

The Nexus between domestic affairs and the success of African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). The case study of Ethiopia with particular emphasis of Ogaden Region of Ethiopia

Milil dushi lama dhayo.

Never dress a bad wound superficially.

__Somali proverb

Abstract

The existence of peace, security, stability and good governance is a prerequisite to achieve sustainable security and economic development in African. The much-touted African peace and security architecture is based on a broad set of instruments and normative frameworks which lay out a broad remit and vision. The implementation of the APSA depends on the actions and coordination between the African Union and the Regional Economic Communities and also a host of organs such as the African Standby Force, the Continental Early System, the African Peace Fund etc. Since the inception of the African Peace and Security Architecture, many studies and reports have sought to identify gaps and weaknesses which have prevent the APSA from achieving its potential. A common thread across these studies is the focus on the horizontal and vertical relations between the different components of the APSA, which has meant that the level of analysis has remained at the continental and regional level while neglecting the national level where conflicts occur and where issues of governance and human security play out. In other words, the success of the APSA depends on domestic peace, security and stability. Weak and fragile governance combined with securitization and militarization of political concerns invariably lead to intractable conflicts. This study will seek to explore and analyze how processes of securitization and militarization of mundane political demands and human security issues in the Ogaden region of Ethiopia have affected the wider Horn of Africa. Moreover, as this essay will argue, domestic policy towards Ogaden is “primarily generated from outside” i.e. Somalia. The usual standard is the influence of the domestic forms the basis of foreign strategy, overshadowing but not discounting remaining elements but in Ogaden context the influence of the foreign (Somalia) forms the basis of domestic policy , overshadowing but not excluding remaining elements.

The study would be based on the analysis of empirical data corroborated by secondary sources of information. It will show how the security prescriptions of the rulers of the central state in Ethiopia towards the region have remained remarkably counter-productive and have shaped the narrowly defined parameters of the state’s approach to national security issues. The study will seek to show that the APSA would be unsuccessful in the absence of a focus on national level dynamics and a willingness on the part of continental and regional level actors to encourage member states to adhere to African and regionally defined standards on governance.

Key word: human security, national security, Self-rule, human rights, Securitization, militarization, Ogaden

Madiba once said “freedom would be meaningless without security in the home and in the streets”

1. Introduction

The continent of Africa has immense potential as it has an extensive productive land mass and abundant mineral resource. Despite its potential, the continent today has numerous unresolved issues such as poverty, bad governance, poor leadership, disasters, crisis of nation building, gender inequality, food insecurity and violent conflicts among many other ills affecting the people. In several countries of Africa, there is evident suppression of freedoms, the violation of human rights and dignity of their people¹.

Attempts to prevent and resolve most of these conflicts and security challenges have not been successful. Consequently, Africa’s new zeal for security management has led to the establishment of a formal institutional framework for conflict management, the APSA in 2002. APSA has potential to play a significant role in promoting cross-cutting issues, such as human rights, in view of its objective to operationalize peace and security responses, including operational and structural conflict prevention. The issues are not, however, currently sufficiently mainstreamed, despite declarations proclaiming the opposite. The AU and the subregional organizations and member states need to put more action and capacity behind their rhetoric.

That said, crisis at national level in most African states particularly the Ethiopian experience towards its Ogaden region and people actually poses great challenges to APSA’s objectives and aspirations. Thus Ethiopia’s contribution to APSA would be unrealistic in the presence of gross violation of rights of its citizens and negligence of human security of the people at home. This is one of the critical issues that need to be addressed for the APSA agenda for stability on the continent to be successful.

2. Peace and Security in Africa: whose Security?

¹ Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, Elizabeth Choge-Nyangoro, Solomon Dersso, Brenda Mofya and Tim Murithi (2014) The African Peace and Security Architecture, A Handbook. 2014, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES), Addis Ababa Office and the African Union (AU)

Security is closely associated with the security of the state in Africa. In this sense, security is tied to territorial integrity, national security and state-centric welfare provision objectives rather than the individual and communities per se. In the early- to mid-1990s, however, a paradigmatic shift occurred wherein state security was problematized, and the individual became the locus of human security concerns. Thus the argument of this study is that state security can be achieved when the security of persons and people are secured too².

