in the 2010–11 post-election violence to secure Ouattara's presidency, as well as in clashes between ruling and opposition party protesters ahead of the 2015 general elections.

These trajectories of social unrest demonstrate the importance of providing space for democratic norms to grow through citizen participation. Increasing frustrations articulated through public protest require effective government responses; or face a risk of fomenting violence. In both cases the manifestation of social exclusion, unemployment and a perceived bias within government has been a visible cause of unrest.

#### 5.2.4 Communal violence

Intercommunal violence is concentrated in areas where tensions over resources, land and claims for recognition of ethnic identity are prominent. As outlined in Figure 5.6 below, in Ghana a large proportion of this violence occurs in the Northern region where heterogeneity of ethnic groups intersects with the powerful institution of chieftaincy. In the fertile western and southwestern areas of Ivory Coast, violence has centred on claims to land rights between migrants from the north and neighbouring countries, and indigenous groups who have been left with a sense of dispossession. Communal violence makes up a larger share of the overall conflict profile in Ghana (over one-third of violence events) than in Ivory Coast (8.2 per cent), but the issue remains volatile and potentially explosive in both countries.

**Figure 5.6 Violence events by communal militias, Ghana and Ivory Coast (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

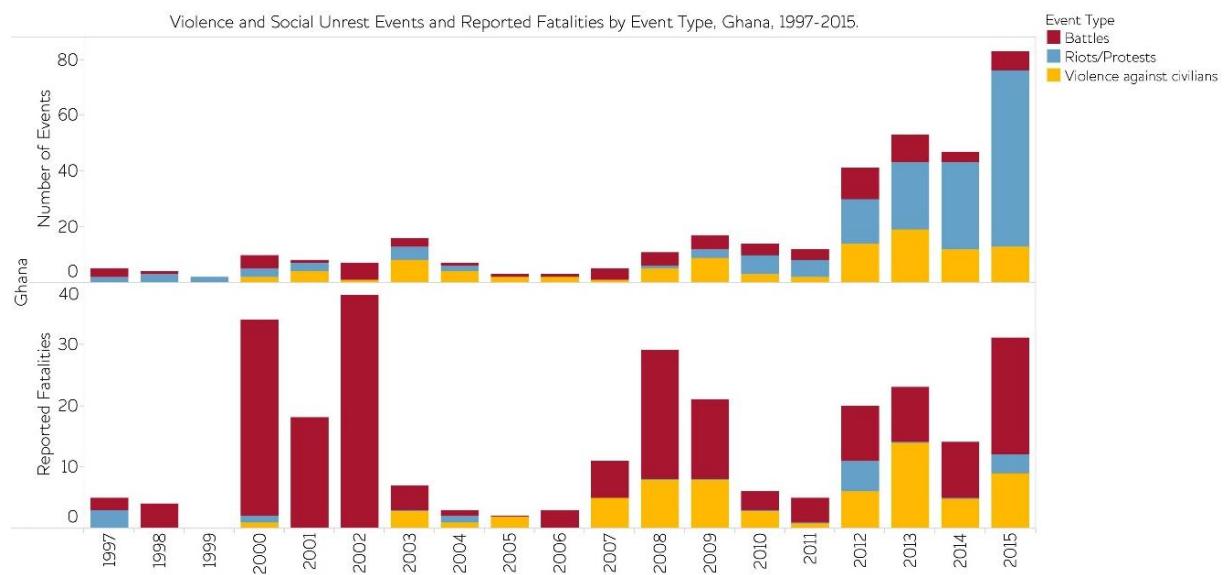
In Ivory Coast, ethnicity has historically been mobilised to secure political power at the national level. As outlined earlier, to secure his regime, Bédié sought to mobilise the concept of Ivoirité and land tenure (land law of 1998). Houphouët-Boigny's policies relating land ownership to those who made the land 'productive' set the foundation for contentious claims over land rights in the southwestern cocoa regions. Under the *tutorat* system, migrants gained access to land in exchange for offering their labour or annual payments to indigenous groups who retained moral authority over the land (Klaus and Mitchell 2015).

Following the 1998 land law, as radicalisation and political violence spread outside of the political sphere – especially in the press, among intellectuals and students – this led to direct confrontation in rural areas between indigenous and migrant communities and the mobilisation of urban youth. Contentious land claims escalated and intercommunal violence over land occurred in the west where historically and economically the balance of power had favoured migrants (ICG 2014a). Critical episodes of intercommunal violence broke out in November 1999 in the southwestern region of Tabou, from where 15,000 Burkinabe and northern Ivoirians were expelled (Vidal 2003). The process was closely intertwined with the wider political dynamics in the lead-up to Ivory Coast's civil war in 2002–03, and which re-emerged in the post-election violence of 2010–11. Duékoué, an important strategic town in the western region, has been a site of intercommunal violence. In June 2005, dozens of villagers – mostly ethnic Guérés – were attacked in night raids in two nearby villages, Petit Duékoué and Guitrozon. Homes were burned down, men, women and children were killed, and thousands displaced. Ivorian northerners and Dozo, traditional hunters associated with the Malinké community, were accused of carrying out the massacre.

