CONFLICT MONITORING IN AFRICA FOR STRATEGIC INTERVENTION

HIPSIR Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT)

Case Studies of Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan

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HEKIMA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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Centre for Research, Training and Publications (CRTP)
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INTRODUCTION

The Conflict monitoring research conducted by the Centre for Research Training and Publications (CRTP) in 2024 revealed early warning indicators pointing to a likely escalation of conflict in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with the 2025 situation confirming the emergence of new conflict fronts in both countries. In South Sudan, fragile peace processes and rising ethnic tensions continue to fuel instability, while in the DRC, renewed armed group activity and disputes over critical minerals have intensified violence, particularly in the east. The research underscores the urgent need for immediate and coordinated measures to prevent further deterioration. Ethiopia remains in a fragile state, still recovering from the northern conflict, while inter-ethnic clashes persist in northern regions. In Kenya, growing public agitation for political and economic accountability—especially among the youth—must be addressed to safeguard national peace and stability. CRTP emphasizes that without swift and inclusive interventions, the region risks deeper instability and prolonged humanitarian crises. The year 2024 recorded the highest number of countries engaged in conflict since the beginning of the 21st century. With the shifts in political dynamics and competing power blocs globally, some world leaders have opted to use military solutions to achieve their end goals. This has led to cycles of violence and conflicts in various parts of the world. The Global Peace Index report indicates that 2024 had the highest number of countries engaged in conflict since the end of the Second World War.[1] Hamas attack on October 7th 2023 and the subsequent Israel invasion of Palestine have increasingly shaped interstate relations in the Middle East. The Israel-Palestinian conflict which has lasted for more than a year and escalated into a regional war with the Houthis in Yemen and the Hezbollah in Lebanon actively

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[1] Institute for Economics and Peace. "Highest Number of Countries Engaged in Conflict since World War II." Vision of Humanity, September 24, 2024. https://www.visionofhumanity.org/highest-number-of-countries-engaged-in-conflict-since-world-war-ii/.

getting engaged in confrontation with Israel. A temporary ceasefire reached between Hamas and Israel in January 2025, allowing hostages and captives to be released expired in the beginning of March 2025.[2] The efforts to extend it has proven difficult. As of March 2025, Israel has blocked humanitarian deliveries to Gaza in an attempt to coerce Hamas into agreeing to a revised ceasefire proposal, sparking growing international concern and diplomatic efforts to restore calm.[3]

In October 2024, Iran directly fired missiles towards Israel, in response to the killings of Hamas leader within its territory.[4] Later in the month of October, Israel targeted military sites in Iran in which Iran has vowed a crushing response. In the Middle East conflict, other actors such as the United States and the United Kingdom have been seen to be providing Israel with technical support, particularly in intercepting the barrage of missiles and rockets fired by Iran and its proxies into Israel. On the other hand, there have also been tensions within Asian countries. For example, there have been tensions between China and the Philippines over maritime features in the South China Sea.[5] Additionally, there is increasing tension between North Korea and South Korea. On 15th October 2024, North Korea bombed two major roads and a railway line connecting the North and South, re-awakening tensions between the two nations.[6] North Korea accused South Korea for flying propaganda-filled drones over its capital Pyongyang. While North Korea and South Korea have been separated since the end of the Korean War in 1953, the relationships between the two countries have been hostile with the South often accusing the North of sending trash-laden balloons to its territory.[7]

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[2] Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). 2024. "Gaza: Relief After Temporary Ceasefire but Immense Scale of Aid Now Needed." *Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) UK*, February 28, 2024. https://msf.org.uk/article/gaza-relief-after-temporary-ceasefire-immense-scale-aid-now-needed.

[3] Reuters. 2025. "Israel, Hamas Diverge Over Ceasefire with First Phase Set to Expire." *Reuters*, February 28, 2025. https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-hamas-diverge-over-ceasefire-with-first-phase-set-expire-2025-02-28/.

[4] Bennett, Tom. "What We Know about Israel's Attack on Iran." BBC News, October 28, 2024. https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgr0yvrx4qpo.

[5] International Crisis Group. "Philippines: Calming Tensions in the South China Sea", Crisis Group, May 2024. https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-east-asia/philippines-south-china-sea/philippines-calming-tensions-south-china-sea.

[6] Bae, Gawon, Yoonjung Seo, and Alex Stambaugh. "North Korea Blows up Roads near Border with South after Warning It Would Completely Cut Ties." CNN, October 15, 2024. https://edition.cnn.com/2024/10/15/asia/north-korea-blast-roads-south-intl-hnk/index.html.

In Europe, the invasion of Ukraine by Russia escalated in 2024, with ACLED reporting about 1031 incidences of political violence and 42 fatalities as of the 25th of October 2024.[8] The Global Conflict Tracker reported in October 2024 that Ukraine soldiers had pushed back the Russians and recaptured 54% of its occupied territory.[9] In efforts to fight back, Russia has increased its drone attacks on Ukraine infrastructures. Additionally, in the beginning of November 2024, the Institute for the Study of the War reported that North Korea had deployed a contingent of troops to support Russia in the full-scale invasion of Ukraine.[10] In 2024, there were also incidences of political violence in Venezuela and Haiti in the Americas. ACLED reports that while the situation in Haiti is improving with the deployment of US supported by Kenyan mission to battle gang violence, the situation in Venezuela and Brazil remains concerning.[11]

In Africa, various historical, political, economic, and social factors have influenced the conflicts that have occurred, making them complex problems. While the African continent has made positive progress in expanding democratic space in recent years, violence in several African countries has intermittently retarded development and weakened governance structures. In Burkina Faso, clashes between government forces and Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM) rebels resulted in over 900 fatalities as of May 2024, the deadliest month in over a year.[12] Government forces of Burkina Faso faced accusations of killing civilians suspected of supporting rebels, while JNIM retaliated against communities aligned with the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland.[13] In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the M23 insurgency's southward advance into South Kivu in March 2024 worsened violence, particularly affecting civilian areas, as the group seeks control over strategic supply routes.[14] By January 2025, M23 had taken control of the

[7] Ibid.
[8] ACLED. "Ukraine Conflict Monitor." ACLED, October 30, 2024. https://acleddata.com/ukraine-conflict-monitor/.
[9] Global Conflict Tracker. "War in Ukraine." Council on Foreign Relations, October 16, 2024. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ukraine.
[10] Hird, Karolina, Daniel Shats, and Alison O'Neil. "North Korea Joins Russia's War against Ukraine: Operational and Strategic Implications in Ukraine and Northeast Asia." Institute for the Study of War, November 1, 2024. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/north-korea-joins-russias-war-against-ukraine-operational-and-strategic-implications.
[11] Raleigh, Clionadh, and Katayoun Kishi. "Conflict Index Results: July 2024." ACLED, September 4, 2024. https://acleddata.com/conflict-index/index-july-2024/#:~:text=Are%20conflict%20levels%20worsening%20or,or%20escalating%20levels%20of%20conflict.
[12] Serwat, Ladd. "Africa Overview: May 2024." ACLED, June 14, 2024. https://acleddata.com/2024/06/10/africa-overview-may-2024/.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

city of Goma, intensifying the conflict in Eastern DRC.[15] Libya, on the other hand, saw a rise in peaceful demonstrations in response to worsening economic conditions and security issues, primarily concentrated in western areas like Tripoli in April 2024.[16] In South Africa, pre-election protests surged in Gauteng, largely due to economic frustrations and controversial judicial rulings, intensifying political tensions in May 2024.[17]

Further, Sudan's North Darfur region experienced deadly clashes between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), with heavy artillery endangering civilians and deepening the humanitarian crisis as the conflict moves closer to densely populated areas.[18] Eric Lob notes that the Sudan Civil War has led to the death of about 13,000 people with 33,000 people being injured.[19] International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that about 6.6 million

people have been displaced since the war began in Sudan.[20] Other countries in Africa continue to experience different forms of armed conflict. These countries include Cameroon, Central Africa Republic, Ethiopia, Mali, Mozambique, Somalia, and South Sudan. However, low-intensity sub-national armed conflicts have also been witnessed in countries like Burundi, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, and Madagascar.

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[15] "M23 Rebels Seize Control of Goma Amid Tensions." The Pinnacle Gazette, January 31, 2025. https://evrimagaci.org/tpg/m23-rebels-seize-control-of-goma-amid-tensions-171445.

[16] Serwat, Ladd. "Africa Overview: May 2024." ACLED, June 14, 2024. https://acleddata.com/2024/06/10/africa-overview-may-2024/.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Lob, E., Iran's intervention in Sudan's civil war advances its geopolitical goals – but not without risks. The Conversation, 2024. https://theconversation.com/irans-intervention-in-sudans-civil-war-advances-its-geopolitical-goals-but-not-without-risks-229989#:~:text=Since%20that%20conflict%20started%20in,the%20southern%20region%20of%20Darfur

The Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT) 2024

The global conflicts that seem to have set the world on fire in 2024 call for collective reflection and analysis to develop effective intervention mechanisms. Drawing on the conflict monitoring exercise, preventive measures can be considered to ensure that conflict is transformed and peace is restored among the various parties involved. Hence, the Center for Research, Training and Publications (CRTP) of Hekima University College has continued to work on the Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT) for Strategic Intervention in Africa in 2024. Consequently, CMT-2024 was the fifth phase of monitoring conflict in selected African countries. CMT-2024, monitored conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan. The countries selected for the study represent various types of conflict that are typically experienced in Africa, such as resourced-conflict, election-related conflict, the results of the proliferation of armed groups and small arms on the continent and also the perennial characteristics of ethnic basic conflicts on the continent.

Case Study Countries

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) represents African states experiencing protracted conflicts with regard to the competition for natural resources, inter-ethnic conflicts, national boundaries, poor governance, multiplication of militia groups, failure of the UN peace mission to engage and integrate key actors as well as lack of integration and engagement of local cultures. The conflict in the DRC is a striking example of how regional actors can either exacerbate or mitigate violence. The country is endowed with fertile agricultural land, rich biodiversity, and abundant mineral resources, including copper, cobalt, diamonds, gold, uranium, platinum, and palladium. However, these natural riches have often been at the center of disputes, fueling greed and instability. The persistent and violent conflicts that have shaped the DRC's history remain one of the nation's most pressing challenges.

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[20] IOM. 20,000 people displaced daily one year into Sudan War, IOM urges action . International Organization for Migration, 2024. https://www.iom.int/news/20000-people-displaced-daily-one-year-sudan-war-iom-urges-action#:~:text=Since%20war%20broke%20out%2C%206.6,on%20the%20brink%20of%20famine

Ethiopia on the other hand is a unique case study for the implications of governance structures in peace stability. Ethiopia is governed by an ethno-federalism model that gives regions in terms of ethnic groups (Oromo, Tigray, Amhara, Somali, Sidama, Gurage, Weleyta and Hadiya) considerable independence to the extent of being able to vote to secede.[21] The adoption of an ethnic-based federal system, which grants territorial authority to various ethnic groups, has been a significant factor driving ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. While this system was originally designed to mitigate regional tensions by offering a degree of autonomy, it has increasingly become a source of conflict in recent years. Ethiopia's ethno-federal system has exacerbated divisions, with militias exploiting ethnic differences to advance competing agendas, underlining the risks inherent in governance structures based on ethnic autonomy. Ethiopia gives insights into understanding conflict brought on by tensions within government systems.

Kenya represents African countries experiencing occasional conflicts and terror attacks. While the country is generally stable and enjoys strong economic performance regionally, it has had several overlapping low-intensity conflicts ranging from ethnic clashes, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), election-related violence, and terrorism. The nature of conflict in Kenya can be attributed to issues concerning social fragmentation, negative ethnicity, political animosity, corruption, impunity of leaders, as well as gender and social group exclusion from conflict management and peacebuilding process. Other issues include land disputes, discrimination, and marginalization, the penetration of Al-Shabaab's ideologies into the country's local politics, and the proliferation of small arms. In June 2024, economic challenges and a burgeoning youth population in Kenya seeking better opportunities and demanding good governance sparked the "Gen Z" protests.

Finally, South Sudan has experienced intermittent conflict since its independence in 2011. At the center of South Sudan's conflict is a myriad of factors such as political arrangements for power-sharing, agreements on the number of states, demobilization of the armed forces, failure of peace agreements, delayed election date, and the formation of a national unity government. Since the 2013 eruption of conflict in South Sudan, there have been several peace agreements between President Salva Kiir's faction and that of his former deputy, Riek Machar. Though the peace agreement signed in 2020 ended a five-year conflict,[22] implementing the deal has been slow, with

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21 Ethiopia's Constitution of 1994, https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Ethiopia_1994.pdf?lang=en (accessed November 18, 1994).

fears that widespread conflict would be ignited again.[23] In 2024, the persistent instability as a fragile young state in South Sudan has led to the postponement of the December 2024 elections, driven by institutional weaknesses, mistrust, and power-sharing disputes among other factions.

CMT Data Collection in 2024

Data collection for the 2024 CMT study began on June 5 and concluded on August 15, 2024. The CRTP research team designed a questionnaire and an interview guide for conducting Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Six hundred and seventy-three (673) respondents from four countries participated in the data collection. Respondents were selected using convenient and purposive sampling techniques.

The team faced several challenges during the 2024 data collection across the region. Although data was gathered from June to August, the conflict dynamics in the DRC, South Sudan, Kenya, and Ethiopia fluctuated significantly throughout the year, highlighting the complex nature of these conflicts. For instance, while Kenya's "Gen Z" protests in June suggested a crisis, the situation appeared to stabilize by August and September. Similarly, in the DRC, although M23 forces were advancing in the eastern region and Goma seemed at risk in March 2024, the government had regained control of the city by June.[24] This variation underscored the limitations of annual data collection for capturing the full scope of regional conflict. The CRTP team supplemented primary data with secondary data from media sources to address this.

Additionally, since the CMT 2024 study relied on respondents' perceptions, which could introduce bias, the team rigorously tested data collection tools with experts to ensure reliability. They also purposefully selected knowledgeable respondents from the peacebuilding sector for the study. Finally, CRTP utilized qualitative and quantitative methods at different stages to address gaps identified during the initial data collection phase.

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[22]Mednick S, "Old grudges and empty coffers: South Sudan's precarious peace process," The New Humanitarian, January 21, 2021, https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news-feature/2021/01/21/south-sudan-peace-deal-violence-famine (November 25, 2021).
23 United Nations, "South Sudan's Transitional Government Must Build on Gains, Speed Up Implementation of Peace Agreement, Mission Head Says in Security Council Briefing," https://www.un.org/press/en/2021/sc14457.doc.htm March 21, 2021.
[24] As at early 2025, this struggle for Gomas has had a resurgence.

This report is divided into four sections. The first section deals with the conceptualization of the conflict monitoring tool. The second section provides a background of the conflict and peace situations in each country under study, followed by the analyzes of the factors influencing the status of peace or conflict. The third section outlines the methodology used in conducting the study. This includes research design, sampling, and data collection strategies, as well as analysis of the data and a systematic explanation of the development and application of the Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT). The final section outlines the diverse areas of concern in the study and some recommendations for action.