In the case of many African states, governments of Africa fail to provide public goods, such as domestic security³. Indeed, sometimes the state is merely a fiction (at least in certain parts of the world, including parts of Africa), and as an actor the state may be fuelling conflict and threatening human security. The consequences of the traditional conception of security in Africa have therefore been more keenly felt by way of internal repression. This is the sense in which “a concept of security grounded on interstate relations” turns the state itself into “a source of citizen insecurity” (Salih, 1999⁴: 127; Abutudu, 2001⁵). Thus, “rather than providing security for their citizens, states are frequently the instruments that destroy the security of their populations”⁶. Two decade ago, the UNDP pointed out that “for most people, a feeling of insecurity arises more from worries about daily life than from the dread of a cataclysmic world event”. Security, for them, is about safety and protection “from the threat of disease, hunger, unemployment, crime, social conflict, political repression and environmental hazards”⁷. Human security paradigm is defined by the UN Commission on Human Security’s as “to protect the vital core of all human lives in ways that enhance human freedoms and human fulfillment”⁸. Human security approach concerns the observance of human rights, good governance, poverty reduction, freedoms, provision of needs, access to education and health care. Such aspirations are relatively scarce for many people

² Nana Poku and Wayne Edge, 2009, “Introduction,” in *Security and Development in Southern Africa*, Nana Poku (ed.), (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers): 4-5.

³ Philip Cerny, “Neomedievalism, 1998, Civil War and the New Security Dilemma: Globalisation as a Durable Disorder,” *Civil Wars* 1, no. 1, (Spring), 36

⁴ Salih, M. A. M. 1999 “The horn of Africa: security in the new world order” in Thomas C. and Wilkin, P. (eds.) *Globalization, human security and the African experience* (Boulder/London: Lynn Rienner).

⁵ Abutudu, M. I. M. 2001 “Reflections on early 21st century Africa” in Adesida, O. and Oteh, A. (eds.) *African voices, African visions* (Uppsala: The Nordic African Institute).

⁶ Wilkin, P. 1999 “Human security and class in a global economy” in Thomas, C. and Wilkin, P. (eds.) *Globalization, human security and the African experience* (Boulder/London: Lynn Rienner).

⁷ UNDP, 1994, *Human development report 1994* (New York: Oxford University Press), 22

⁸ Human Security Now, 2003, Final report of the United Nation’s Commission on Human Security, www.un.org/humansecurity/content/human-security-now.p4

in the continent of Africa. Thus, this piece of argues that the success of APSA depends on to what extent member states address the human security of its citizens focusing on Ethiopian case.

3. APSA

APSA became Africa's first continent-wide regional peace and security system; it represents African efforts to manage African security, for it provides an opportunity for the continent to break away from the age-old practice of overreliance on the international community to solve African conflicts (Kasumba and Debrah 2010: 12).

At regional level the creation of the AU in 2000 marked a watershed moment for the regionalisation of security. Based on it, the APSA developed with five main components in the subsequent decade: the Peace and Security Council (PSC), which is the decision-making mechanism for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts; the Panel of the Wise, which assists the PSC particularly in conflict prevention; the Continental Early Warning System (CEWS), which gathers information to anticipate and prevent conflict; the African Standby Forces (ASF); and the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the Area of Peace and Security between the AU and the Regional Economic Communities/Regional Mechanisms (RECs/RMs) for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution⁹.