In Ghana, there is a critical relationship between chieftaincy, paramountcy and land disputes (Jonsson 2009; Awedoba 2010), which manifests itself in intra- and inter-communal violence. This typology of violence is present nationwide but particularly in Ghana's Northern region (Kendie 2010). The region is home to around 17 ethnic groups (Pul 2003) that perceive themselves as indigenous. Chieftaincy and ethnic conflicts often manifest themselves in issues of succession to chiefship positions, claims to land, territorial boundaries and superior/subordinate claims (Canterbury and Kendie 2010; Awedoba 2010; Tonah 2007). According to Brukum (2001), most of these conflicts are best described as 'wars of emancipation', grounded in the claiming of political recognition, redistribution of land and resources, and establishment of a premise of equality for groups historically marginalised through the colonial administration of paramountcy and territories. Politics in Northern region have been dominated by the murder in 2002 of the paramount chief of the Dagomba, the *yana*, followed by an extended intra-ethnic succession crisis that disrupted major investments in the region and threatened national democratic consolidation (Oelbaum 2010).

Awedoba (2009) catalogues the consequences of violent conflict at the community level, which include heavy loss of life, injury to civilians, destruction of public and personal property, ruined social relations, breakdown of inter-ethnic marriages, polarisation of social life, and exodus of community members to safe areas. This violence has a lasting impact that is gendered. Women who were displaced from the 1994 Konkomba–Nanumba conflict in Ghana interviewed in 2008 outlined that the ongoing disruption of social systems, fear of isolation, and lack of food or other resources forced them to seek shelter and security away from their homes. These internally displaced women were afraid and ashamed to return home, because their villages and social infrastructures had been destroyed and livelihood opportunities lost (McGadney-Douglass and Ahadzie 2008). Spikes in inter-communal violence of this nature account for high levels of reported fatalities, illustrated in Figure 5.7, between 2001 (Upper East) and 2002 (Northern). The Kusasi–Mamprusi conflict in Bawku in the Upper East region has been a flashpoint of violent conflict since 1980. It is a deep-seated and long-standing ethno-political conflict between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups and revolves around claims over traditional political power (chieftaincy) (Mahama 2010). In 2001, dozens of people were killed when factions clashed in a battle apparently sparked off by a relatively small crime, but which fuelled a cycle of escalation and reprisal attacks (IRIN 2008).

**Figure 5.7 Violence and social unrest events and reported fatalities by event type, Ghana (1997–2015)**



Source: ACLED.

As Jonsson (2007) outlines, perceptions of the legitimacy of inter-group relations are not static but dynamic. Negative experiences of conflict, changing patterns of minority and majority block mobilisation, increasing Konkomba political participation and Ghana's era of stability and economic improvement all decreased the perceived desirability and viability of violent change. Conflicts have taken place in periods of economic instability and democratic transition, confirming the dangers of perceived state ambiguity and weakness (Akwetey 1996). Routes for building status other than chieftaincy have opened up to minority elites, creating incentives for rather than against compromise, and the struggle over the creation of new districts has moved into a discursive arena if not into a narrowly political one. Yet there is a danger in depending on ameliorating circumstances rather than institutionalised procedures to avoid future conflict.

Further inter-ethnic conflict in the north has been avoided through a combination of NGO peace negotiations and awareness-raising efforts, and other positive external factors. However, basic risk factors, such as the tying of land ownership to ethnicity and neo-traditional institutions, and the ethnic exclusiveness of these institutions, have not been resolved. The Regional House of Chiefs and National House of Chiefs, charged by the constitution with dealing with 'traditional' disputes, have proved unable to accommodate the demands of minority group chiefs for representation and become an arena for inter-ethnic dialogue. Similarly, they have failed to resolve intra-ethnic disputes of Dagbon, for example, which also threaten the peace of Northern region (Jonsson 2007).

The state struggles to deal effectively with chieftaincy conflicts: the tendency is to withdraw to avoid being seen as partisan, and to be overly dependent on military operations, coupled with ineffective investigative commissions, leading to conflict freezing (Jonsson 2007). A non-interventionist stance, while aiming at neutrality, leaves the state with insufficient institutional capacity to intervene proactively. There is an urgent need to draw on the perspectives of local actors to promote more permanent solutions to Northern region conflicts that are sensitive to the region's specific historical background.

In Ghana and Ivory Coast, intercommunal violence constitutes a protracted form of conflict grounded in contradictions between indigenous modes of organising social and political life, and increasing inter-group competition. Where intercommunal violence is prevalent, the state is often perceived as ambiguous or weak, and violence has escalated as a way of filling a gap. In seeking to build an inclusive and peaceful nation state, intercommunal violence must not be neglected. There is a risk that marginalisation of land disputes to 'regional' issues in Ghana's Northern region and increasingly in western Ivory Coast will mean that government actors are not held accountable for transformative change. Groups in these regions need to be meaningfully empowered to address issues in a locally relevant way that includes marginalised groups. Investment in the socioeconomic development of these regions can help provide non-violent pathways for those affected by the conflicts. Reconciliation is necessary to address the root causes of the violence in both settings; however, the specificities of each context need to be taken into account.