THE CMT CONFLICT CURVE ASSESSMENT

The HIPSIR CMT was designed to analyze conflicts in line with the conflict curve assessment to monitor conflict levels. A modified version of Lund's conflict curve was adopted (See Lund's curve in Figure 1 below). Lund's conflict curve elaborates and gives different intervention methods employed in conflict resolution. In addressing ongoing conflicts, Lund's is a valuable tool[25] for indicating the various stages of a conflict. The conflict curve seeks to achieve seven goals. *First*, it means the stage of a conflict. *Second*, it points to possible interventions that different actors can adopt. *Third,* it plays a vital role in identifying the indicators for conflict early warning. *Fourth*, it shows the five stages of a conflict. *Fifth*, it assesses how conflict escalates from one stage to another. *Sixth*, it is ideal for identifying patterns in the conflict. *Finally*, it shows the increasing or decreasing intensity of a conflict situation.[26]

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[25] Lund S. M., "Curve of Conflict," United States Institute of Peace. https://www.usip.org/public-education/students/curve-conflict, 2012

[26] Marian Hassan, "Conflict Curve/Stages 0f Conflict," *The Peace and Collaborative Development Network (PCDN)*, June 27, 2010. https://pcdnetwork.org/blogs/conflict-curvestages-of-conflict/

Figure 1: Conflict Curve Representing Different Levels of Conflict
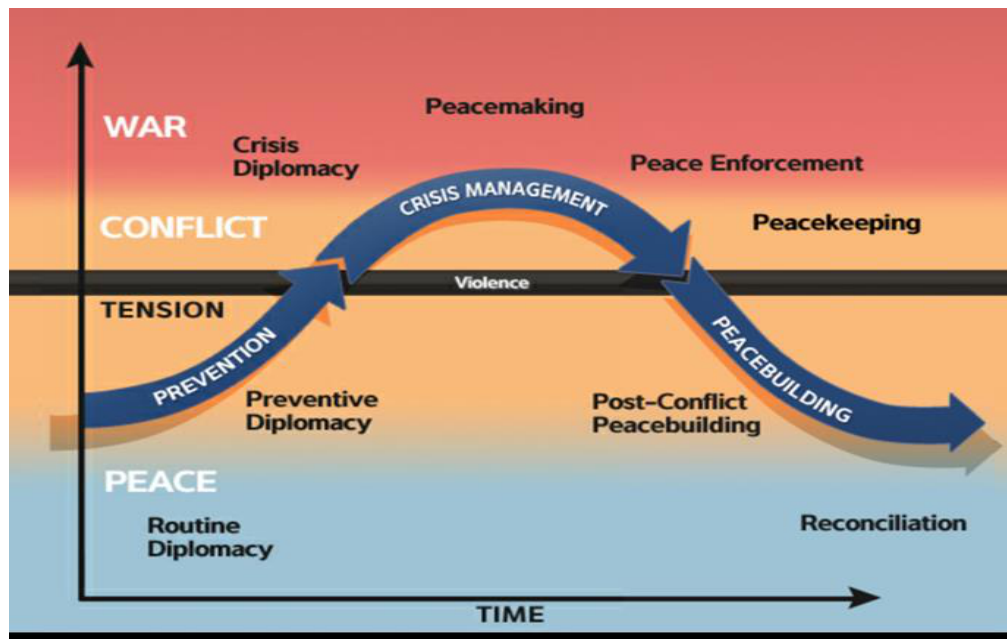
(Source: Conflict Curve Representing Different Levels[27])

Niklas Swanström and Mikael Weissmann also discuss the life cycle of conflict. Noting that conflict is dynamic,[28] understanding its life cycle is essential to knowing when and how to make a strategic intervention. Thus, a tool that monitors the conflict cycle s know how and when to intervene strategically to avoid an escalation of conflict and its (more often than not) devastating consequences. The conflict model denotes an ideal conflict cycle divided into different phases.

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[27] Conflict Curve Adopted from United States Institute of Peace, Accessed June 7, 2019, url: https://www.usip.org/public-education/students/curve-conflict.
[28] Swanström, Niklas L.P. & Mikael S. Weissmann, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Management in Northeast Asia. United States: Central Asia-Caucasus Institute, 2005.

According to Swanström and Weissmann, these stages of the conflict are:

Table 1: Stages of Conflict

STAGE OF CONFLICT	DESCRIPTION
Stable peace	Where there exists very little or any tension between parties and there is cooperation between parties, economically, socially, and environmentally. There is also cooperation in non-sensitive areas.
Unstable peace	Presence of negative peace and increased tensions between parties.
Open Conflict	Whereby the conflict has been identified and conflict parties are ready to engage in the conflict, even if militarized options have not been adopted.[29]
Crisis	Militarized options are preferred, sporadic acts of violence and the eventuality of war is imminent.
War	Intense, widespread violent conflict.

(Source: Swanstrom and Weissmann, 2005)

While the five stages present an escalation of conflict, according to Swanstrom and Weissmann, the progression is reversed for the de-escalation of conflict until the situation reaches stable peace.

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[29] Swanström, Niklas L.P. & Mikael S. Weissmann, Conflict, Conflict Prevention, Conflict Management and beyond: a conceptual exploration, p.11.

Figure 2: The Conflict Cycle
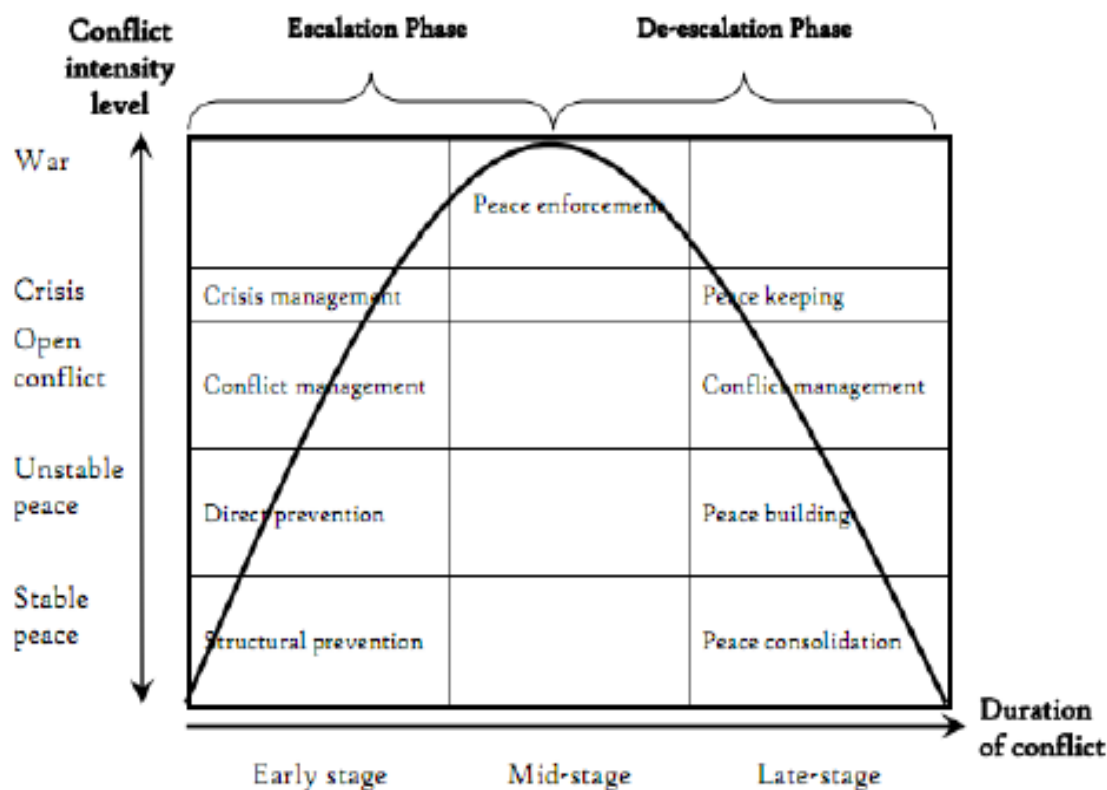
(Source: Swanstrom and Weissmann, 2005, p. 13)

Swanström and Weissmann also acknowledge that this conflict curve is idealistic as it does not always follow such a predictable progression; because of its dynamic nature, each conflict situation adopts its unique curve. They, therefore, highlight various scenarios that could characterize a conflict cycle. To begin with, a conflict can re-occur over time, "and pass through the different stages over and over again."[30] It thus takes on the form of a wave as represented in the figure below:

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[30] Swanström, Niklas L.P. & Mikael S. Weissmann, p. 15.

Figure 3: Conflict Curve A
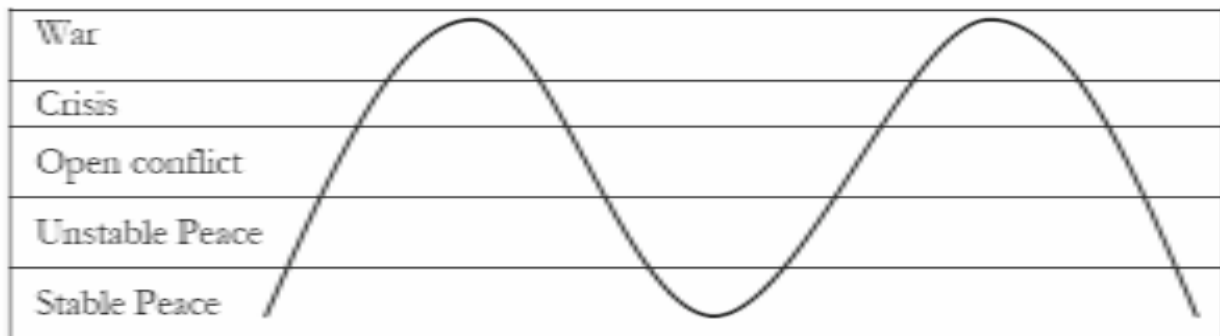
(Source: Swanstrom and Weissmann, 2005, p. 15)

Secondly, the above conflict wave does not occur predictably as indicated. However, a conflict can re-escalate at any phase of the conflict curve.[31] Indeed what is usually observed is that a conflict will often reoccur between the crisis and war phases, either because crisis management breaks down or conflict resolution strategies are ineffective. Thirdly, a conflict situation sometimes gets entrenched between the escalation phases of open conflict and crisis never reaching the level of war. Such conflicts are usually left without concrete resolution, making them prone to further escalation in the future. Moreover, Swanstrom and Weissmann also point out that sometimes conflicts will waver between unstable peace, open conflict, and crisis. Similar to the previous example, while the conflict may not fully escalate to war, it usually remains unresolved over a long period.

Further, they also hold that conflicts can occur concurrently, meaning that during a specific time and space multiple conflicts driven by diverse issues can occur side by side.[32] Also, in other instances there could be a core conflict with smaller (sub) conflicts occurring alongside it, each of these sub conflicts would have its conflict cycles.[33] Once again this complicates the conflict curve. Therefore, their point is that, conflict needs to be neatly simplified and consequently it does not follow a predictable progression as imagined by the conflict curve.

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[31] Swanström, Niklas L.P. & Mikael S. Weissmann, p. 15-16.
[32] Ibid., p. 17.
[33] Ibid.

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The figures below show a representation of conflict curves of Kenya, South Sudan, Ethiopia and DRC with the various conflict levels since the inception of CMT in 2019.

Figure 4: Conflict Curve for DRC from 2019 to 2024
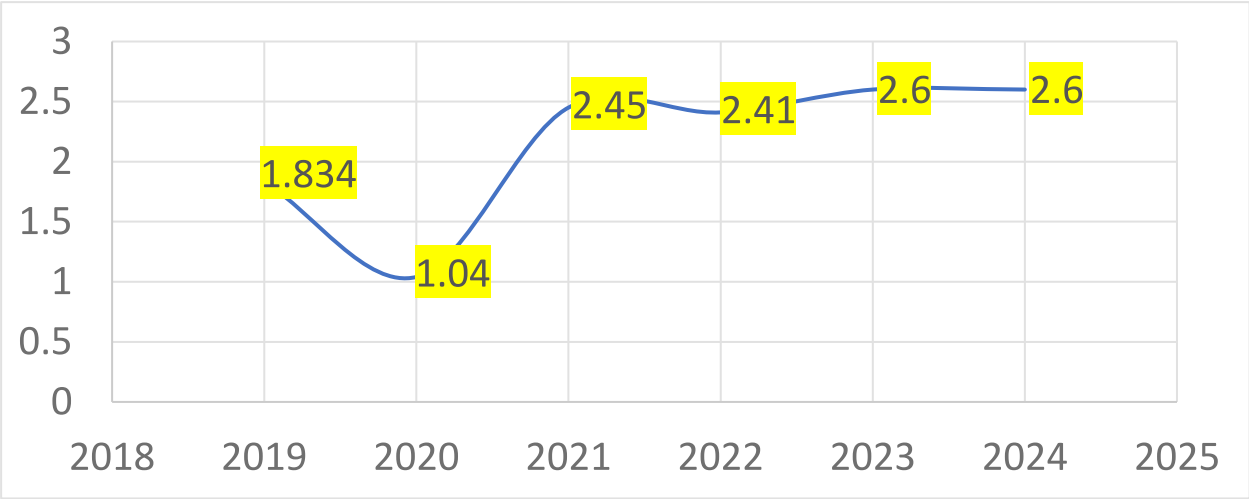
Figure 5: Conflict Curve for Ethiopia from 2021 to 2024
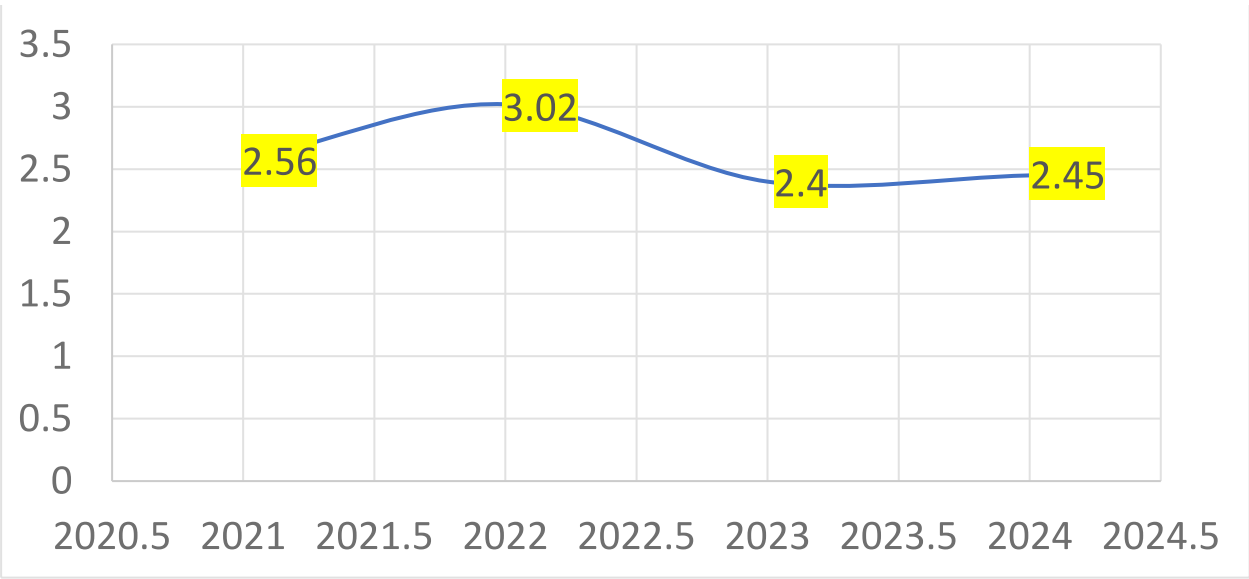
Figure 6: Conflict Curve for South Sudan from 2019 to 2024
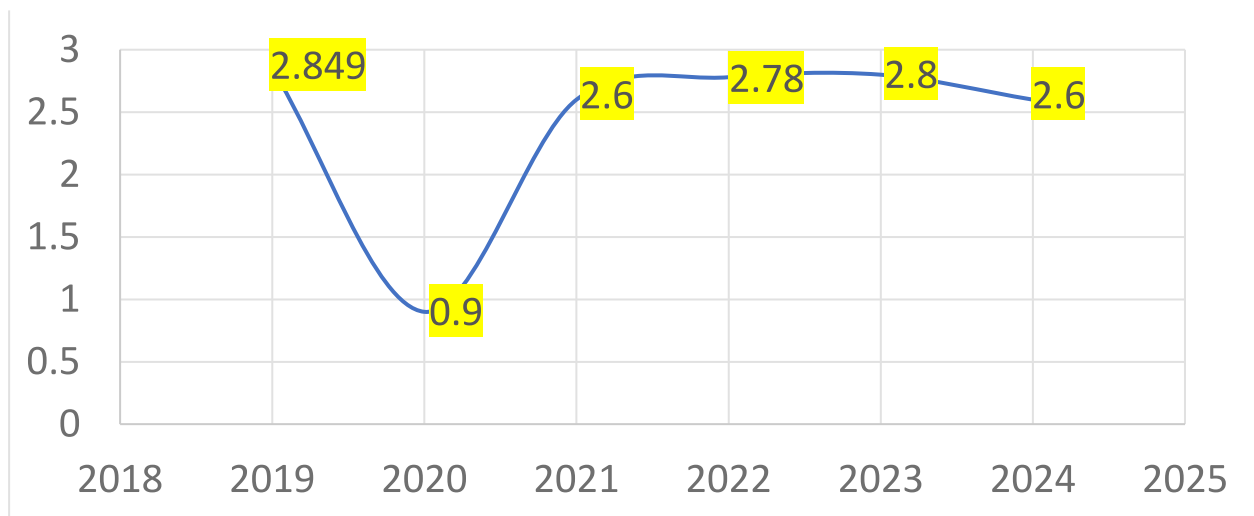
Figure 7: Conflict Curve for Kenya from 2019 to 2024
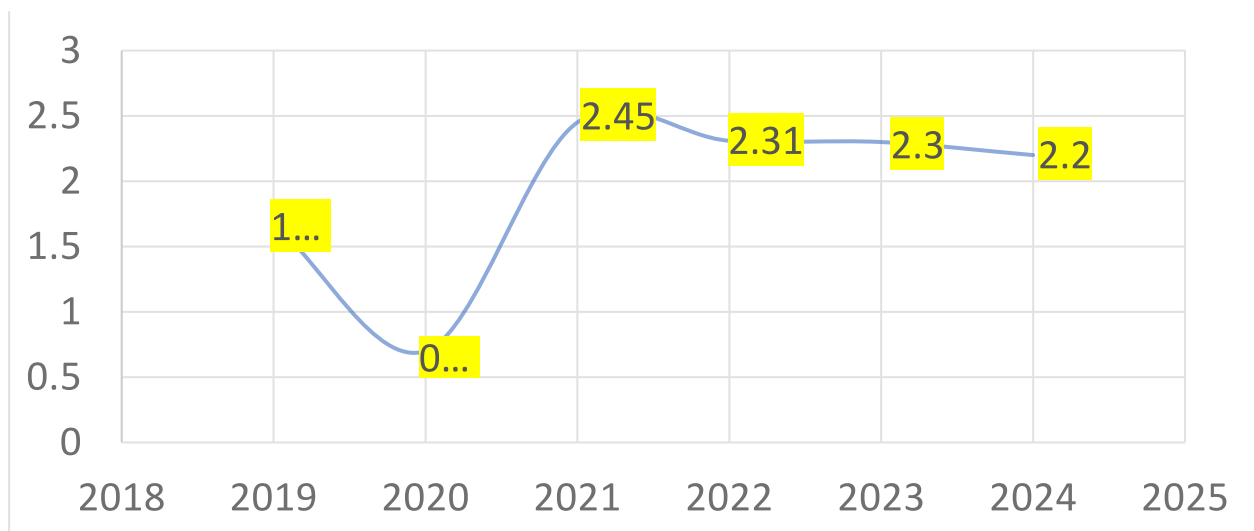
The conflict curves for Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and the DRC illustrate that conflicts do not follow a straightforward or predictable path. The figures above indicate that conflicts are complex and often shift unexpectedly, defying the linear or cyclical patterns typically suggested by conflict curves. In reality, conflicts may escalate, de-escalate, or change dynamics due to various factors, including political shifts, economic pressures, or international interventions, making it challenging to rely on a single model to capture or forecast conflict progression fully. Understanding the conflict curve and the various phases that a conflict progresses through is integral to the monitoring of conflict. Consequently, it informs the intervention and resolution strategies to be employed to