APSA underlines the need for building promoting good governance and paying attention to human rights and to the fragile state institutions and political structures, especially in war-torn societies and of new democracies in Africa, are of critical importance. However, the absence of strong institutions is related not only to the incidence of conflicts, but to the retardation of socio-economic development in Africa. These crises are a direct consequence of lack of democracy, freedom, politics of exclusion and tyranny by many African governments. Fragile political structures and institutions need to be strengthened. Moreover, building transparent and accountable systems, encouraging participation and inclusiveness, participating in peace

⁹ African Union, 2012, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Partnership between the African Union and the United Nations on Peace and Security: Towards Greater Strategic and Political Coherence*, No. PSC/PR/2.(CCCVII), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

education and building local capacity to manage conflicts are important contributions to peace and development in the continent and determine the success of APSA.

4. Ethiopia, Ogaden Region

In the discussion of APSA and the state of affairs of member countries— politically, economically, socially and security - needs to be considered seriously. Thus in this piece, I argue that the internal conditions of Ethiopia, focusing on Ogaden region, would undermine the realization of the aspired objectives of APSA.

The Ethiopian case is crucial, because the country's performance on human rights and political indicators are appalling and its reputation among human rights organizations is dreadful¹⁰. Ethiopia is also a relevant case regarding the debates on fragile or failed states in Africa, for which there is insecurity, lack of basic services for all, grinding poverty, communal tensions, and growing corruption¹¹. Moreover, Ethiopia does not succeed in providing food security for its own people and every year millions are in need¹².

However, the country is a major receiver of western donor-country funds, and has often received fairly praising reports from the World Bank and the IMF on the purely economic indicators¹³. There is a nicely worded Federal Constitution in Ethiopia, but the government has difficulty in adhering to it. Moreover, the model of “revolutionary democracy” officially advocated by the ruling EPRDF, represents in many ways a contradiction to the proclaimed constitutional principles (Smith 2007¹⁴; EHRCO 2008¹⁵).

4.1. Ogaden: A volatile and Insecure region

¹⁰ Turton, David (ed.), 2006, *Ethnic Federalism. The Ethiopian Experience in Comparative Perspective*. Oxford: James Currey.

¹¹ In 2007 Ethiopia was ranked 138th on the 179-country Corruption Perception Index, and it is moving down.

¹² See R. Righter, *Ethiopia: another famine, another avoidable disaster*, *The Times*, 20 August 2008; R. Hampson, *Ethiopia's new famine: a ticking time bomb*, *USA Today*, 17 August 2008. Also: Revised Humanitarian Requirements for 2008, *Government-Partners Joint Document* (12 June 2008, Addis Ababa), and *Ethiopia – Emergency beneficiaries increase to 6.4 million*, *IRIN news message*, 14 October 2008

¹³ *Ibid*

¹⁴ Smith, Lahra 2007, *Political Violence and Democratic Uncertainty in Ethiopia*. Washington DC: USIP, Special Report no. 192, online: <<http://www.usip.org>>, accessed 16.10.2007.

¹⁵ EHRCO, 2008, *The Human Rights Situation in Ethiopia*, 31st Regular Report July 2008. Addis Ababa: Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

The Somali regional state (SRS) (Region 5), formerly known as the Ogaden, is an area that has been historically plagued by instability and neglect. It is one of the poorest and most conflict-ridden regions of Ethiopia. Two wars have been fought between Ethiopia and Somalia over this region. Somalia, before its collapse in 1991, claimed the Somali Region as part of “greater Somalia,” which also included part of northern Eastern Kenya and Djibouti¹⁶. The Region’s protracted crises pose serious security threats to its inhabitants, the nation, Horn of Africa and to the wider continent of Africa.

Lessons of the past century, in Ethiopia, include examples of governments (monarchical and military dictatorship) with unrestricted power stripping away economic, political and social protection of Somali people in the name of broadly defined national security. From the imperial governments of Menelik to Haile Selassie and from the Derg dictatorship of Mengistu Haile Mariam to the EPRDF (Ethiopia People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front), politics in the region have been repeatedly reconfigured, but have shown continuities that have transcended the various regimes. At the core of these continuities is securing the border of the country and negligence of people’s security¹⁷. To this day, the concept of security in Ethiopia vis-a-vis Somali region is interpreted narrowly: as security of territory¹⁸.