### **5.2.5 State-produced insecurity**

Some refugees are afraid to go back to Ivory Coast fearing FRCI reprisals. The refugees believe that the majority of soldiers in the army are former rebels who backed Ouattara. The Ivorian army has been accused of committing abuses, including arbitrary arrests and torture (Adele 2015). This is also relevant for refugees living in Liberia, where outbreaks of intercommunal and rebel-led violence have continued. There is no chance of stabilising western Ivory Coast unless Liberia is associated with any settlement. This makes the task even more complex.

## **6 Cross-regional trends in violence dynamics and peace-building**

### **6.1 Peace-building and violence mitigation in Kenya and Uganda**

The preceding analysis has revealed that in Kenya and Uganda the idea of the rule of law as important to pre-empting, managing and resolving violence emanating from diverse actors has taken root. However, both countries emerge from histories in which institutions such as the judiciary have not operated independently of the political elite, thus leaving them prone to mistrust. The management of electoral crises are cases in point: in Kenya in 2013 and Uganda in 2016, even when there were fairly robust legal frameworks to address possible constitutional crises such as those created by contested presidential elections, it was not the letter of the law that mattered, but larger considerations about the impact of court decisions on national stability, and therefore the stability of the region.

For example in Kenya, one of the arguments made by the attorney-general, as an *amicus curiae*, was for the court to make a judgment not based on the fact that there were indeed problems with the conduct of the elections and therefore the results, but to do so based on whether the problems were grave enough to have altered the outcome (Odote and Musumba 2016). In Uganda, following Museveni's announcement as the winner of the election the main opposition challenger, Besigye, was kept under house arrest and his party officials were harassed. These factors made it technically impossible for the party to use legal channels to pursue their grievances (Conor 2016). If political elite machinations affect the ability of the elite to either use the rule of law effectively or abuse it, then the likelihood of members of the society belonging to other social strata seeing the courts and the judiciary as viable institutions to reduce violence is minimal.

Kenya and Uganda have long histories of civil society organising and interventions on peace-building, conflict management and community reconstruction. While larger international NGOs support and run some of this work, a number of violence reduction initiatives emphasise pre-existing models of conflict resolution as key to re-building societies. Mat Oput in northern Uganda and the Tecla Lorupe Peace Foundation in Karamoja in Kenya are examples of these home-grown initiatives. It must be noted though that most of these models in drawing on 'traditional approaches' end up re-inscribing gender power hierarchies that may have been destroyed by conflict rather re-defining them.

The trends observed above have a number of policy implications. The first overarching policy proposition concerns creating strong institutions that have the capacity to effectively mediate violence events where they occur. First, in Kenya and Uganda building a judiciary that is removed from executive capture as well election management bodies that can be relied on to mediate elections in ways that strengthen democratic processes rather than polarise society.

Second, and connected to the above, is the role of security sector reform as a critical intervening process in how the state mediates violence events when they occur across actors, whether they are political militias or national responses to radicalisation and/or extremist attacks. Both countries have adopted half-hearted security reform processes that have been primarily geared towards building capacities and capabilities rather than transforming attitudes about and perceptions of security provision, which in turn influence responses. The staggered approach to security sector reform is located in the historical relationship between security forces and regimes on the one hand and citizens on the other hand, which has failed to transform dramatically. In Uganda, reform processes are cosmetic, while in Kenya significant gains are slowly being eroded.

Third, foregrounding how women's bodily autonomy is threatened by violence means focusing on women's experiences of actors and violence. Paying attention to how masculinities and femininities are used in the service of the regimes through young wings of political parties and the legitimacy of violence as a language to claim space creates a robust approach to understanding how intersectional identities are forged and what to account for in resourcing work to reduce violence.

Finally, the growth of violent extremist groups has complicated state- and nation-making processes in the region by subsuming and co-opting legitimate demands for equity and territorial integrity. State responses to countering violent extremism mask larger democratisation demands in society. In effect terror and extremism become metaphors for opposition and dissenting voices. The interplay between regime security, patronage and counter-terrorism debates is important. Consequently choices are made about which violence matters: is it the economic violence sustained by the state or the death and carnage wrought by violent extremist groups, which statistically are lower than the former? It is essential that policy responses do not externalise the debate on conflict management, which is key to state and national cohesion.

## **6.2 Peace-building and violence mitigation in Ghana and Ivory Coast**

Efforts to address and mitigate violence have occurred in direct and indirect forms in Ghana and Ivory Coast, including explicit violence reduction measures in response to conflict, as well as political, economic and social action undertaken to prevent or reduce future violence.

For sustained peace and democracy, the military must be subject to the democratically elected government without reserve and hold a strong attachment to the values of the state. In Ivory Coast, this requires the army to be subject to continued reforms, training and adequate administration. A depoliticised, ethnically inclusive and neutral army would be one focused on its primary mission of safeguarding national security (Sidibé 2013). This is essential in regions where during conflict the military has been implicated in or held directly responsible for crimes against civilians based on ethnicity, nationality and religion (UNSC 2016). Currently, the dominance of FRCI soldiers continues to create tensions in some areas, linked to the history and narratives of the conflict. Challenges also remain regarding gender balance (UNSC 2016).