effectively mitigate and eventually resolve a conflict to realize stable (positive) peace. Therefore, over time, having successfully monitored conflict in the region periodically, the CMT 2024 is in a position to represent various conflict scenarios with the use of the conflict curve as described in the figures above.

Understanding the CMT Conflict Curve

The CMT conflict curve is a tool developed by the Centre of Research, Training, and Publications to monitor the conflict levels across different regions. It is an innovation combining the concept of a conflict curve, as detailed by Michael Lund and Swanstrom and Weissmann, and the levels of conflict, as detailed in Table 2. The conflict curve from Swanstrom and Weissmann indicates five stages of a conflict, namely stable peace, unstable peace, open conflict, crisis, and war, while Lund's curve indicates three stages of conflict, i.e., peace, conflict, and war.[34] However, the CMT chose to use the conflict levels as Marian Hassan detailed. This is because they indicate escalation and de-escalation levels of conflict thus making it easier to identify indicators that clearly describe each level of conflict. Having clear indicators to describe each level of conflict is essential as this would ensure a clear understanding of what level a conflict situation might be at a given time. Subsequently, this identification would inform what intervention strategies are to be applied.

The second innovation that the CMT developed by the CRTP is that it has a numerical scale for measuring conflict levels, unlike the Lund and Swanstrom and Weissmann models. This scale was developed through a rigorous process of selecting measurable indicators of conflict and statistical calculations that were tested over time to ascertain their accuracy in measuring conflict levels. Conflict level, or the severity of a conflict, according to the CMT, is measured on a scale ranging from negative two (-2) to positive three (+3). In this case, the CMT has six levels that are statistically calculated using 60 indicators of conflict (see Appendix). The CMT conflict curve is shown in the figure below.

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[34] Swanström, Niklas L.P. & Mikael S. Weissmann, p. 11.

Figure 8: HIPSIR CMT Conflict Curve
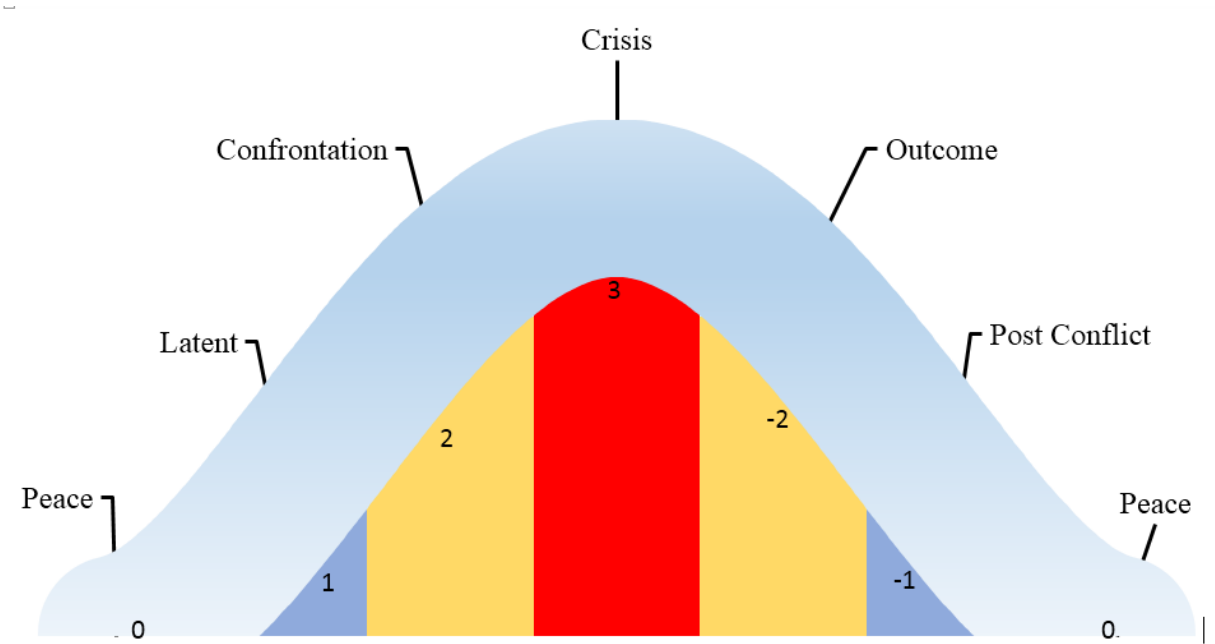
These levels and their respective numerical denotation are explained below.

Table 2: Description of conflict levels

Conflict Level	Description
Peace **(0)**	At this stage, there is no conflict whatsoever.
Latent **(1)**	This level is characterized by incompatible goals between one or more parties but hidden from the public. If not identified early and proper intervention not taken to address the causes of the tension, a confrontation occurs.[35]
Confrontation **(2)**	At this stage, the conflict is more open. There could be intolerance that may lead to confrontational behavior. If no interventions take place, the situation may become polarized leading to a crisis.[36]
Crisis **(3)**	At this level, there is war or open conflict.
Outcome **(-2)**	Either one party in the conflict is defeated, or there may be an intervention from a third party that leads to a ceasefire. It may also occur when the conflict is ripe for intervention and all parties are tired and ready for dialogue. The force of the government could also lead to an outcome.
Post Conflict **(-1)**	When the issues are finally resolved and relationships normalize. If the cause of the incompatible goals among the parties is not addressed, the tension can occur and revert to pre-conflict or confrontation stages.

(Source: Marian Hassan, 2010)

In some instances, many issues of a cycle of conflict are not fully addressed and this sets the stage for a subsequent conflict. A similar situation may also occur if state machinery is generally weak and not able to enforce enduring peace. The result is usually another outbreak of war.

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[35] Marian Hassan, "Conflict Curve/Stages 0f Conflict," *The Peace and Collaborative Development Network (PCDN)*, June 27, 2010, https://pcdnetwork.org/blogs/conflict-curvestages-of-conflict/
[36] Marian Hassan, "Conflict Curve/Stages 0f Conflict," *The Peace and Collaborative Development Network (PCDN)*, June 27, 2010, https://pcdnetwork.org/blogs/conflict-curvestages-of-conflict/

Conceptualization of Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT)

On realizing the need to bring together all actors through the creation of a platform for gathering and sharing of information, the Centre for Research, Training and Publications (CRTP) of Hekima University College developed a conflict monitoring tool (CMT). Through its development, the CMT seeks to contribute to the practice of conflict monitoring in Africa by fostering cooperation in generating information on the best strategies to manage conflict. To effectively monitor conflict and develop goal-oriented conflict resolution or peace-building interventions, there is need to understand the theory of change, which "explains how a given intervention, or set of interventions, are expected to lead to specific development change, drawing on a causal analysis based on available evidence." [37]

A theory of change explains why certain actions will produce desired change in a given context. It is intended to make all the implicit assumptions more explicit, to clarify which drivers of conflict are being addressed, what are intended outcome/s of the conflict situation, and seek to articulate how and why the situation should be addressed as per the drivers of conflict to achieve the intended outcomes.[38] Further, the theory of change is appropriate in understanding conflicts in Africa which are complex due to the numerous drivers and actors involved. Such an approach helps in the identification of actors-centered solutions to address the drivers of conflict effectively by leveraging comparative advantages throughout the change process.

Based on the theory of change, the HIPSIR conflict monitoring tool can be used to suggest the action needed to manage the conflict to ensure peace stability based on the data collected. For instance, if the main driver of conflict is youth, then based on the theory of change we can assume that they are not relatively engaged in constructive work and then if jobs can be created for them, there is anticipation that the youths will be engaged and will not be used as conflict perpetrators.

The conflict monitoring tool can be used to monitor conflict indicators that are consistently observed, to understand whether the conflict is escalating or deescalating for appropriate policy recommendations. This can be explained by the fact that each indicator plays a certain role in

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[37] Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security, and Justice Programmes: Part II: Using Theories of Change in Monitoring and Evaluation. Department for International Development (DFID), 2013.
[38] Babbitt, Eileen, Diana Chigas, and Robert Wilkinson. Theories and Indicators of Change Briefing Paper: Concepts and Primers for Conflict Management and Mitigation. United States Agency for International Development (USAID), March 2013.

understanding a conflict situation. In the context of theory of change, indicators are mainly used to assess the assumptions, outputs, outcomes sustainability in comparison with the expectation informed by the program's design.[39] For instance, if conflict management experts in conflict-affected areas accept a new conflict resolution method different from the previous method due to changes in the intensity of the conflict, peace practitioners are expected to intervene and suggest appropriate strategies in response to such changes.

Therefore, the CMT seeks to generate information by monitoring conflicts and disseminating up-to-date information on the conflict trends of the selected countries for appropriate policy formulation and strategic interventions. The consumers of the information are expected to help restore peace across the region to improve the people's economic, social, cultural, and political conditions. In this case, the CMT seeks to promote peace by monitoring key indicators pointing to concerns needing attention. By doing so, measures can be taken based on the information provided to prevent an escalation of conflict[40]. Using the CMT will allow for a broader identification of the causes of conflict and propositions on possible ways of resolving conflicts. Following its development, the CMT is one of the numerous existing tools. Some of the existing conflict monitoring tools and data sources are discussed below.

Existing Conflict Monitoring Tools

The existing tools for conflict monitoring each serve unique purposes and cater to different needs in peacebuilding, security, and governance. The Conflict Sensitivity Resource Pack offers guidance on integrating perception-based and objective indicators for comprehensive conflict analysis, though it lacks tailored advice for specific interventions. The Gender and Conflict Sensitivity Tool emphasizes the role of gender in conflict and peacebuilding, recognizing how gender disparities can both trigger and resolve conflicts. Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) and Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) focus on broader peace research and policy recommendations, examining conditions that promote peace or contribute to conflict escalation. At the same time, Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) provides event-based data

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[39] Corlazzoli, Vanessa, and Jonathan White. Practical Approaches to Theories of Change in Conflict, Security, and Justice Programmes: Part II: Using Theories of Change in Monitoring and Evaluation. Department for International Development (DFID), 2013.
[40] Ibid

on violence sourced from news reports. The Global Peace Operations Review and Human Security Report Project tracks global trends in peace operations and violence, addressing shifting conflict dynamics and emphasizing adaptable peace strategies.

Other significant tools include the Institute for Economics and Peace, which annually publishes the Global Peace Index to quantify peace levels and conflict costs, offering insights into economic impacts. The Conflict Alert system, specific to the Philippines, tracks violent incidents, human costs, and causes to inform policy and development strategies. Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (ACLED) collects and maps data on political violence across multiple regions, detailing actors, types of violence, and locations. Good Governance Africa's Conflict in Africa Monitor (CAM) provides decision-makers with data on African conflict hotspots. At the same time, the Kivu Security Tracker (KST) maps violence in eastern DRC, collecting and verifying data on incidents involving state and armed groups to better understand the causes of insecurity and human rights abuses. Each tool brings a unique dimension to understanding and addressing conflict worldwide.