During the Derg regime of Ethiopia, those who had raised issues of human security of the people of the region, which put the Somali minorities at a disadvantage in the country, had been dismissed as 'anti-unity, Wenbedes (rebels) and Shiftas (Bandits). Many, indeed, had been killed for pressing these 'human security' concerns. The Derg regime displaced huge numbers of Somalis from their homes. The military government’s attempt to retain a unitary state and address the "national question" within the framework of Marxism- Leninism (according to the military regime’s 1987 constitution, Ethiopia was a unitary state that “shall ensure the equality

¹⁶ Somalia’s disillusioned move has resulted in more desolation and tribulations for Somalis in Ethiopia. The author calls the Ogaden war as “unfortunate war” because, it has neither ‘liberated’ Somalis nor helped them live in Ethiopia peacefully. Rather Somalia’s disillusioned move have caused the Somalis to be treated differently and seen as collaborators of Ethiopia’s enemy. Above all it laid the foundations for the ever existing uncertainty and suspicion of the center towards its Somali citizens.

¹⁷ Medhane Tadesse (2006:89) argues that the successive Ethiopian regimes positioned government action in the region “primarily in militarily than civilian terms”. The fear and uncertainty that the region would one day secede or join Somalia is persistent. Explaining such a fear or expressing the threat to Ethiopia’s security, Waal (2004:206), says “the most imminent threat to Ethiopia’s security is from the eastern, Somali frontier”.

¹⁸ Clapham, C. (1988) Transformation and Continuity in Revolutionary Ethiopia. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

of nationalities, combat chauvinism and narrow nationalism” (Article 2) was theoretical and no devolution of authority was discernible to Somalis¹⁹. While it was making relentless effort to maintain the unity of the state at any expense, it never considered the human security of the people of the region as necessary issue. Thus, Somalis were forced to live with such a blatant inhuman treatment from 1974-1991. In the words of Merera (2003:105) “the national inequality under which the Somalis suffered during those periods was naked...”²⁰ It was neither the objective of security policy of the Hiale selaise nor the Derg regime to go beyond achieving an absence of war (protecting the border or territory) to encompassing the pursuit of good governance, peace and security of people, crime prevention, protection of fundamental freedoms, sustainable economic development, social justice, and protection of human rights of its Somali citizens.

4.2. Post 1991 Ogaden Region: - The Impact of securitization calculus on the Human Security of the People

After the overthrow of the Derg regime in 1991, EPRDF ushered in a new system of “ethnic federalism” with the ostensible objective to “give greater autonomy to ethnic communities to manage their affairs” (Article 39(3) of FDRE constitution). Since 1991 and the inception of the federal system, the Somali region of Ethiopia has been one of the component elements of the Ethiopian federation. The Somalis find satisfaction in the ideological commitment behind the promise to recognize their identity, language and political rights. Such moves have secured a certain amount of good will for the central government. Though sparse and irregular, some public services do exist in the region. For instance, for the first time in modern Ethiopian history, investment in human capacity building has facilitated the emergence of educated Somali leaders within the periphery. The socio-economic infrastructure has been recently strengthened through the building of schools, clinics, veterinary health posts and roads (UN Humanitarian Assessment mission, 2007:7).

However, many of the problems and predicaments with which Somali people underwent in the 1960s, 70s and 80s continue today. The few studies made on Somali region in post 1991, agree

¹⁹ Gashaw Solomon (1993) ‘Nationalism and ethnic conflict in Ethiopia’ in Young, C. (ed.) *The rising tide of cultural pluralism: The nation-state at bay?* Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press. P. 154

²⁰ Merera Gudina (2003), *Ethiopia: competing ethnic nationalisms and the quest for democracy, 1960-2000*. Netherlands: Shaker Publishing.

that the resources devoted to human security endeavors have been insufficient²¹. Politically²², socially and economically²³, still the region remains one of the most poorest²⁴ and insecure regions in Ethiopia and continues to be a hotbed of conflict²⁵.