Progress in handing over security functions from the military to the police has been made; however, effectiveness is hampered by Ivory Coast's over-centralised governance structure, which constrains operations at the local level (UNSC 2016). The government has made some progress in security sector reform by disarming tens of thousands of former combatants who fought during the crisis. However, efforts have focused predominantly on combatants affiliated with Gbagbo. It is argued that the former rebels of the New Forces should be disarmed to guarantee that their weapons are not used by new groups coming together in an uncontrolled fashion and harming collective security. Employment and development projects are critical for ensuring that disarmed combatants find future non-violent pathways (Sidibé 2013; HRW 2015).

Ghana's successful reform of the security sector following the transition of the Rawlings regime from military government to elected representatives was critical to sustaining and consolidating democracy (Hutchful 2003). However, while reforms were successful in suppressing the abusive political influence of the military, they lacked transparency or public input, which led to the military being perceived as partisan. Furthermore, the police force was neglected and there was little reform of the legal system, which led to a sense of impunity for security forces (Hutchful 2003), an important lesson for the Ivory Coast context. The professionalism and legitimacy of the Ghanaian military has been enhanced by its prominent

role in peacekeeping initiatives within ECOWAS and its contribution to UN missions in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, Lebanon and DRC (Throup 2011).

The creation and maintenance of effective CSOs and IGIs are seen as safeguarding peace and democracy in Ghana. IGIs have helped promote civic education and democratic temperance, for example, through the National Commission for Civic Education established in 1993. These underlying features exemplify a deepening democratic institutionalisation. The law courts have gained popular and elite acceptance as legitimate avenues to settle differences between contending political factions (Oduro *et al.* 2014). In contrast, in Ivory Coast the relative underdevelopment of these institutions is a major challenge for efforts aimed at democratic consolidation and the prevention or resolution of violence.

In Ivory Coast the establishment of regional security councils in bringing together state and non-state actors, such as civil society, has the potential to be an important mechanism to decentralise security services and address community-based insecurity. However, the effectiveness of these councils has been undermined by a deficit of trust, including between communities and security institutions, between civil administration and security institutions, and among the various services of the security apparatus (UNSC 2016).

Committees and commissions of enquiries to investigate conflicts with the aim of finding a resolution have also been important features of both conflict environments. The Dialogue, Truth and Reconciliation Commission (CDVR) in Ivory Coast, created in July 2011, aims to search for truth in the Ivorian crisis and situate responsibilities, as well as hearing from victims, the authors of atrocities and witnesses to the political and military crisis. Despite the investment in this process, the lack of published findings from the commission's report has hampered momentum. In 2015, Ouattara issued an executive order establishing the National Commission for Reconciliation and Compensation of Victims (CONARIV), which is mandated to register all unidentified victims of the Ivorian crises in 2002–03 and 2010–11 and their entitled beneficiaries, and propose compensation measures to repair the harm suffered or the restitution of property to all victims. Research by CSOs within CONARIV's consultation process found that victims had expressed the need to prioritise those who were most marginalised and vulnerable, and that reparation need to go beyond compensation to include psychosocial support, rehabilitation, education for children and symbolic reparations (ICTJ 2016).

The ICC can play an important role in ensuring accountability for the violent and repressive acts committed during this period. However, from the outset, the Ivory Coast government and civil society have outlined the importance of domestic trials in this effort. This is because the ICC will only take on a few specific cases; trials conducted domestically can have greater resonance with affected populations when conducted according to international standards; and local accountability efforts can help maximise the reconstruction of respect for the rule of law. In June 2011, Ouattara created a task force of judges and prosecutors – the Special Investigative and Examination Cell – to spearhead efforts to pursue those responsible for post-election crimes (HRW 2016).

The legitimacy of the reconciliation process has been questioned over the past five years. Some interlocutors have noted that judicial proceedings at national and international levels have predominantly focused only on violations allegedly perpetrated by Gbagbo and allies during the crisis of 2010–11, and have not addressed the issue of violence committed by actors under the Ouattara banner, contributing to perceptions of victors' justice and impunity (UNSC 2016). Opposition figures have denounced this as perpetuating one-sided justice. With increased resources in 2014 and 2015 more than 20 people, including high-level commanders from both sides, were charged by national courts. The importance of an impartial, fair and independent system in ensuring justice has been shown in the trial of former first lady Simone Gbagbo who, although convicted for crimes against the state, strongly questioned the legitimacy of proceedings (HRW 2016).

In Ghana, inter- and intra-ethnic disputes that have their origins in the struggle for chieftaincy positions are destabilising large parts of the country and threatening development. The diversity of culture and tradition means that there are no acceptable and uniform means of selecting chiefs in the country. Resolutions to these conflicts are likely to be found through indigenous approaches, given that they are grounded in a traditional source. Traditional methods may also promote a more dialogic and conciliatory approach than the courts, which polarise the conflict further (Bukari 2013; MacLean 2004). However, it is critical that space is made for women and young people, as their voices are often excluded from these processes as a result of patriarchal constructions (Fox et al. 2011; Bukari 2013). The Houses of Chiefs could play a vital role in settling these disputes, but only if they are balanced, representative, credible and efficient. They would require more funding to undertake the traditional settlement procedures they have been charged with and could take on; but a precondition for such investment is that they have the trust and support of all of the people involved, including minority ethnic groups and women, who have historically been excluded from these sites of political decision-making and conflict resolution (Jonsson 2007).