THE REVIEW OF CONFLICTS IN ETHIOPIA, DRC, KENYA AND SOUTH SUDAN

Unresolved conflict is detrimental to the well-being and development of citizens and a country. Cyclical conflict in the DRC, Kenya, Ethiopia and South Sudan is a major concern for citizens, the states, peace builders and conflict management experts. This is not least because of its effect on the socio-political stability of the regions. Therefore, efforts should be made equally by both peace building experts and the countries' governments towards ensuring that an "integrated" approach in analyzing the on-going conflict and conflict drivers in DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and South Sudan is considered towards achieving sustainable peace and effective peacebuilding programs in these conflict torn countries. To address these conflicts appropriately, there is a need for constant and reliable analysis of conflict situations in order to plan adequate responses or preventive measures where necessary. Regular analysis is vital for creating good strategies for local and regional responses to conflict. This section provides a contextual analysis of literature on the four countries by giving historical and the most recent updates on the conflict and peace situation.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

The 2024 CMT report indicated that DRC was at a confrontational conflict level of 2.6.[41] The drivers of conflict that were prevalent in DRC in the year 2023 included resource-based violence, armed robbery and theft and political violence. The respondents who participate in the study in 2023 indicated that resource-based violence was the most significant, with 63.33% of respondents citing disputes over resources like land, water, and minerals as key conflict drivers.[42] Armed robbery and theft also contributed to widespread insecurity, as highlighted by 49.17% of respondents, while gender-based and sexual violence remained a major issue, affecting 48.33% of the population.[43] Political violence was moderately prevalent, with 46.67% acknowledging its impact.[44] Focus group discussions held in DRC in 2023 further revealed the role of both internal and cross-border armed groups competing for control over natural resources, fueling additional

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[41] Opongo, Elias, Anthony Egan, and Linus Kawuondi Gabriel. *Conflict Monitoring Tool in Africa for Strategic Intervention*. Nairobi: Centre for Research, Training and Publications, April 2024. https://crtp.hekima.ac.ke/crtp-research-series/.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid.

conflict. Key conflict drivers included high youth unemployment (69.17%), the proliferation of small arms (67.5%), and multiple armed groups, often foreign, which 60.83% of respondents recognized as aggravating conflict.[45] Additionally, 51.67% noted the failures within the judicial system, underscoring the need for accessible, effective justice to mitigate violence.[46]

During the period spanning from December 2023 to October 2024, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has grappled with persistent conflicts and humanitarian crises, particularly in its eastern provinces. This crisis has been escalating alarmingly since 2023, making it one of the most severe protection crises globally. As of 2024, over 25.4 million people, equivalent to a quarter of the population, are in urgent need of assistance, especially in the eastern provinces, which have been severely affected by violence and insecurity.[47] Existing tensions have escalated, resulting in violence, displacement of more than 6.9 million people, and immense suffering for civilians where various armed groups are vying for power and control over valuable resources, exacerbating the situation.[48] Despite concerted efforts by the government and the international community, the plight of millions of Congolese civilians remains at stake. This update explores the key developments and dynamics of the conflicts in the DRC during this critical period, shedding light on their impact on civilians and the ongoing efforts toward resolution and peacebuilding.

Analysis of conflicts in DRC

Political factors

Elections

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) experienced a surge in violence during the latter months of 2023, coinciding with the anticipation and aftermath of the national elections held in December. The political landscape became increasingly volatile as various factions vied for power, leading to heightened tensions and conflict across the country. Before the elections, election-related violence risked undermining the general elections scheduled for December 20, 2023.

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[45] Opongo, Elias, Anthony Egan, and Linus Kawuondi Gabriel. *Conflict Monitoring Tool in Africa for Strategic Intervention*. Nairobi: Centre for Research, Training and Publications, April 2024. https://crtp.hekima.ac.ke/crtp-research-series/.

[46] Ibid.

[47] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. (n.d.). Democratic Republic of Congo. Retrieved [12 April, 2024], from https://www.unocha.org/democratic-republic-congo

[48] Center for Preventive Action. (2024, February 21). Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Global Conflict Tracker*. https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo

Clashes between supporters of rival political parties resulted in assaults, sexual violence, and at least one death.[49] Also, violent acts by armed groups have been attributed to politics where, for instance, groups like the M23 rebels, primarily consisting of ethnic Tutsis, have historical grievances related to political marginalization and discrimination by the Congolese government.[50]

Social factors

Intercommunal violence

The ongoing violence in the regions of Ituri, South Kivu, and Maniema, among other regions, is driven by inter-community disputes. In the western region of Mai-Ndombe, tensions have increased between the Teke and Yaka communities, mainly due to conflicts over land ownership and customary rights.[51] Unfortunately, this continuous conflict has led to a high number of victims, with a significant number dying as a result. Furthermore, Human Rights Watch reports that the violence has had a significant humanitarian impact, causing more than 160,000 people to be displaced from their homes and experience profound humanitarian hardships.[52] A troubling trend has emerged where surrendered members of the Mobondo militia are being integrated into security forces without undergoing proper screening before being sent to military training centers. Despite their documented histories of human rights abuses, this practice raises serious concerns that they may perpetuate cycles of intercommunal violence, thereby undermining efforts to establish sustainable peace and stability in the affected regions.[53]

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[49] Human Rights Watch. (2023, December 16). DR Congo: Electoral Violence Threatens Vote https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/12/16/dr-congo-electoral-violence-threatens-vote
[50] ibid
[51] Famine Early Warning Systems Network. (2024). Democratic Republic of Congo: Food Security Outlook, February 2024. Retrieved from https://fews.net/southern-africa/democratic-republic-congo/food-security-outlook/february-2024
[52] Human Rights Watch. (2024). World Report 2024: Democratic Republic of Congo. Retrieved from https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/democratic-republic-congo
[53] ibid

Complex factors

Militia and rebel groups

The continued militia violence in DRC reflects a complex interplay of factors that are involved. In particular, militia violence is driven by a raft of issues that include local, national, and geopolitical interests, as well as social, economic, and religious interests that are difficult to separate from each other. The conflict between the M23 group and the Forces Armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and their allies has been a significant driver of violence and instability in the region, particularly driven by the desire to control mining areas in the mineral resource-rich eastern parts of DRC which has served as a motivation for both the M23 rebels and the FARDC to engage in conflict. The M23 group has also been accused of harboring political motives, mainly supported by Rwanda, which has led to diplomatic strife between DRC and Rwanda.

Foreign interference

Foreign governments like Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi have been accused of supporting armed groups in the DRC, straining diplomatic relations and complicating efforts to address the root causes of the conflict and achieve lasting peace.[54] For instance, the M23 rebels, allegedly backed by Rwanda, has intensified fighting with government forces recently, particularly in North Kivu province.[55]

Main actors involved in the DRC conflict

Militia/rebel groups

Militia/ rebel groups notable for the Congo violence include: M23, supported by Rwanda, which plays a significant role in the conflict in North Kivu, causing a severe humanitarian crisis with displacement, violence, and instability. There is Wazalendo, starting as youth self-defense groups now includes armed factions and clashes with M23, heightening conflict complexities.[56] The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in eastern DRC and Uganda, linked to the Islamic State, commit violent acts, adding to local instability and extremist threats. The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), active under Wazalendo, fuels ongoing violence. Additionally,

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[54] Human Rights Watch. (2024). *World Report 2024: Democratic Republic of Congo*. Retrieved from
https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/democratic-republic-congo
[55] Ibid
[56] ibid

CODECO in Djugu and Mahagi territory inflicts violence on civilians, worsening the humanitarian crisis and further complicating peace efforts.[57] Accusations against Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi for backing armed groups strain diplomatic ties and hinder resolving the conflict, blending geopolitical interests with local power struggles.

The M23 armed group, has played a significant role in the conflict in North Kivu, particularly in its continued fighting with the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC).[58] Since the beginning of 2024, the M23 has been advancing in the eastern part of the DRC, particularly towards Goma, which serves as the capital of North Kivu. The M23's recent actions suggest their intention to take control of Goma, potentially marking their second occupation of the city after a brief period of control in 2012. These clashes dramatically increased in February 2024, leading to international outrage and a severe humanitarian crisis with displacement, violence, and instability. This has also strained diplomatic relations between the DRC and Rwanda. [59]

Another rebel group the Wazalendo, initially formed as a youth defense group, has grown to include armed factions and has clashed with M23, further complicating the situation. Embedded in it is the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), part of the Wazalendo coalition, which has also contributed to ongoing violence where the group has been accused of having ties to the Rwandan genocide. Additionally, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), an ISIS-affiliated militia group that has been present in Congo for many years now and has conducted and claimed responsibility for many violent attacks against civilians, the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and the UN peacekeepers thus being another significant source of conflict in the region.[60] In addition, the Coalition of Congolese Democrats CODECO, a militia group in Djugu and Mahagi, has caused widespread violence, adding to the complexity and volatility of the conflict.

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[57] ibid

[58] ibid

[59] ReliefWeb. (n.d.). Escalating violence in Democratic Republic of Congo exacerbating humanitarian crisis, Special Representative warns Security Council, urging durable political solution. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/escalating-violence-democratic-republic-congo-exacerbating-humanitarian-crisis-special-representative-warns-security-council-urging-durable-political-solution

[60] U.S. Department of State. (2019). *Country Reports on Terrorism 2019: Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Retrieved from https://www.state.gov/reports/country-reports-on-terrorism-2019/democratic-republic-of-the-congo/

Political actors (government officials and the opposition)

The main actors implicated in these incidents were supporters of the ruling Union for Democracy and Social Progress Party (UDPS) and opposition party leaders.[61] Widespread logistical problems were reported during the elections, with violent incidents occurring at polling stations. The government and the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI) were the main actors involved in these incidents.[62] Following the elections, the aftermath saw the deployment of the army in various parts of the capital, Kinshasa, to prevent any unrest leading to sporadic violence as the security forces clashed with opposition supporters.[63] The post-election period was marked by calm and relative peace, attributed mainly to the successful election outcome. However, reports of increasing civilian casualties in eastern Congo due to ongoing rebel and militia activities highlighted persistent challenges in the region.[64]

Foreign countries involvement

As mentioned earlier, Rwanda, Burundi, and Uganda have been complacent in the DRC conflicts. Of particular interest is Rwanda, which has over time been accused of supporting the M23 rebel group to protect the Tutsi population in the DRC.[65] In the wake of the May 2024 attack on a displacement camp in eastern DRC that killed several civilians, the United States of America (US) castigated Rwanda Defence Forces for carrying out the attack together with M23 thus signifying the magnitude of Rwanda's involvement in the crisis.[66]

Latest Peace Processes and interventions in DRC

UN Diplomatic efforts

In response to the escalating violence and quest for a lasting peace, the UN Security Council has voiced concern. The UN Special Representative, Bintou Keita, has been spearheading diplomatic efforts at the top UN organ by urging states to do all they can to prevent the fighting in North Kivu

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[61] Ibid

[62] BBC News. (2023, December 31.). *DR Congo: The fight against electoral violence* https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-67850563

[63] Ibid

[64] Center for Preventive Action. (2024, February 21). Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. *Global Conflict Tracker.* https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-democratic-republic-congo

[65] Ibid

[66] Gregory, J. (2024, May 4). US blames Rwanda and rebels for deadly camp strike. BBC News. Retrieved from https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/crgyxxlzvk4o

Province from spreading beyond the DRC borders to avoid an expansion of the conflict on a regional scale.[67]

DRC Elections

The successful conduct of largely peaceful elections in December 2023, despite widespread skepticism, has been widely praised as a significant step toward peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This achievement provides an opportunity for national authorities to facilitate a comprehensive process of national reconciliation.[68]

Luanda Peace Process

With Rwanda's reported role in eastern DRC in supporting M23, and the need to de-escalate the tensions between DRC and Rwanda, Angola is mediating the regional tensions between the two foes with the resumption of the Luanda process.[69] The mediation efforts, spearheaded by Angolan President João Lourenço, have resulted in the adoption of a roadmap aimed at pacifying the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This roadmap seeks to address ongoing conflicts through peaceful resolution while fostering cooperative relations between the DRC and Rwanda.

SADC Peacekeeping Mission

In response to renewed fighting between FARDC and M23 forces, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) began sending troops to North Kivu. This mission, called SAMIDRC, started sending troops in December 2023 after the end of the mandate and withdrawal of the East African Force and includes 5,000 soldiers from Malawi, South Africa, and Tanzania.[70]

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) regional force has been deployed to assist the Congolese government in its military efforts against the M23 rebel group, working in coordination with MONUSCO, which is similarly committed to supporting the restoration of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This deployment, announced for December 28, 2023, comes in response to renewed clashes between the FARDC and M23 forces. This deployment aims to address the escalating conflict and provide support to the Congolese

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[67] Ibid
[68] Ibid
[69] Ibid
[70] Ibid

government in the wake of the former interventions like the East African Force that failed to ensure there is lasting peace in eastern Congo. [71] This deployment aims to address the escalating conflict and provide support to the Congolese government.[72]

Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region (PSC-F)

To address the persistent violence in the eastern DRC, there have been ongoing discussions on Revitalizing the 2013 Peace, Security, and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Region (PSC-F) which is a regional approach to de-escalating tensions in the region.[73] The Peace, Security, and Cooperation (PSC) Framework includes commitments from the DRC government, regional governments, and the international community, focusing on the establishment of benchmarks and indicators to monitor progress toward achieving peace and security objectives in the region. Key principles for the DRC include Security Sector Reform (SSR), decentralization, and the consolidation of state authority. This aims to strengthen these commitments and enhance cooperation among stakeholders to effectively address the root causes of conflict and promote lasting peace in the region.

Humanitarian assistance

Due to the long-standing status of the DRC conflict that has spanned more than 20 years, the country and particularly eastern Congo has been a hotspot for humanitarian organizations offering much-needed assistance. The conflict has displaced many people thus profound human suffering. Led by UN organizations, major humanitarian entities are present in the DRC, offering medical assistance, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) services, mediating conflicts, offering counselling and also reporting what is happening on the ground. International NGOs in DRC have highlighted the alarming increase in civilian casualties and the use of heavy weapons in populated areas, including displacement camps.[74] For instance, Save the Children reported that the renewed

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[71] Security Council Report. (2024, April). In hindsight: The escalating conflict in eastern DRC and UN support of regional forces. Security Council Report. Retrieved from https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-04/in-hindsight-the-escalating-conflict-in-eastern-drc-and-un-support-of-regional-forces.php

[72] Security Council Report. (2024, April). In hindsight: The escalating conflict in eastern DRC and UN support of regional forces. Security Council Report. Retrieved from https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-04/in-hindsight-the-escalating-conflict-in-eastern-drc-and-un-support-of-regional-forces.php

[73] ReliefWeb. (2024). Increased fighting in Democratic Republic of Congo exacerbating security woes, threatening regional conflagration, Special Envoy warns Security Council. Retrieved from https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/increased-fighting-democratic-republic-congo-exacerbating-security-woes-threatening-regional-conflagration-special-envoy-warns-security-council

[74] Al Jazeera. (2024, February 9). Photos: Aid Groups Sound Alarm Over Escalating DR Congo Violence. https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2024/2/9/photos-aid-groups-sound-alarm-over-escalating-dr-congo-violence

fighting has displaced over 150,000 people, with many children separated from their families. This adds to the seven million already displaced in DRC, mostly in the violence-ridden east.[75] The situation worsened around Goma after a pause during the recent election, where Doctors Without Borders noted a surge in war-wounded patients in medical units they support in North Kivu.[76]

In summary, the period from December 2023 to May 2024 witnessed a continuation of conflict and instability in the Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in the eastern provinces where the M23 insurgency and electoral violence remained significant challenges. Addressing the underlying grievances and effectively engaging with critical actors will be essential for achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

Ethiopia

The CMT data analysis report for 2024 revealed a conflict level of 2.4 in Ethiopia, indicating an aggressive level of conflict.[77] Border violence and incitement, identified by 45.53% of respondents, was the most prevalent conflict type, with territorial disputes, such as Tigray's call for secession, often leading to political violence.[78] Other reported conflicts included political violence (21.31%), illegal settlement of displaced persons (18.03%), and issues like cattle rustling, gender-based violence, and resource-based conflicts, each affecting smaller portions of the population.[79] Key conflict drivers included political and economic marginalization (52.85%), the spread of small arms (32.52%), partial implementation of peace agreements (58.54%), and ethnicized politics (55.28%), all fueling tensions.[80] These findings highlight the importance of addressing these drivers for effective conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts in Ethiopia.