The challenges confronting the Somali region of Ethiopia is different from what the founders of contemporary Ethiopian federation assume. There is too much interference in the region's affairs by the center in every aspect of the administration of the region. The fear²⁶ of Ethiopia is that genuine decentralization to Somali people would encourage the region to secede, taking advantage of the constitutional provisions. The trauma of such kind of situation needs one to understand the interconnections of issues and requires of us to recognize the nexus among economics, governance and security. Zoellick (2008:68) notes that "Most wars are now conflicts within states, and fragile states account for most of them. But our knowledge about how best to respond remains thin."²⁷

In Somali region, due to the fear and uncertainty thinking of the center, the region's elites/together with the federal government officials/, in order to deny their citizens democratic rights and to justify autocracy, use these high sounding terms- territory, sovereignty, security.

4.2.1. The Prevailing Human Rights Conditions in the region

There is a strong link between a sense of heightened insecurity and human rights conditions in the region. The denial of basic human rights has exacerbated the security situation of the people

²¹ See Merera, 2003; Waal 2004; Medhane , 2006; Mohamud H. Khalifa and Martin Doornbos, 2002; Asnake, 2009.

²² Devereux (2012: 678) maintains that, "Pastoralists in Somali Region are...politically excluded, geographically isolated and intensely vulnerable to livelihood shocks - natural (droughts), economic (livestock import bans by the Gulf States, government crackdowns on 'contraband' trade) or socio-political (conflict between clans, or between militia groups and the state). In this highly politicized context, the voices of pastoralists themselves are often ignored". Clapham (1994) shares the idea that the peripheries, including the Somalis, have suffered from economic marginalization. The peripheries have suffered exploitation (Donham, 1986) and have suffered from the center's uncomplimentary and pejorative conceptions (young, 1999; Dereje, 2009; Markakis, 2004)

²³ Hagmann (2005) maintains that "the Somali Region is among the very poorest regions in Ethiopia.

²⁴ Reliable data on living standards is extremely difficult to come by.

²⁵ Merara Gudina (2003), P.189

²⁶ There exists securitization of internal affairs of the region. The fear factor, the revival of irredentism and secessionism, has resulted in the securitization of the center's relation with its Somalis citizens.

²⁷ Zoellick, Robert B.(2008) 'Fragile States: Securing Development', *Survival*, 50: 6, 67 — 84 <http://dx.doi.org>.

in the region. Officials in the region are largely perceived to be corrupt and unaccountable to the people, while the public participation in the political system is generally absent. There is little also little public confidence in the criminal justice system and the rule of law. In the absence of effective institutions of democracy, the region's human rights records have deteriorated considerably over the past two decades.

Central to the worsening human rights situation in the Somali region is the role of the special police force, commonly referred to as the Liyu police. This special police force is just one of the many formations that make up the security apparatus of the region. It was established to fight the ONLF²⁸, but has since become a source of terror for the local population. The Federal Government of Ethiopia provides trainings and equipment to the Liyu Police, to enable it to succeed in the fight against ONLF. Both the regional and federal governments have defended the existence of the special police force, arguing that it plays an important role in providing security in the region and defending the entire country from the terrorist activities of groups such as ONLF and al-shabab in neighboring country Somalia. However, the local population holds a different view on the role of the special police force. They are underage boys, they don't respect the codes of our culture and religion and don't receive proper training on human rights. They are creating instability and carries out illegal operations against the people.

Indeed, the realization of democratic ideals is found at the very core of Ethiopian constitution. The Constitution and the Criminal and Civil Codes prohibit arbitrary arrest and detention, the use of torture, and the mistreatment of prisoners. There is a strong link between a sense of heightened insecurity and the human rights conditions in the region. The 'the denial of the democratic principles of the dignity, equality and mutual respect of men', allegations of widespread violation of human rights have exacerbated the situation of the people in the region. "There is no independent judiciary; rule of law doesn't exist in the region. In the absence of such important inputs for human rights protection and promotion, would be difficult to think of a better condition of human rights which also explains the state of human security in the region. The region is in human rights limbo. There are a number of cases where people are arrested on charges of being ONLF supporter with no evidence some serving a 20-year jail sentence or more.