Ghana's constitutional provisions and other features of the country's political settlement, including those to ensure regional and ethnic balance and to prevent the formation of parties on ethnic or regional lines, seem to have been an important conflict-prevention strategy. The empowerment of minority and marginalised ethnic groups within substantive local decision-making structures has also provided pathways and platforms for the interests of these groups to have been brought into the political sphere. The strength of localised structures and strong social networks in Ghana meant that when the state retracted or weakened this was countered with alternative sources of social cohesion, whereby horizontal solidarities were strengthened (Hutchful 2003).

In Ivory Coast the 2010–11 post-election crisis triggered the displacement of around 300,000 Ivorian refugees to Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mali and Togo, with Liberia hosting some 220,000 refugees at the peak of the crisis. There are also 300,000 IDPs, primarily in Abidjan and the west of the country (UNSC 2016). If strategies are not in place to support positive resettlement, the return of Ivorian refugees from neighbouring countries risks exacerbating land disputes and intercommunal clashes over socio-political marginalisation of different groups, and historical claims to land and control. Significantly, an estimated 700,000 people in Ivory Coast are stateless or at risk of becoming stateless, or lack the documents required to prove their nationality. As a consequence, a large segment of society is ineligible for access to basic services. The government has ratified all international conventions concerning statelessness, and also reformed legislation to allow stateless people and others born in the country to apply for citizenship if they have lived in Ivory Coast for over a decade. However, implementation remains a challenge (UNSC 2016).

Economic policies and programmes explicitly targeting social and regional inequalities also have an important role to play. The prevalence and protracted nature of land-related disputes rooted in the evolution of socio-political and economic relations between indigenous and migrant communities are major obstacles to rural livelihood security in western Ivory Coast and Ghana's Northern region. Effective land reform policies can consolidate progress towards sustainable peace and sustain peace over the long term. To be meaningful, however, land reforms or policies need to be accessible to all groups. Pritchard (2016) argues that the cost and complexity of mandatory certification procedures under the Ivory Coast Rural Land Law of 1998 undermines the capacities of rural, conflict-affected households and displaced people to adopt the law (Pritchard 2016).

A group that needs special attention and targeting in Ghana and Ivory Coast is young people. Due to high youth unemployment, many young people are easily mobilised, and politicians and military leaders in Ivory Coast have manipulated them. In Ghana, young people have clashed with police in demonstrations over public service provision as well as

their long-standing involvement in political mobilisation. In Ivory Coast, while economic growth is strong, averaging 9 per cent annually since 2012, a large proportion of the youth population has yet to fully benefit from the country's prosperity. Government officials have recognised that this could be a destabilising factor (UNSC 2016). It is vital to design and implement empowerment, employment and education policies aimed at this important group. This should not be purely a response to their 'destabilising potential', but rather acknowledge their right to security, development and political participation in the future of their society.

Post-conflict reconstruction efforts within West Africa have historically focused on security, physical infrastructure and economic development rather than gendered human security issues. However, gender-informed strategies are needed to improve the safety, health and wellbeing of men, women and children in conflict-affected settings. As Ivory Coast builds peace, the issue of violence against women cannot be ignored. Ivory Coast would benefit from increased policy and programming attention to the different types of violence in conflict-affected countries, including sexual violence in conflict perpetrated by combatants, but also intimate partner violence against women, which was reported as higher during the Ivory Coast post-election crisis. During periods of conflict, findings show that both sexes are subjected to various forms of sexual violence. There is concern that the discourse used in examining wartime sexual violence perpetuates a male perpetrator and female victim paradigm, which is incomplete and harmful to male victims (Blay-Tofey and Lee 2015).

In Ghana, the impact of electoral violence on women's empowerment and participation in political life needs to be considered (Hossain *et al.* 2014). Despite high numbers of women voting in elections, women's participation in representative politics is low, with 10 per cent of members of Parliament being women, which restricts inclusive and equitable democratic consolidation in the country and sustains violent power inequalities (Commonwealth Secretariat 2012). The reconstruction period in Ivory Coast is an opportunity to recalibrate gendered norms in political leadership, and should be an important consideration in inclusive development of institutions at the local level, in an effort to respond to disempowerment and abuse due to the gender inequalities in social, educational, and economic domains. The impact of conflicts on vulnerable groups, including those displaced and returning to their communities, also needs to be recognised.

## 7 Conclusions

In this section, we draw on the analyses presented in the previous sections to critically evaluate dominant assumptions about the causes of and solutions to violence in and across the different focal settings and from a cross-regional perspective. We also highlight the significance of historically and geographically contextualised approaches in understanding and mitigating violence, and discuss key findings, practical lessons and policy propositions that we believe can make an important contribution to progress toward SDG 16 targets. These are summarised in Box 7.1.

### Box 7.1 SDG 16 select targets

- Promote the rule of law at national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.
- Reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets, and combat all forms of organised crime.
- Reduce corruption and bribery.
- Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.
- Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
- Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.
- Provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.
- Ensure transparency, public access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms.
- Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, and build capacity at all levels to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.
- Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.