During the period spanning from December 2023 to October 2024, internal conflicts in Ethiopia remained highly prevalent, mostly along ethnic and intercommunal lines. The conflict between the central Ethiopian regime and local Fano militias has intensified in the Amhara region, resulting in

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[75] Ibid
[76] Ibid
[77] Opongo, Elias, Anthony Egan, and Linus Kawuondi Gabriel. *Conflict Monitoring Tool in Africa for Strategic Intervention*. Nairobi: Centre for Research, Training and Publications, April 2024. https://crtp.hekima.ac.ke/crtp-research-series/.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] Ibid.

significant civilian casualties, widespread displacement, and disruptions in the delivery of essential services. The federal government has conducted operations to disarm the militias, but there is resistance through continued fighting that worsens the situation. Moreover, the government of Ethiopia is battling former allies-turned-enemies in the form of Amhara regional forces and non-state militias from Amhara and Oromia as part of its quest to consolidate central military control and react to ethnic violence in the two regions.[81] There are fears that the fighting may expand into other areas, specifically Oromia, also experiencing intertribal conflict. The Oromia zone has been plagued by intense conflict between the Oromo Liberation Army forces and government security forces. This conflict has been marked by severe human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings and the forced displacement of residents from their homes.

The escalation of conflict in Ethiopia is further compounded by the country's ethnic federalism, which carries deep-seated historical tensions. Long-standing grievances among various ethnic groups create significant obstacles to achieving effective conflict resolution.[82] These conflicts have significantly exacerbated humanitarian crises. Access to basic necessities, such as food and healthcare, is severely limited, particularly in areas affected by military conflicts. While international organizations continue to advocate for peace and dialogue, a sustainable solution remains elusive.

The conflict between Ethiopia and Somalia has recently intensified significantly in the disputed border areas. The primary source of conflict seems to stem from territorial issues and other ethnic tensions between the Somali and Ethiopian communities.[83] The two sides clashed once more in May 2024 as both accusing each other of violating the borderline and launching attacks. The Ethiopian authorities sought to expand their military contingents in the border area, claiming it would help strengthen the territory's defense. In contrast, the Somali authorities have described it as an infringement on their sovereignty. It has resulted in hefty loss of lives and displacement of

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[81] Center for Preventive Action, "Conflict in Ethiopia," Global Conflict Tracker, May 12, 2022, https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-ethiopia.
[82] Adegehe, Asnake Kefale. Federalism and Ethnic Conflict in Ethiopia: A Comparative Study of the Somali and Benishangul-Gumuz Regions. n.d. Accessed [August 14, 2024]. https://scholarlypublications.universiteitleiden.nl/access/item%3A2962276/view.
[83] Fred Harter and Fred Harter, "We Are Ready for a War': Somalia Threatens Conflict with Ethiopia over Breakaway Region," *The Observer*, January 13, 2024, sec. World news, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/jan/13/we-are-ready-for-a-war-somalia-threatens-conflict-with-ethiopia-over-breakaway-region.

people, which has worsened an already dire humanitarian crisis in the region. There have been numerous attempts to reduce tension, but to date, no permanent way of avoiding escalation of the conflict has been achieved.

Towards the end of July 2024, the Amhara ethno-nationalist militia group (Fano) , launched an offensive in the northern Amhara region, gaining control over key roadways and staging an attack on Ethiopia's second-largest city in September 2024.[84] This offensive appears to secure critical communication routes, restricting the federal government's access to northern Amhara and contested areas in Tigray.[85] While the Ethiopian government likely lacks the military capacity to decisively counter Fano, the militia's decentralized nature also limits its ability to consolidate political power.[86] A more robust Fano insurgency heightens the risk of ethnic conflicts with neighboring regions, such as Tigray and Oro. It could impact regional stability by involving Eritrea, Somalia, and Sudan, potentially destabilizing Ethiopia and the wider Horn of Africa.

Kenya

The CMT 2024 report showed that Kenya's conflict level was rated at 2.3, indicating a confrontational stage.[87] Cattle rustling was the most widespread issue, with a high prevalence rate of 42.92%, pointing to significant concerns around livestock theft.[88] Domestic violence followed, affecting around 37.77% of households, while armed robbery and theft were reported by 35.62% of respondents, highlighting persistent security issues.[89] Resource-based violence was also notable, with 31.76% identifying conflicts over resources such as land, water and grazing fields.[90] Gender-based violence had a moderate prevalence of 40.34%, indicating an ongoing concern.[91]

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[84] Karr, Liam. "Africa File, September 26, 2024: Fano Offensive in Ethiopia's Amhara; Egypt Arms Somalia; Rebel Drones in Mali; Burkina Thwarts Another Coup." Institute for the Study of War, September 26, 2024. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/africa-file-september-26-2024-fano-offensive-ethiopia%E2%80%99s-amhara-egypt-arms-somalia-rebel.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Karr, Liam. "Africa File, September 26, 2024: Fano Offensive in Ethiopia's Amhara; Egypt Arms Somalia; Rebel Drones in Mali; Burkina Thwarts Another Coup." Institute for the Study of War, September 26, 2024. https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/africa-file-september-26-2024-fano-offensive-ethiopia%E2%80%99s-amhara-egypt-arms-somalia-rebel.
[87] Opongo, Elias, Anthony Egan, and Linus Kawuondi Gabriel. *Conflict Monitoring Tool in Africa for Strategic Intervention*. Nairobi: Centre for Research, Training and Publications, April 2024. https://crtp.hekima.ac.ke/crtp-research-series/.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid.
[90] Ibid.
[91] Ibid.

Although political violence was reported at 28.33%, and police brutality at 17.17%, they were seen as less widespread yet still concerning.[92] Key drivers of conflict included high youth unemployment (72.96%), political and economic marginalization (40.34%), and cattle rustling for economic reasons (37.77%).[93] Other significant drivers were climate change, resource competition, armed groups, and unaddressed grievances.

During the period from December 2023 to October 2024, Kenya experienced a series of conflicts, with several political violence events and a number of reported fatalities recorded.[94] The key actors involved in perpetuating conflict during this time included Al-Shabaab militants, pastoralist militias, political groups, and demonstrators. Al-Shabaab, a terrorist organization originating from Somalia, continued to pose a serious security threat to Kenya, carrying out attacks and instilling fear among civilians. Pastoralist militias, often engaged in disputes over land and resources, exacerbated tensions through violent confrontations, whereas demonstrations by civil servants also turned ugly with violent confrontations.[95]

Causes of conflict and the main actors involved

Social factors

Al-Shabaab-Activities

Over the reporting period in Kenya, there were incidents of violence involving the Al-Shabab terror group based in Somalia but with a presence in East Africa, resulting in the deaths of civilians in several areas of the county.[96] The organization has executed large-scale attacks in Kenya which typically involve the detonation of explosives, followed by gunfire, surprise attacks, military-style offensives, abductions, and targeted killings.[97]The northeastern part of Kenya has been the epitome of Al Shabab attacks due to its proximity to Somalia, with Mandera County bearing the scars for many of the violent acts by the terror group.

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] ACLED. (2024, January 19). Kenya Situation Update: January 2024 | Al-Shabaab, Pastoralist Militias, and the M23. https://acleddata.com/2024/01/19/kenya-situation-update-january-2024-al-shabaab-pastoralist-militias-and-the-m23/
[95] Ibid
[96] Ibid
[97] National Counterterrorism Center. n.d. Al-Shabaab. National Counterterrorism Center. Accessed [January 19, 2024]. https://www.dni.gov/nctc/ftos/al_shabaab_fto.html.

Notably, in March 2024, an explosion rocked a small hotel near a police station in the town of Mandera in northeastern Kenya where the blast claimed the lives of four individuals, including three police officers, and left several others wounded. Authorities revealed that the explosion was caused by an improvised explosive device planted at the hotel, which detonated during breakfast, catching a crowd of people off guard. Mandera, situated on the border with Somalia, has been a region of concern due to its proximity to areas with heightened security risks.[98] In April, the group attacked a village and burned vehicles down where the militants also took advantage of the sparse population along the Lamu-Witu-Garsen route to attack several vehicles.[99] The attack resulted in one fatality and two injuries, with the injured individuals treated for minor injuries and discharged.[100] Overall between 2023 and May 2024, al-Shabaab conducted 37 remote violent attacks, with an increasing number targeting civilians and security forces that resulted in several casualties and deaths, latest being on April 19th 2024 still in Mandera County that led to death of more than 10 civilians.[101]

Socio-economic factors

Armed Pastoralists

During the period from December 2023 to April 2024, Kenya experienced a notable increase in sporadic violence, largely attributed to armed pastoralist groups. These groups, primarily located in the North Rift region, were involved in nearly 30% of the violent incidents in the country.[102] The root cause of the problem lies in the region's heavy reliance on pastoralism, which covers a significant portion of Kenya's land. Insecurity challenges brought about by pastoralist militias have plagued the region, exacerbated by the proliferation of small weapons and increasing tactical sophistication.[103] For instance, in February Baringo North, a team of security officers were attacked by suspected bandits, resulting in one National Police reservist being injured. This

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[98] VOA News. (2024, April 7). Explosion near Kenya police station kills 4. Voice of America. https://www.voanews.com/a/explosion-near-kenya-police-station-kills-4/7542713.html
[99] Nation Africa (2024, April 09). One dead, two injured as Al-Shabaab torch vehicles in Lamu. Retrieved from source. https://nation.africa/kenya/counties/lamu/one-dead-two-injured-as-al-shabaab-torch-vehicles-in-lamu--4584898#google_vignette
[100] Ibid
[101] Crisis24. (2024, April 29). Kenya: Explosion in El Wak, Mandera County, reportedly kills at least 12 people. Retrieved from https://crisis24.garda.com/alerts/2024/04/kenya-explosion-in-el-wak-mandera-county-reportedly-kills-at-least-12-people-april-29
[102] Ibid
[103] The Conversation. (2022, November 09). Kenya violence: 5 key drivers of the decades-long conflict in the north and what to do about them. The Conversation. https://theconversation.com/kenya-violence-5-key-drivers-of-the-decades-long-conflict-in-the-north-and-what-to-do-about-them-193466

incident occurred while the team was responding to a previous bandit attack that had resulted in the death of a head teacher on the same area.

The attackers fired bullets at the lead vehicle of the convoy, injuring one reservist and causing damage to the police vehicles.[104] Additionally in the same month of March 2024, bandit attacks in Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet, and Samburu counties resulted in the deaths of five people.[105] In Baringo North, a 59-year-old man was ambushed and killed while tending to his livestock near Yatya Primary School. In Marakwet East, two individuals were fatally shot in the Liter area. Bandits also drove away a herd of cattle during these attacks.[106] Moreover, in Samburu County, a 70-year-old man was killed by bandits in Lolmisingiyoi village after resisting their attempts to steal goats. Also, the killing of an MCA in the area sparked protests over the alleged failure of security agencies to restore peace.[107] This led to residents in affected areas of Longorate, Longewan, Lolmolok, Loosuk, Porro, and Morijo, flee to safer grounds due to the fear of attacks

Political factors

Political violence and demonstrations

Between February 17 and March 15, 2024, Kenya witnessed 89 political violence events and 64 reported fatalities, according to ACLED data.[108] The majority of these events occurred in Nairobi, with 12 recorded instances, mostly riot events. Samburu and Narok counties reported the highest number of fatalities, with six each. In Samburu, the fatalities resulted from battles and violence against civilians, while in Narok, battles and riots accounted for the fatalities.[109]

Riots were the most common event type during this period, with 49 recorded events, followed by violence against civilians, totaling 26 events mostly in Nairobi.[110] One notable incident occurred on February, when hundreds of health workers, supported by Kenya Medical Practitioners

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[104] NTV Kenya. (2024, February 15). Suspected bandits spray bullets on police convoy in Baringo North. NTV Kenya. https://ntvkenya.co.ke/news/suspected-bandits-spray-bullets-on-police-convoy-in-baringo-north

[105] Citizen Digital. (2024, February 22). Five people killed as bandits attack Baringo, Samburu, and Marakwet counties. Citizen Digital. https://www.citizen.digital/news/five-people-killed-as-bandits-attack-baringo-samburu-and-marakwet-counties-n337224

[106] Ibid

[107] Kenya News. (2024, March 05). Elder killed in bandit attack. Kenya News. https://www.kenyanews.go.ke/elder-killed-in-bandit-attack/

[108] Ibid

[109] ACLED. (2024, March 22). Kenya Situation Update March 2024: Demonstrations, gangs, and Kenya-Somalia relations. ACLED. https://acleddata.com/2024/03/22/kenya-situation-update-march-2024-demonstrations-gangs-and-kenya-somalia-relations/

[110] Ibid

Pharmacists and Dentists Union (KMPDU) officials, protested at the Ministry of Health and the National Treasury in Nairobi. They demanded the opening of internship posts for medical graduates, as previously agreed upon in talks with the Health Ministry. Police dispersed the peaceful demonstration with tear gas, resulting in over 20 injuries. Subsequent protests were held in Nairobi and other counties to denounce police violence and advocate for KMPDU demands.[111]

In June 2024, Kenyan youth, particularly youth belonging to "Gen Z," used social media to mobilize against government policies, including the controversial Finance Bill 2024, which proposed higher taxes amidst economic hardship and widespread corruption.[112] The protests, which transcended generational and ethnic divides, were driven by grievances over unemployment, political exclusion, corruption, and police brutality. Though Kenya's Constitution guarantees the right to protest, the government often suppresses dissent with excessive force, a trend that continued under President Ruto, despite his campaign promises to curb police brutality.[113] Ruto's response, including dismissals within his cabinet frustrated protesters, who accused him of promoting tribalism and favoring an elite political class.[114] This youth-led movement reflects a broader demand across Africa for accountable governance, human rights, and economic equity, challenging entrenched authoritarianism. These protests signify that African youth are far from disengaged in politics; they are determined to bring about lasting change despite the odds, highlighting the risk of continued unrest if governments fail to address these demands.