²⁸ ONLF is considered as a terrorist group in Ethiopia.

The human rights situation in the region after 21 during the last two decades does not show marked improvement, and the perception of many is in fact it has been worsening. A number of international institutions, the U.S. State Department's Human Rights Report, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and others assert that "there are human rights violations of different type going on in the region". Human Rights Watch report warns of the abuses meted out by the Liyu police'. In fact, the unsuccessful efforts by some international advocacy groups to castigate the violence as one of 'genocide' is owing to the invisible nature of the conflict to the outside world where "access to the region by outsiders is strictly prohibited, making it extremely difficult to assess the humanitarian impact of the conflict" (Quoted in Lyons, Terence, 2011)²⁹.

However, the regional as well as the federal government are critical of international condemnation and blame them of being biased and anti-government. State authorities view such allegations as baseless, dismissing the statements and documented cases of abuse. The position of state authorities maintain that human rights monitoring organizations such the Human Rights Watch/ HRW are silent in regards to their alleged murder and destruction of property committed by terrorists of citizens and government officials in Somali region.

4.2.2. Socio-economic development at cross roads

In addition to the short coming in self rule and human rights abuses discussed above, the human security challenges in the Somali region are closely linked to the lack of meaningful regional development. The Somali region is considered as one of the most economically underdeveloped region in Ethiopia. Various reports published by the federal government and humanitarian organizations indicate that, compared to the rest of the country, socio-economic conditions in the region remained largely the same after two decades of supposed self rule. Access to basic services such as health, education and potable water remain dream for the majority of the population, including those residing in the region's capital, Jigjiga.

Although the region has a huge potential for livestock farming, years of neglect and political marginalization within Ethiopian federation mean that this potential has not been harnessed. Haggmann argues that the Somali region has remained a periphery state throughout most of its

²⁹ Lyons, Terence (2011) 'Ethiopia: Assessing Risks to Stability'. A Report of the Crises Africa Program. Center for Strategic and International Studies. June, 2011. Washington. www.csis.org

history, causing frustration and ill-will of its people towards the government³⁰. Similarly, Devereux notes that as a result of the marginalization of the Somali region within Ethiopia, Somali pastoralists live on the margins of society in almost every sense³¹. The absence of data on the region further exemplifies the poor state of development and human security in the region.

Conclusion

There can be no environment of security for Africa, if an environment of security is not built. If APSA agenda is to make any progress, Africans need to encourage their elites to accept responsibility for their own people and promote the humans security of their own people. APSA's success depends on government's readiness to serve and defend the interests of their people rather than hide behind the guarantees of territorial integrity. In this way, the onus is on governments to find ways to ensure that APSA to achieve its objectives- Sustainable peace and sustainable security in member states are both fundamental prerequisites for sustainable development and no dimension can succeed without the other. Ethiopia isn't an exception to this general rule and Ethiopia's role in APSA could only bear fruit if the domestic conditions-security of people and democratic process-are met and handled glowing. Then the responsibility to protect other citizens abroad becomes a genuine, explicable and reasonable. Ethiopia, however, has failed in the provision of the basic security to its Ogaden region and people and this makes Ethiopia's intervention in other country insincere and irrational; and such scenarios would hamper the success of APSA's initiatives and aspiration.

³⁰ Tobias Hagmann, 2007, "Bringing the Sultan Back in: Elders as Peace Makers in Ethiopia's Somali region' in Lars Buur and Helene Maria Kyed (eds.), state recognition and the democratization of sub-Saharan Africa: A New Dawn for Traditional Authorities? New York, Palgrave-Macmillan

³¹ Stephen Devereux, 2010, Better Marginalized than incorporated? Pastoralist livelihoods in Somali region, Ethiopia. Sussex, university of Sussex,