### 7.1 A contextual approach to understanding and reducing violence

AMV research has shown that a central assumption that underlies attempts to develop a normative set of goals on reducing violence and building peace is that a common set of drivers, failures, situations and processes related to development cause violent conflict. A high-level ‘best practice’ consensus has emerged, reflected in SDG 16 targets, that reducing violence therefore requires building resilience through a set of key policy interventions, namely those that create legitimate institutions (often through the crafting of political settlements); that it is necessary to establish mechanisms to increase access to justice and security systems; and that it is necessary to reduce poverty by extending employment and other economic opportunities (Lind *et al.* 2016: 3).

These goals imply that violent places need to evolve to be more similar, in terms of governance, justice and security and economic characteristics, to places that are already peaceful and stable. While these very broad principles can inform violence reduction efforts and are important goals, they are less useful in formulating short- and medium-term approaches to addressing and mitigating violence in particular countries and regions. Furthermore, just as no single pathway or set of circumstances leads to violence, there is no single pathway to building peace. While patterns of violence may appear similar across different contexts, violence dynamics, and therefore appropriate and effective means to address and mitigate violence, are highly context dependent, and will vary at national and sub-national levels.

The optimal design of institutions or programmatic approaches is therefore never an absolute that can be transported from one context to another as a whole or with equal efficacy. Rather, approaches need to be flexible in response to political conditions and trends, and

must take in to account stakeholders' framings and perceptions of these in places where violence is a way of life (Lind *et al.* 2016). Rather than identifying a standard formula or approach to building peaceful and inclusive societies in all countries, AMV research indicates that there is no one-size-fits-all method of reducing violence. In place of uniform approaches, we recognise that reducing violence requires identifying more contextually specific best-fit political and institutional arrangements, based on detailed analysis of violence dynamics and reduction efforts in particular places (Lind *et al.* 2016).

At the same time, it is also important to understand how particular dynamics that emerge in different settings and different scales can coalesce in relation to common themes, topics, actors and processes. Understanding, in comparative or contrastive perspective, a range of ways in which violence patterns are, have been or can be associated with, for example, historical processes of state-making, key groups of actors, types of social and political change, horizontal inequalities (across ethnic groups, regions, etc.) and other factors is incredibly useful. It gives substantive insights into why ostensibly different factors in different settings are associated with similar outcomes, or how similar circumstances can be associated with divergent outcomes, and situations in which the causes of violence are complex and overlapping. Approaches such as ours can facilitate the identification of a range of experiences, challenges and practices that can be useful in identifying best-fit approaches described above that can be adapted to specific needs with regards to addressing particular problems and violence settings.

Several key findings emerge from our preceding comparative analysis at the national and regional cluster levels, and have a direct bearing on insights for addressing SDG 16 targets. Our central findings are presented below, drawing on the previous analyses, from a cross-regional perspective.

## **7.2 Historical legacies of state-making contribute to contemporary landscapes of violence when they justify systematic exclusions**

Critically, the historical state-making processes and recent trajectories of violence across all cases examined here point to the importance of looking beyond superficial conflict dynamics. Violent conflict is not inevitable in multi-ethnic settings, nor does strong collective national identity preclude violence. The instrumentalisation of politicised ethnic identity, with roots in colonial governance structures, can be used to justify inequitable resource access and political exclusion. Similarly, strong postcolonial national identity discourses of citizenship and belonging can be used as a means to pit autochthons against groups labelled as outsiders or migrants. Both situations, particularly when politics is widely perceived as a winner-takes-all game, can lead to trajectories of violence. A historical understanding of what may appear on the surface to be ethnic or regional conflict, for example, reveals processes, relationships of power and agents involved in producing instability, insecurity and a lack of inclusion that dominant discourses of ethnicity, regionalism and 'tribal' antagonism conceal.

Our analysis reveals important ways in which long-lived patterns of structural violence and exclusion can intersect with processes of political and economic change, but also how to potentially avoid horizontal inequalities catalysing violence. For example, Ghana's constitutional provisions and other features of the country's political settlement, including those to ensure regional and ethnic balance, and to prevent the formation of parties on ethnic or regional lines, seem to have been an important conflict-prevention strategy. The empowerment of minority and marginalised ethnic groups within substantive local decision-making structures has also provided pathways and platforms for the interests of these groups to be brought into the political sphere. By understanding and unmasking these historical dynamics, and how different actors have used them or avoided these pitfalls, conflicts can be opened up and pathways for inclusive dialogue and building peace can be identified.

### **7.3 State and non-state actors play important and often complex roles in violence dynamics**

There is a tendency in conflict analysis to highlight non-state activity over the sometimes-violent actions of state forces themselves. Privileging non-state activity in violence analyses can lead to recommendations that centre on increasing capacity of national police or military forces as a short-term approach to violence reduction. None of the cases explored in this analysis are easily reduced to ‘failed’ or ‘fragile’ states in which the state is absent, or in which increased state policing or militarisation alone would be likely to address violence perpetuated by non-state actors or contribute to more peaceful outcomes. Rather, our analyses demonstrate that the state is an important actor in violence across all cases.