Gang violence

Though this kind of violence is very limited in its scope, sporadic incidences of gang violence have erupted in Kenya, leading to conflicts. A notable incidence occurred on February, 2024 that involved utility workers attempting to remove illegal electricity connections in the Marachi area of Busia town. This led to violent clashes over the next three days, with at least one fatality reported.[115] The violence was attributed to the jobless group, an organization associated with the

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[111] Ibid

[112] Shilaho, Westen K, and Lennon Monyae. "Kenya's Historic Gen-Z Led Protests: The Issues." ACCORD, September 5, 2024. https://www.accord.org.za/analysis/kenyas-historic-gen-z-led-protests-the-issues/.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Standard Media Kenya. (2024, February 24). Eight arrested as police reign in on dreaded Marachi Boys gang. Standard Media Kenya. https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/business/western/article/2001490515/eight-arrested-as-police-reign-in-on-dreaded-marachi-boys-gang

old Marachi Boys gang, which had political connections. The strained relationship between the Jobless Group and politicians became evident, as politicians had previously supported the group but were now facing backlash. The Jobless Group's chairperson, accused politicians for politicizing the situation, highlighting the political motivations behind the violence.[116]

Complex factors

Climate-induced conflicts

Extreme weather events as a result of climate change such as floods and droughts in Kenya have increased the susceptibility to disasters thus posing a major environmental concern, resulting in extensive destruction and humanitarian emergencies in different areas of the country. Notably, the floods in Kenya in 2024 have caused severe damage to communities, economies, and ecosystems.[117] Floods caused damage or destruction to roads, bridges, schools, and other important infrastructure, making it difficult to access necessary essential services and slowing down relief operations.[118] The interruption of transportation systems has also impeded the distribution of assistance and emergency response efforts. The floods have led to casualties, forced relocation of residents, and damage to property and infrastructure. Many individuals have had to leave their homes and find refuge in temporary camps or with family members, increasing the pressure on limited resources and humanitarian assistance.

Latest intervention variables

Increased security presence and deployments

In response to the escalating violence, the Kenyan government announced expanded operations against pastoralist militias in the North Rift region, extending into Marsabit, Isiolo, and Meru counties.[119] For instance, where escalating banditry has displaced over 2000 families in Baringo County, the government has deployed more security officers and armored personnel carriers to tackle the issue.[120] This renewed effort follows a series of violent attacks that have claimed 13

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[116] *The Star Kenya.* (2023, February 14). From goons to entrepreneurs: Busia most feared gang reforms as members get jobs. The Star Kenya. https://www.the-star.co.ke/counties/western/2023-02-14-from-goons-to-entrepreneurs-busia-most-feared-gang-reforms-as-members-get-jobs/
[117] Ibid.
[118] Human Rights Watch. (2024, May 2). Kenya: Floods Threaten Marginalized People. ReliefWeb. https://reliefweb.int/report/kenya/kenya-floods-threaten-marginalized-people
[119] Ibid
[120] Ibid

lives and displaced thousands of families. Despite these measures, the violence persists. The government has announced an expansion of operations targeting pastoralist militias in the North Rift region, extending into Marsabit, Isiolo, and Meru counties. Simultaneously, operations against Al-Shabaab continue in the northeast, supported by international interventions on the Somali side.[121]

Humanitarian assistance

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) also implemented a crisis response plan to reduce the vulnerabilities of crisis-affected populations and host communities by supporting evidence-based interventions increasing access to basic services such as clean water, shelter, health, and restoration of livelihoods.[122] Additionally, due to the past flooding crisis in Kenya, the government, civil society and faith-based organizations, well-wishers as well as international community took the lead role to offer the affected victims much needed humanitarian aid.[123]

Negotiations and judicial interventions

In order to avert violent acts from erupting due to various demonstrations held, the government has engaged the rioting parties in negotiations to come up with an agreement that would determination of demonstrations. Consequently, civil society groups have explored judicial mechanisms to quell demonstrating groups to end protests that would result to violence. In cases where the security personnel have threatened demonstrators, judicial orders have also been used to compel security officers to uphold the rule of law in dealing with protesters.[124]

Suspension of services

The government's approach to mitigating climate-induced disasters in Kenya has included implementing significant measures such as the suspension of education, restriction of movement, and transport services in affected regions. For instance, curfews have been imposed repeatedly in areas prone to banditry and terrorism, aiming to restore order and prevent further crises. While

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[121] Ibid
[122] Global Crisis Response Platform. (2023, November 27) Kenya Crisis Response Plan 2024
https://crisisresponse.iom.int/response/kenya-crisis-response-plan-2024
[123] Ibid
[124] Ibid

these interventions highlight proactive governance, the long-term efficacy and broader social impacts of these measures warrant further examination.[125] Economic activities like mining have also sometimes been suspended especially when rival groups fight for mining sites to avert conflicts and disasters. In the latest flooding disaster in 2024, the government has suspended schooling country-wide as a disaster mitigation measure.[126]

South Sudan

According to CMT 2024 data, South Sudan experienced high levels of confrontational conflict (2.8).[127] Among the prevalent issues, cattle rustling, political violence, border disputes, illegal settlements, and resource-based violence were significant.[128] Major conflict drivers included political and economic marginalization (88.33%), proliferation of small arms and light weapons (80.67%), multiple armed groups (75.83%), and high youth unemployment (76.47%).[129] Additionally, competition for resources, unresolved grievances, and partial peace agreement implementations were cited as prominent factors.

In 2024, South Sudan faced significant challenges in its preparation for the elections initially scheduled for late 2024, which were later postponed to 2026. This delay has raised concerns about a potential escalation in violence, as critical provisions of the peace agreements remain unimplemented. The transitional government has pointed to unresolved issues, such as the integration of armed groups, electoral reforms, and the establishment of democratic institutions, as key obstacles to a timely election. These challenges highlight the fragile state of South Sudan's peace process and the urgent need for intensified efforts to address outstanding agreements and maintain stability. It is crucial to note that the country is still fragile, and ethnic conflicts and political instabilities are still of great concern. The peace process initiated to make way for free and fair elections is not on track; some of the elements, like registration of voters and training of integrated forces, have not yet been initiated. This led to much concern among the international community regarding the delay in implementing the 2018- Revitalized Peace Agreement in South

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[125] Ibid

[126] Government of Kenya. (2024, May 03). Government adopts holistic flood mitigation approach. President's Office, Republic of Kenya.https://www.president.go.ke/government-adopts-holistic-flood-mitigation-approach/

[127] Opongo, Elias, Anthony Egan, and Linus Kawuondi Gabriel. *Conflict Monitoring Tool in Africa for Strategic Intervention*. Nairobi: Centre for Research, Training and Publications, April 2024. https://crtp.hekima.ac.ke/crtp-research-series/.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

Sudan. Some of the critical elements of the agreement include the registration of voters, the formation of structures to put in place a permanent constitution, and the training of unified forces, which need to be revised.[130]

The United Nations and other international and regional actors have cautioned that if no measures are taken to eliminate these delays, the elections could cause growing violence, threatening the tenuous peace process is likely to be rolled back and acute violence resumed.[131] These delays are especially concerning given the specific and unpredictable security situation, the continued inter-communal conflict, and the deteriorating humanitarian situation that may further complicate the security environment. This unenviable position has made intercommunal violence one of the leading threats to the peace of South Sudan. The escalating violence in South Sudan is largely driven by resource-based competition, exacerbated by the influx of refugees and returnees fleeing the ongoing conflict in southern Sudan. Humanitarian observers have highlighted that the strain on resources, particularly food and water, is intensifying tensions among communities. Food insecurity and displacement remain critical issues, impacting large segments of the population and fueling instability. The combination of these factors underscores the urgent need for coordinated efforts to address resource scarcity, provide humanitarian assistance, and mitigate conflict triggers in affected areas. There is still a high likelihood of violent incidents linked to the election, even with the intervention of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The international organizations have pointed out that the government of South Sudan must show political will and commitment to conduct a free, fair, and violence-free election.

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[130] Digital Quality Editor, "SPLM-IO Proposes 24 Months to Make Permanent Constitution before Elections - Radio Tamazuj," Radio Tamazuj (Radio Tamazuj, March 2, 2024), https://www.radiotamazuj.org/en/news/article/splm-io-proposes-24-months-to-make-permanent-constitution-before-elections.

[131] United Nations, "If Not Managed Carefully, South Sudan Elections Could Result in 'Disastrous Consequences,' Peacekeeping Chief Warns Security Council | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases," press.un.org, 2024, https://press.un.org/en/2024/sc15611.doc.htm.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The 2024 CMT study applied a cross-sectional research design by comparing diverse perceptions from different contexts. The design was important in understanding the actual context of conflicts, their multi-level perspectives, as well as the cultural influences involved. The research also applied a mixed-method approach, which accommodated quantitative as well as qualitative methods of data collection. This helped in formulating a holistic approach to interpreting the research findings.[132] The mixed-method approach was also important in the rigorous use of quantitative research that helped in examining the magnitude of conflict and the frequency in which the conflict indicators were observed.

Target Population

The target population of the 2024 CMT research were mainly individuals with informed levels of knowledge of the prevailing security situation from the general public, civil society organizations, NGOs, and key informants from the DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan. Examples of professions represented by respondents included peace practitioner, political/community leaders, security personnel, media practitioners, teachers, journalists, those working in the healthcare services, the government officials, the business sector, and religious leaders. The population also included people involved in peace processes within the targeted four countries. The research only included participants over the age of 18 years who gave their verbal informed consent to participate in the study. The age brackets considered in this study were 18-26 years, 27-35 years, 36-50 years, and above 50 years.

Sampling Procedure

Convenience and purposive methods of non-probability sampling were used. First, four countries (Ethiopia, DRC, South Sudan and Kenya) were selected purposively to represent countries with various conflict situations in Eastern Africa. Secondly, the participants were selected based on their availability and willingness to take part in the study. Inclusion criteria were used to ensure that

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[132] University of Southern California, "Research guides," https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns

only those people who had the desired attributes and experience participated in the CMT 2024 study. The minimum targeted sample size for each country was 120 respondents for the questionnaire and 40 respondents for the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) totaling to 520 respondents for the four countries.

Data Collection Tool

The 2024 CMT questionnaire was designed based on the objectives of the study as well as the findings of the literature review. The questionnaire employed a combination of open-ended and closed-ended questions to assess conflict levels effectively. To ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement tools, a pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted before the actual data collection process. This pre-testing phase allowed for the identification and resolution of potential issues, ensuring the robustness of the instrument for capturing accurate and meaningful data. This was done to test the relevancy of the questions and the validity of the questionnaire in achieving the research objectives. From the pre-test, different indicators were validated as appropriate for measuring different stages of conflict in a given country. A final draft questionnaire was developed and translated from English to French for DRC to ensure easier data collection in DRC.

Data Collection Procedure

A total of 603 questionnaire copies were filled and returned across the four countries (DRC-120 copies, South Sudan-130 copies. Ethiopia-120 copies, and Kenya-233 copies). Additionally, a total of 50 respondents participated in the FGD (Kenya: Kisumu -10, Nairobi -10, South Sudan: Juba – 10, DRC: Goma – 10, Ethiopia: Addis Ababa -10). Another 20 respondents participated in the Key Informant Interviews (KII's) (Kisumu-5, Goma-5, Juba-5 and Addis-Ababa-5). Cumulatively, a total of 673 respondents participated in the CMT 2024 study. In DRC, Ethiopia and South Sudan, the questionnaire data was collected using hard copies due to limited internet connectivity and the response rate was 100%. In Kenya, the data was collected online using survey monkey. Data collection for the 2024 CMT research was conducted between June and August 2024. For data collection, we engaged conflict monitors, individuals contracted on the ground in each of the four countries, to assist with gathering data, providing updates on conflict situations, and mobilizing participants for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs). The conflict monitors underwent specialized training to equip them with skills in systematic data

collection, focusing on neutrality, accuracy, and ethical considerations. This training by the CRTP lead researcher enhanced their ability to observe, select participants for the CMT research and report objectively, improving the reliability and scope of data collected. Their role was pivotal in providing ground-level insights that enriched the 2024 CMT study's contextual depth and accuracy.

These monitors were well-informed about the conflict dynamics in their respective countries, enabling them to effectively identify and mobilize the right target respondents. Alongside administering questionnaires, we also gathered in-depth data on conflicts in Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, and South Sudan through FGDs and KIIs, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the conflict scenarios across the regions.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted using structured yet flexible formats to facilitate open and candid dialogue. FGDs included diverse participants from different demographic groups, ensuring representation of varied perspectives. KIIs targeted individuals with expertise or firsthand experience related to the conflicts, such as local leaders, humanitarian workers, and conflict-affected individuals. This diversity added richness to the 2024 CMT research findings. The use of tools such as questionnaires, structured interviews, and structured FGD guide was carefully chosen to triangulate data and enhance both reliability and validity. Questionnaires provided standardized data, while KII's and FGD's captured deeper, qualitative insights. Combining these tools allowed the study to address complex dynamics with both breadth and depth.

Limitations of the Research

The 2024 CMT research encountered some limitations. Firstly, accessing various regions within each of the four countries to collect comprehensive data on the conflict situations was not possible. Therefore, in South Sudan, data was collected predominantly in Central Equatorial State and Lakes State. In Ethiopia, the data was collected in Addis-Ababa, South Ethiopia region, Sidama region, Gambella region, Tigray region, Oromia region, Amhara region, and South West Ethiopia region. In DRC, the data was mostly collected in North and South Kivu provinces. In Kenya, data was collected across 23 counties. However, only 10 counties had substantive data that was enough to give a concrete conflict analysis. To address this, we classified Kenya into regions namely, Nairobi,

the Coast region, the Western region, the Central Rift Valley region and the North Rift Valley region. Consequently, from the data collected across the four countries, in some of the sub-regions within the country, the number of respondents was not enough to be able to provide a comprehensive analysis of the conflict. As such, while the CMT 2024 may have a conflict level for the entire four nations, the data mostly reflects the happenings in the areas where data was collected, and in only a few instances can the data be generalized to the entire nation.

Secondly, the 2024 CMT gathers opinions and comments from the various stakeholders that were identified by the criterion set forth by the CRTP team. As such, the conflict level for the four countries is based on the perception of the various respondents who either filled the questionnaire, participated in the KII's or took part in the FGD. Nonetheless, perception can sometimes be based on stereotypes and assumptions. To ensure that the CMT findings were not skewed based on the respondents' stereotypes and assumptions, validation exercises were conducted across the four countries to ensure that the conflict levels and other findings were accurate.

DATA ANALYSIS

Application of Conflict Monitoring Tool and Data Analysis

Below is a summary of the data analysis procedure and report for the four countries. Data analysis was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. Content analysis was applied for open-ended questions while statistical descriptive analysis was applied to close-ended questions. Below is the specific procedure used in analyzing the level of conflict.

Step 1: Identification of Indicators of Conflict

Sixty (60) indicators were used to calculate the statistical rating of the severity of the conflicts. Each level had a unique group of indicators. A full list of the indicators under each of the six levels of conflict is listed in the Appendix section.

Step 2: Rating Participants' Responses

The indicators were presented to the participants of the study who rated them using a four-point Likert scale. The Likert scale measured whether these indicators were observed and if so, the frequency of their occurrence. In this case, the ratings of the scale were '*Not Observed*', '*Rarely Observed*', '*Sometimes Observed*', and '*Consistently Observed*'.

Step 3: Summarizing Participants' Responses

The primary data from each country were summarized using frequencies for each indicator under the four choices of the Likert scale. The more such indicators for category one [levels zero (0), negative two (-2), and a negative one (-1)] are observed, the higher the chances that the region or country is either enjoying relative peace or moving towards the realization of peace. On the contrary, the more consistent indicators for category two [levels one (1), two (2), and three (3)] are observed, the higher the chance that the country is experiencing conflict or the conflict situation is escalating.

Step 4: Weighting the Responses

Weights were introduced for the four categories of the Likert Scale because a 'Not observed' case of an indicator contributes differently in determining the conflict level compared to another case of a 'Consistently observed' response of the same indicator. However, the weighting for the

responses for indicators levels zero (0), negative two (-2), and a negative one (-1) and those for levels one (1), two (2), and three (3) were rated in reverse order. This was meant to maintain consistency in calculating the conflict levels. In other words, the weighting of the '**Not observed**' indicators in category one was meant to mirror the **'Consistently observed'** category two indicators and vice versa.