Rather than being in opposition to non-state violence actors, the state outsources violence to militia forces, in addition to sponsoring, funding and tacitly condoning their activities. This relationship makes it hard to draw a clear distinction between state and non-state forces in some cases. While some militia forces portray themselves as defence or vigilante units concerned with protecting their communities, the activities of many groups are also associated with abuses, use of excessive force, lack of transparency and accountability, and manipulation of informal forces for intimidation and violence around political processes.

There are particular issues around state violence in relation to responses to violent extremism. This form of violence is often specific and under-reported, linked to extra-judicial killings and disappearances in the guise of responding to violent extremism (IMLU 2015). For example, in Kenya, after efforts at security sector reform had gained significant ground in some countries, increasingly violent extremist attacks by Al-Shabaab in Kenya, the conflict in Somalia, and Kenya’s contribution to the AU mission there, have all provided a narrative to roll back these gains. This was illustrated in the process that led to the Security Laws Amendment Act in 2014.

Given the regional and global ramifications of violent extremism, the resources that have been pumped into the country and region generally have not been fully quantified, given the absence of full disclosure on defence and security budgets. However, there are concerns about buying armoured vehicles for national police while local police stations remain poorly equipped to respond to daily crimes. Furthermore, there are questions to be raised about the level of investments made in technology as a crime prevention mechanism, when that technology cannot be relied on in prosecutions, and the corresponding legal and investigative infrastructure is limited.

It is important to keep in mind that state responses to countering violent extremism can mask larger democratisation demands in society. In effect terror and extremism become metaphors for opposition and dissenting voices, and the interplay between regime security, patronage and counter-terrorism debates is important. This can justify widespread economic violence sustained by the state in the name of countering extremism. In this way these two forms of violence can be interrelated, and it is essential that policy responses do not externalise the debate on conflict management, which is key to state and national cohesion.

### **7.4 It is critical to understand how hyper-localised conflict systems and horizontal inequalities feed into broader national and international geographies of violence**

Our analyses demonstrate that even though poverty and inequality do not cause violence *per se*, insecurities, horizontal inequalities and exclusions figure prominently in violence dynamics across contexts. Nevertheless, violence, insecurity and the limits of inclusion are experienced differently in different countries and sub-regions, at different times, and by different communities and individuals. The goal of creating peaceful and inclusive societies

must be mindful of this varied experience, and take into account the full range of ways in which security and inclusion are undermined, threatened and damaged.

Throughout the report, sub-national analysis has revealed the varied geography of violence and insecurity: different forms of conflict may affect different regions or locations in discrete ways. The concentration of violence in particular locations, or among particular communities, points to the importance of understanding the dynamics and dimensions of often hyper-localised conflict systems. The drivers and triggers of conflict, its agents and sponsors, and the leaders and stakeholders best situated to address, resolve and mitigate it, are often context- and situation-specific. Much more time and energy should be dedicated to developing deep-seated contextual knowledge of how conflict systems at local, sub-regional, national and transnational levels operate and function.

Several analyses demonstrated the ways in which patronage networks and the political settlement processes are critical to maintaining certain forms of stability and security, although the nature of these local systems of buy-in means certain forms of exclusion, or limited inclusion, must arise from these arrangements. Critically, trajectories of violence pointed to the particular risks associated with volatility and shifts in political settlements. While poverty and exclusion may not always produce violent conflict, trajectories of violence and histories of state-making in all countries attested to the dangers associated with drastic shifts in who holds power, who has access to it, and how it is exercised and distributed across key elites. The history of decentralisation, devolution and state-making has also highlighted parallels in the way processes intended to devolve politics and increase popular proximity to power can also produce unintended consequences. By creating incentives for groups to compete for power and control over sub-national units with devolved resources, decentralisation and devolution processes have served as tools in political bargaining, and sometimes flashpoints of violent confrontation.

Often, certain forms of violence, including high-profile and high-priority violence that threatens national stability, are privileged in policy and framing, but this privileging obscures the profound ways in which communities and individuals experience insecurity and the threat of violence. Communal violence is of critical importance to understanding the dynamics of peaceful and inclusive societies. While national and international security agendas often focus on the most high-profile manifestations of insecurity – including transnational, Islamist or insurgent violence – the analysis presented here attests to the high level of insecurity, and particularly civilian vulnerability, that inter-communal violence has created in several countries. This form of violence is less likely to occur in areas with a high state presence: in other words, even where violence is relatively low, as in Ghana, state forces' intervention in inter-communal violence is comparatively limited. This factor, combined with the cyclical and reprisal attack dynamics common to many instances of inter-communal violence, contributes to relatively high fatality-to-event ratios in the case of this form of violence.

In practical terms, local, national and international stakeholders that are committed to building more peaceful and inclusive societies can contribute to this goal by first advocating for greater attention and recognition of the varied and complex nature of violence and insecurity, and recognising the multiple ways in which security is undermined in contemporary conflicts. Second, the same stakeholders can commit more time and resources to understanding the underlying drivers of these forms of violence and the cleavages along which they often occur, and working with affected communities to build peace and amplify their voices.