Example:

The first indicator in conflict Level zero (L_0I_1) states:

[L_0I_1]: There is reduced number of conflicts resolved through community elders/court
system
(The consistent observation of this indicator means that the country is experiencing
peace.)

The first indicator in conflict Level one (L_1I_1) states:

[L_1I_1]: There is increase of access of light weapons by ordinary citizens
(The consistent observation of this indicator means that the conflict situation is
escalating.)

In this example, a **'Consistently Observed'** response for L_0I_1 implies a '**Not Observed**' response for L_1I_1. Theory indicates that it is <u>less likely</u> that a reduced number of conflicts resolved envisioned in L_0I_1 will be accompanied by consistently observed increase of access of light weapons by ordinary citizens as stated in L_1I_1. Therefore, the weighting of the responses for the two categories of indicators was based on the following interpretations.

(i) An increase in the frequency in which category one indicators are observed means that the conflict is de-escalating and vice versa.

(ii) An increase in the frequency in which category two indicators are observed means that the conflict is escalating and vice versa.

The Table below shows the weights that were assigned for the responses for each conflict level.

Table 3: Weighting of Participants' Responses

Level	Not observed	Rarely observed	Sometimes observed	Consistently observed
Level 0	3	2	1	0.01
Level 1	0.01	1	2	3
Level 2	0.01	1	2	3
Level 3	0.01	1	2	3
Level -2	3	2	1	0.01
Level -1	3	2	1	0.01

(Source: CRTP Research)

The Table 4 summarizes country-weighted means per each of the 60 indicators. In this case, the interpretation is that a greater weighted mean depicts a case of a higher conflict level. To build lasting peace, actors should seek to ensure that these weighted means are as close to zero as possible. In this case, zero is the ideal weighted mean where the region or country enjoys absolute peace. For example, all indicators in level zero, negative two, and negative one should be consistently observed for the region to have absolute peace. In an ideal situation of absolute peace, none of the indicators in levels one, two, or three of the Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT) should be observed. However, since the concept of absolute peace is practically unattainable, the conflict levels as measured by the CMT are expected to fluctuate within a range from negative two to positive three. This range reflects the realistic dynamics of conflict, acknowledging that complete elimination of all conflict indicators is not feasible.

Table 4: Conflict Level Constants in South Sudan, Kenya, Ethiopia and DRC

		SOUTH SUDAN	KENYA	ETHIOPIA	DRC
	There is protection and promotion of fundamental human rights, which include upholding principles such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and belief, and the right to education and healthcare	2.307692	1.374318	0.495868	1.83375
	There is an absence of direct and structural violence, including armed conflict, terrorism, political repression, and human rights violations	2.207692	1.519364	0.983471	1.750417
	There is increased social cohesion and cooperation witnessed by inter-ethnic peaceful coexistence and inter-ethnic marriages	2.476923	1.184318	1	1.342833
	There are effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts peacefully, through judicial court process or traditional dialogue, mediation, negotiation, and reconciliation processes	2.515385	1.261	1.355372	0.853583
LEVEL 0	There is an observed increase in youth and women employment	2.684615	1.950909	1.61157	1.543167
	There is an enabling environment that allows economic activities to prevail without interruption	2.477308	1.478818	1.669421	1.177417
	There is perceived equitable resource distribution and services by the government	2.500385	1.873364	1.413223	1.925833
	There is a sense of trust and cooperation between the government and the citizens fostering stability	2.561923	1.778	1.429752	1.884417
	There is perceived low level of corruption	2.700385	2.159682	1.289256	1.867833
		2.492479	**1.619975**	**1.24977**	**1.575472**
	There is increase of access to light weapons by ordinary citizens	2.292615	1.202361	2.587025	2.0425

	There is increase in political-based hate speeches, peaceful demonstrations and workers strike	2.246462	1.894676	2.074711	1.75
	There is rise in the level of criminal activities/gang groups e.g. mugging	2.169538	2.056296	2.206942	2.341667
	There are cases of ethnic social discrimination and exclusion by government authorities	2.184923	1.839028	2.017273	1.751
LEVEL 1	Increased cattle rustling activities	1.808231	1.497731	1.50562	1.942333
	Lack of gender inclusion and social groups (women, youth, labour/workers association, people with disability) in conflict management process	2.061538	1.848241	1.497025	1.992
	There are increased incidences of disappearance of men, women and young people in the community	2.492538	1.474306	2.059008	2.241917
	Unresolved historical grievances/revenge attack and killings	2.5	1.585231	2.050165	2.350167
	There is lack of the full implementation of Peace Agreements	2.407692	1.645093	1.835455	2.291667
	There is an increased complaints of economic hardships e.g. High cost of living	2.646154	2.505093	2.40562	2.541667
		2.280969	**1.754806**	**2.023884**	**2.124492**
	There are occasional low key armed conflict in the country (between different armed groups/government forces, etc)	2.039308	1.268761	2.595041	1.875417
	There is frequent acquisition of small arms and light weapons by residences.	2.216	1.172844	2.289256	2.191667
	There are reported cases of police brutality in the process of enforcement of government orders such as disarmament processes	2.231385	1.849633	2.116364	1.8925
	There are violent demonstrations/riots (by civilians, opposition leaders, civil servants) against perceived government oppression and exclusion	2.131385	1.758028	1.530496	1.966667

	There is perceived erosion of governance structures, (the judicial courts) weakening state institutions, and challenging the legitimacy of the government	1.884615	1.735321	1.728595	1.651
LEVEL 2	There are rampant abuses of fundamental human rights through the suppression of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion and belief, e.g., media censorship	2.038462	1.758073	1.366033	1.676167
	There is an increased political incitement /negative propaganda that tend to generate violence	2.723077	1.772018	1.926612	1.517833
	There are frequent incidences of inter-ethnic/cross-border clashes	2.476923	1.403226	1.554793	1.550667
	There are cases of people being pushed out of their homes and other personal properties for political reasons (e.g. 'ethnic cleansing')	1.946385	1.27789	1.711322	1.268833
	There are increased reports on violation of human rights e.g. armed robbery, gender and sexual based violence, police brutality	2.423077	1.849725	2.083058	2.150333
	There is disruption of economic activities due to conflicts/violence (such as trading, food supply, market activities etc)	2.7	1.730642	2.289504	2.116917
		2.25551	**1.597833**	**1.926461**	**1.805273**
	There are increased incidences of armed conflict such as armed clashes and bombing of civilians and civilian infrastructure in your country	1.039538	0.845841	2.364215	2.250333
	There is a total breakdown in law and order with the government forces struggling to protect life and property of the citizens	2.262308	1.073692	1.860331	1.783333
	Several armed groups have emerged and are claiming control of strategic locations of your specific location thus challenging the government legitimacy	1.993308	0.850327	1.563719	2.25

	There is a deterioration of the humanitarian situation putting the people affected by conflict on pressure as they lack access to clean water, food and medical attention	2.000538	1.148178	1.546529	2.350333
LEVEL 3	There is widespread displacement of civilians from their homes and communities as they flee into camps and neighboring countries	2.031308	0.943505	1.629669	2.242
	The government is mobilizing its military troops and weapons to be deployed to the affected region	2.285462	1.083364	1.249669	2.133417
	There is heightened outbreak of inter-communal violence (ethnic, religious or political)	1.731923	1.041355	1.488678	1.625833
	There is media information blackout	0.955231	0.915374	1.563554	1.252167
	There is disruption of economic activity, including damage to infrastructure, disruption of trade routes, and loss of livelihoods, leading to economic instability and hardship for affected populations	2.547077	1.292477	1.447769	2.308583
	There are ongoing diplomatic efforts to call the warring parties for a ceasefire, mediate the conflict and provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population	2.477846	1.017897	2.165702	2.142167
		1.932454	**1.021201**	**1.687983**	**2.033817**
	There is presence of international peace keeping bodies such as UN, AU & SADC, East African Standby Force deployed to intervene in the regions affected by conflict	0.384615	2.114645	0.781653	0.6705
	There are increased conflict intervention activities by third party facilitators pressuring the main actors to end the hostilities (mediation, negotiation, peace talks, sanctions)	1.069538	1.967725	0.970579	1.043917
	Humanitarian corridors are open and the urgent needs of the civilians/displaced people are being addressed	1.892615	1.929905	1.357355	1.69275

	There is evidence of reduced conflict in the country due to peace talks between the rival groups	0.628923	1.574882	1.199752	1.301167
LEVEL -2	An inclusive transitional governance structure has been or is being established to oversee the transition from conflict to peace	0.895769	1.991327	1.702893	1.600833
	People are seen as slowly taking on normal daily activities like resumption of business	1.063846	1.267867	1.529669	0.928083
	Reconciliation and peace building programs have been initiated	0.956846	1.508673	1.258264	0.812333
	There is ceasefire (the parties from both sides have agreed to suspend their aggressive actions)	0.575308	1.636019	1.134215	0.853583
	The protagonist have agreed to sign a peace agreement	1.238538	1.962654	1.011405	1.1185
		0.967333	**1.772633**	**1.216198**	**1.113519**
	The parties to the conflict have agreed to demobilize their forces	0.735308	1.88181	0.510248	1.417667
	The citizens holding arms illegally are surrendering to the government in a demilitarization/disarmament and reintegration program	0.987	2.033619	1.191901	1.12725
	There are ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation activities such as building of roads, schools and hospitals to ensure that essential services are available to the citizens	0.91	1.720048	1.24124	1.226417
	Truth, justice and reconciliation tribunals have been established to address the grievances and promote reconciliation	1.277	1.834381	1.422727	1.567083
	There are efforts by both the transitional government and the civil society to focus on socio-economic development programs aimed at addressing poverty, inequality, and unemployment	0.652308	1.820143	1.843388	1.21

LEVEL -1	There is a wider inclusion in the peace-building process/activities (includes women, youth, different ethnic groups, religious group)	1.038923	1.58219	1.835289	1.002833
	There is reduced tension and fear between different ethnic/religious/armed groups	0.01	1.444429	1.094463	1.252
	The refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning to their homes	2.784923	2.076524	1.69562	1.675583
	There is improved economic situation for citizens (resumption of economic activities, opening of markets/shops)	2.792538	1.781571	1.266694	1.451
	The causes of conflict are currently being addressed	2.884846	1.724571	1.448182	1.1605
	There is international assistance in the promotion of good governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights through institution-building and capacity-building efforts	0.331846	1.829381	1.159669	1.0925
		1.309517	**1.793515**	**1.33722**	**1.289348**

(Source: CRTP Research)

Step 5: Introduction of Constants

Constants were then introduced in each conflict level. The aim of introducing the constant was to uniquely identify the conflict levels on a scale between negative two (-2) and positive three (+3) as earlier stated. The constants for levels 0, 1, 2, 3, -2, and -1 were 0, 1, 2, 3, -2, and -1 respectively. In other words, all the values in the data summary were multiplied by constants respective to their conflict level. Also, the total frequencies were also multiplied by the constants.

Step 6: computation of the Conflict Level

From the results from step 5 above, the level of conflict was calculated using the following formula.

Figure 9: Formula for Calculating the Conflict Level

$$Cl = \frac{\sum c_{ij}[(f_{ij})w_{ij}]}{\sum(c_{ij}f_{ij})}$$

Where

Cl = the conflict level

c_{ij} = the constant of the ith row in the jth column

f_{ij} = the frequency for the ith row under the jth column

w_{ij} = the weighting for the ith row under the jth column

i = the indicator number listed from level 0 to level -1 and appearing as rows.

j = Likert scale options that are listed in four columns as '*Not observed*', '*Rarely observed*', '*Sometimes observed*', and '*Consistently observed.*'

(*Source*: *HIPSIR Research*)

RESEARCH FINDING

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

The conflict level for DRC is 2.6 which means that the country is at the confrontational stage of conflict. This relates to escalating rivalry between opposing conflicting parties.

Figure 10: Map of DRC
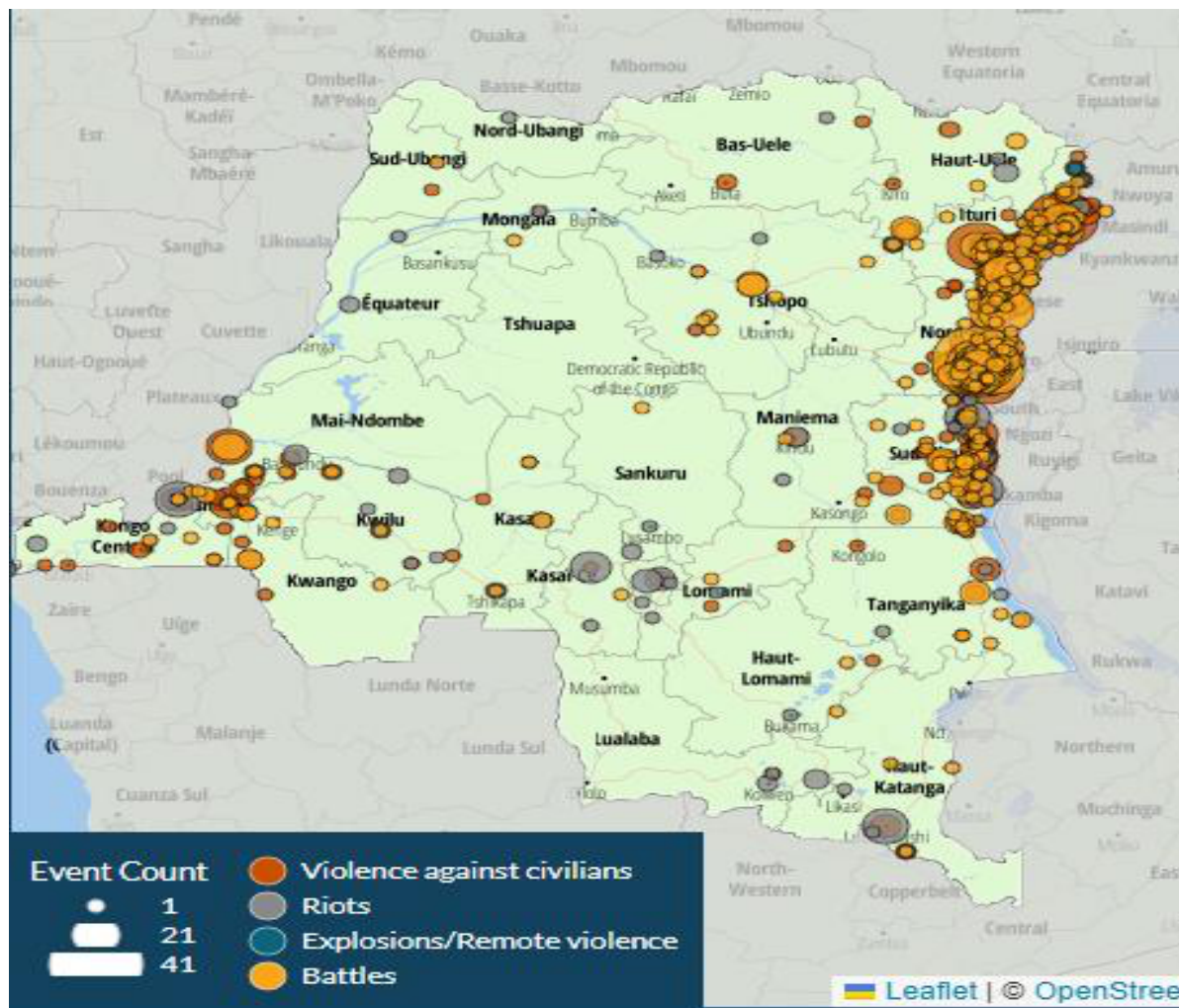
Source: Armed Conflict Location and Event Data (2024)[133]

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[133] Serwat, Ladd. "Conflict Watchlist 2024: Democratic Republic of Congo: Re-Elected President Tshisekedi Faces Regional Crisis in the East." ACLED, August 14, 2024. https://acleddata.com/conflict-watchlist-2024/drc/.