## **7.5 Gender-informed strategies for building inclusion will benefit the safety, health and wellbeing of men, women, boys and girls in conflict-affected settings**

The differential effects of violence are clearly evident through a gendered lens. The production and perpetuation of violent masculinities, particularly through political militias, point to the need to recognise the gendered ways in which the effects of violence are felt. By asking which bodies are killed, maimed, incarcerated or mobilised, violence reduction responses can begin to recognise how state force brutality, for instance, may play a particular role in criminalising poor, black, masculinities thereby generating more criminality rather than reducing it. In formulating gender-informed strategies to reduce violence, it is vital to design and implement empowerment, employment and education policies aimed at benefitting young men, which recognise and respond to the particular challenges that they face. This should not be purely a response to their ‘destabilising potential’, but rather acknowledge their rights to security, development and political participation in the future of their societies.

An understanding of the differential experiences – especially in terms of deliberate targeting and sexual and gender-based violence – in and the effects of violent conflict and post-conflict settlement on women and girls is also of central importance to the task of creating peaceful and inclusive societies. Legal and social structures that restrict women’s full and equal participation, such as restrictions on inheritance, can exacerbate the effects of violent conflict, and impede women and girls’ resilience and recovery from its impacts in different ways. As demonstrated in the Kenya analysis, post-conflict recovery efforts in the 2000s failed to effectively address gendered internal displacement, which is associated with landlessness, unemployment and poor compensation for labour, vulnerability to gender-based violence, susceptibility to HIV infection and a disproportionately gendered burden of caring for family members living with HIV/AIDS.

Post-conflict reconstruction efforts in West Africa have historically focused on security, physical infrastructure and economic development rather than gendered human security issues. Gender-informed strategies for identifying vulnerabilities and building social and economic inclusion are needed to improve the safety, health and wellbeing of men, women and children in conflict-affected settings.

## **7.6 Election cycles are flashpoints for violence, revealing the failure of formal democratic institutions to ensure inclusion**

Riots and protests have consistently increased across all four countries. This may attest to the emergence of (sometimes violent) political demonstrations as an increasingly relevant means of contestation and expression in these countries. The period covered in the ACLED analyses corresponds in some contexts with the opening up of democratic participation and representation, which may partially explain the increased salience of this means of civic engagement; although subsequent attempts to restrict public space and political participation have also provoked rioting and demonstrations, as is particularly apparent in Uganda. Combined with the analysis of militia violence, these forms of contestation reveal the limitations of formal democratic processes on their own in ensuring meaningful inclusion, or in promoting peaceful and secure societies.

Electoral cycles remain flashpoints of violence in all cases, with associated security issues ranging from unrest during mass demonstrations, to targeted, sponsored intimidation and violence. In such situations it is important to remember that violence is often used to silence or undermine forms of non-violent conflict that can lead to beneficial policy changes or focus attention on inequalities or abuses. In addressing violence around political election cycles, it is important to understand precisely how violence is precipitated or used politically in specific

situations. Neglecting this runs the risk of suppressing important forms of civic disruption and protest that are part of legitimate democratic practice in the focal national contexts.

As discussed in the West Africa analysis, the creation and maintenance of effective CSOs and IGIs can serve as a safeguard to peace and democracy when done effectively. For example, in Ghana IGIs have helped promote civic education and democratic temperance, deepening democratic institutionalisation. Law courts have gained popular and elite acceptance as legitimate avenues for settling differences between contending political factions. In contrast, in Ivory Coast the relative underdevelopment of these institutions is a major challenge to efforts at democratic consolidation and the prevention or resolution of violence.

## 7.7 Towards violence reduction: investing in knowledge and setting an inclusive agenda

There is no ‘silver bullet’ for violence reduction. As highlighted by Lind *et al.* (2016), understanding the landscape of violent conflict is increasingly complicated by transnational flows of money, arms and people. Different types of violence are often interlinked, and emerging forms of violent conflict are diffuse, involve new assemblages of actors, and entail changing roles for international, state and non-state actors, including members of conflict-affected communities. For national and international stakeholders who are responsible for making choices about where to concentrate conflict-resolution and conflict-mitigation resources, we advise that investing in expertise and knowledge of specific conflicts and conflict dynamics is important and worthwhile, particularly around the micro-dynamics of conflict and localised conflict systems.

Conventional research methodologies can be complemented by ground-level participatory research to co-produce knowledge of violence dynamics with diverse actors and groups that have played roles in conflicts or have intimate experience living with violence. Such research reveals important fault lines and dimensions along and in which conflict is likely to occur, and can help illuminate entry points and opportunities for violence mitigation and achieving justice. Successful policies and interventions, as detailed in the rest of the report, depend on such knowledge and insights. They can help guide strategies for creating inclusive policies, settlements and platforms for sustainable social dialogue that feed in to long-term goals of creating legitimate and democratic institutions, strengthening access to justice for all and extending resource access, economic opportunities and employment in ways that address persistent inequalities and historical patterns of injustice and exclusion.

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Institute of  
Development Studies

Brighton BN1 9RE

T +44 (0)1273 606261

F +44 (0)1273 621202

E [ids@ids.ac.uk](mailto:ids@ids.ac.uk)

[www.ids.ac.uk](http://www.ids.ac.uk)