Age Bracket of Respondents

The analysis of the age bracket of the respondents from the Democratic Republic of Congo reveals that the age group of 27-35 had the highest with 62 respondents accounting for 52% of the total participants. The age group of 18-26 had significant participation, with 26 participants making up around 22% of the total respondents. The age group of 36-50 years had 25 participants, representing 21% of the total respondents, while the age group above 50 had 7 respondents, accounting for approximately 6% of the total participants. From the above, it's clear that the respondents from DRC are distributed across various age groups. As such, the diversity in age groups contributes to a comprehensive understanding of the conflict dynamics and perspectives in DRC. Figure 11 shows the distribution of the respondent's age bracket in percentage.

Figure 11: Age bracket of respondents from DRC
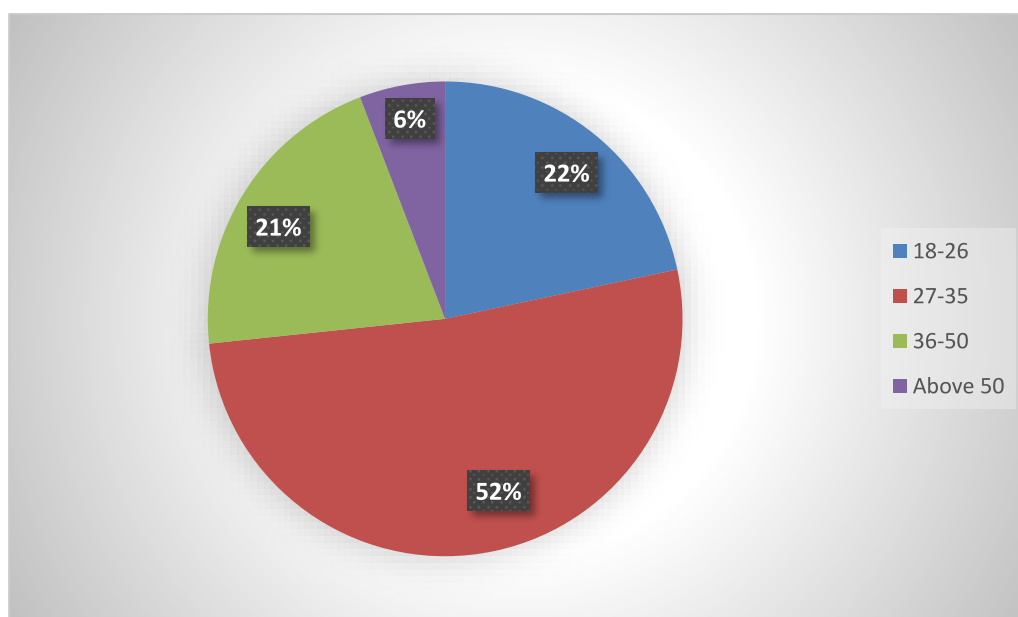
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Gender of the Respondents from DRC

In terms of gender, the male respondents comprised 74 respondents, accounting for 62% of the total participants, while the female respondents comprised 45 respondents representing 38% of the total participants. The gender distribution of the CMT respondents from DRC shows a higher representation of males than females. Nonetheless, the diversity in gender distribution and participation is essential for capturing the comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences of the conflict situation in the country. Figure 12 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents by gender. In the Focus group discussion (FGD) conducted in Goma, the female participants were 6, while the male participants were 4. The Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), on the other hand, constituted 3 males and 2 females.

Figure 12: The Gender of the Respondents from DRC
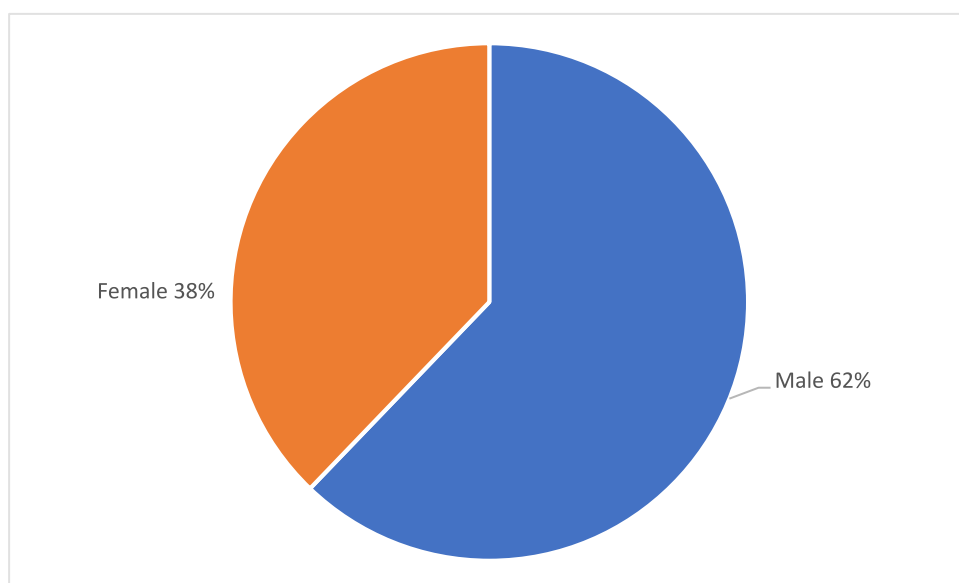
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Occupation of the respondents

Regarding the occupation of the respondents who filled out the questionnaire, the peace practitioner was the most prominent category with 37 participants, accounting for approximately 31% of the total. Respondents from the Business (Private) were the most significant category with 24 participants, representing approximately 20% of the total participants. Other respondents identified themselves as Academia, government and public administrators, religious leaders, media

practitioners, civil society, and healthcare. On the other hand, the respondents who participated in the KII's and FGD in Goma constituted individuals working with the civil society, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), academia, religious leader and representatives of internally displaced people in DRC. The data on the occupation of the respondents reflects a diverse mix of professionals. This diversity is essential for capturing a comprehensive range of perspectives on conflict situations in DRC.

Figure 13: Occupation of the Respondents from DRC
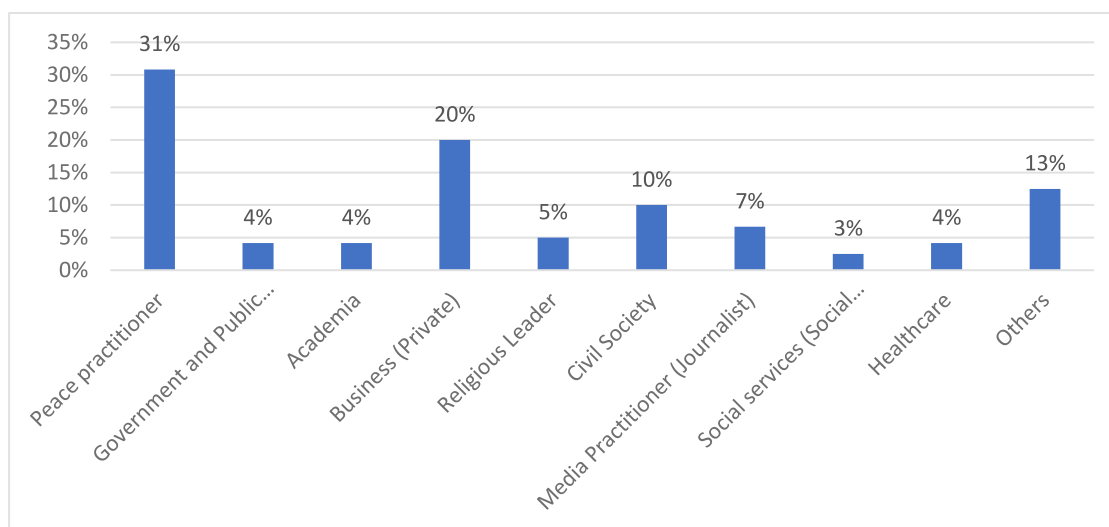
Source: CMT Research Findings

Years of experience of the respondents

This study also assessed the respondents' level of experience to gain a comprehensive understanding of diverse perspectives, behaviors, decision-making processes, and expertise influencing various conflict intervention mechanisms in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Respondents with over five years of work experience formed the largest group representing approximately 50% of the total respondents interviewed. This significant representation underscores the wealth of practical knowledge and insights contributing to the analysis of conflict interventions. Respondents with 3-4 years of work experience were 48 individuals representing 40% of the total respondents. Individuals with 1-2 years of experience were 7, representing 7% of the total respondents, and finally, respondents with below one year of experience were 5,

representing 4% of the total. The figure below shows the distribution of years of work experience of the respondents from DRC in percentages.

Figure 14: DRC Respondents Years of Experience
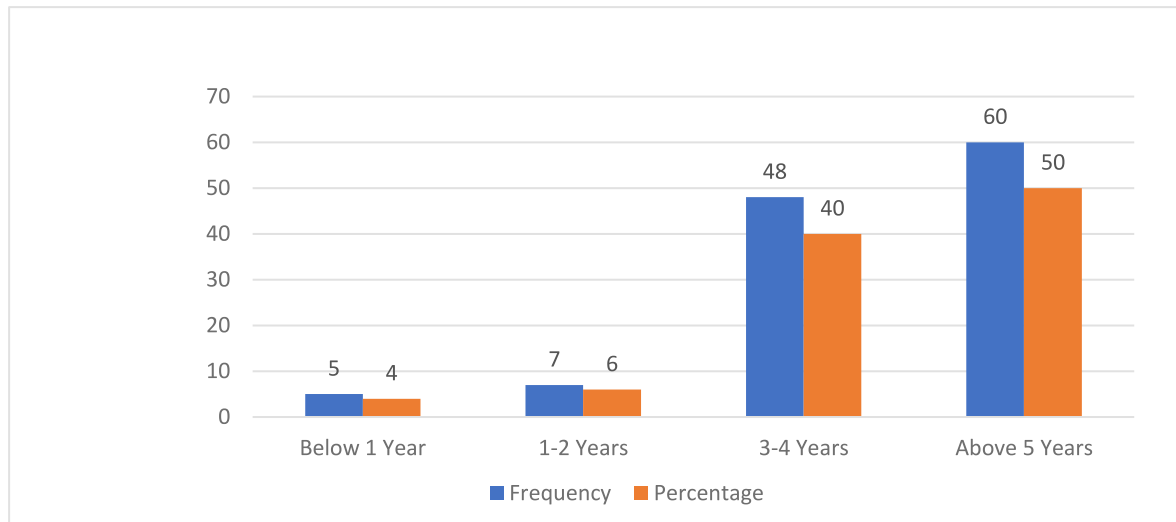
Source: CMT Research Findings

Stakeholders engaged in the CMT research from DRC

Additionally, the research aimed to comprehend the affiliations of the CMT questionnaire respondents. Results in Figure 15 community members had the largest group, with 43 participants accounting for 36% of the total respondents. Respondents from Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) constituted a significant portion, with 26 respondents, representing 22% of the total. Youth group members and NGO staff followed, each with 16 respondents, making up 16% of the total respondents respectively. Religious leaders and women's groups were also represented, with 8 and 9 respondents, respectively. Chiefs had the lowest representation, with only one respondent, and notably, there was no representation from government officials. This distribution highlights a diverse but uneven representation among stakeholders in conflict intervention efforts.

Figure 15: Stakeholders engaged in the CMT research from DRC
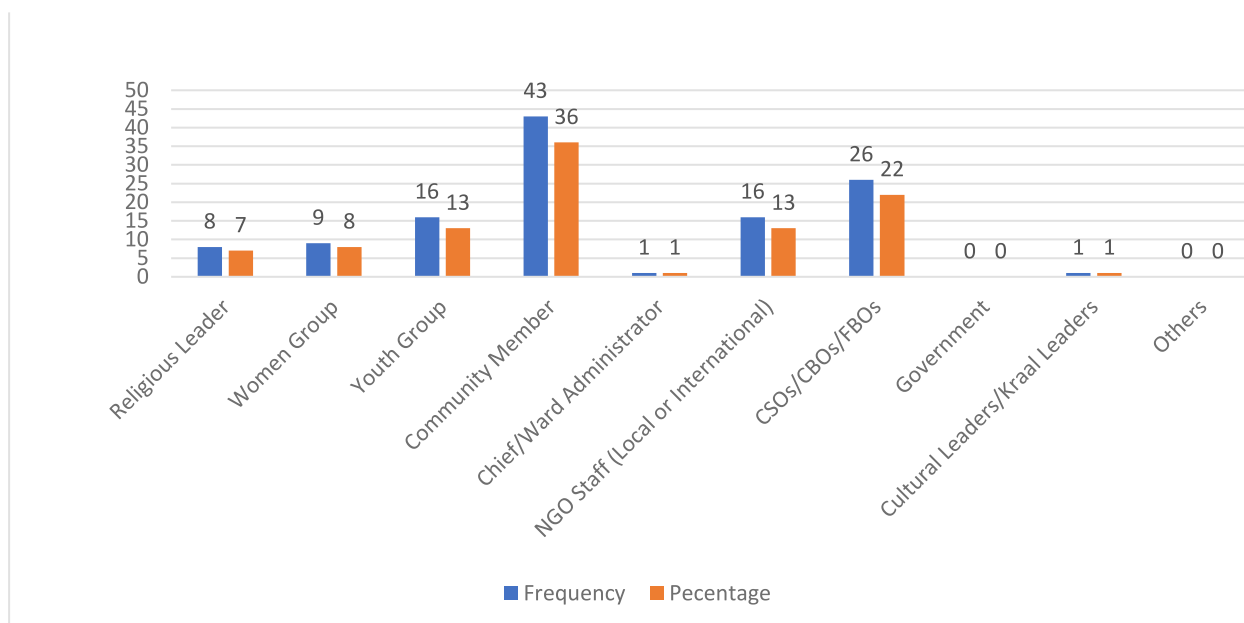
Source: CMT Research Findings

Prevalent Conflicts in DRC

The 2024 Conflict Monitoring Tool (CMT) research findings provided key insights into the prevalent conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), capturing respondents' perceptions of various issues. Among the most highly prevalent conflicts were armed robbery and theft (42%), illegal settlement of internally displaced persons (37%), gender-based and sexual violence (33%), political violence (31%), and police brutality (31%). These conflicts emerged as the most urgent challenges, underscoring the need for immediate and focused interventions to address these critical areas.

Additionally, the study identified conflicts that were perceived as moderately prevalent. These included political violence (53%), gender-based violence (49%), resource-based violence (47%), armed robbery (43%), domestic violence (35%), and illegal settlement (33%). These findings reflect the complexity and interconnection of conflict dynamics in the DRC, pointing to the necessity for a comprehensive approach to conflict resolution and prevention efforts. These findings suggested that while conflicts were not as rampant, they still posed significant threats to peace and security in the DRC.

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Conflicts classified as less prevalent included cattle rustling (28%), domestic violence (28%), police brutality (20%), and resource-based violence (23%). These conflicts appeared to be more localized or limited in scale compared to others, though still noteworthy for ongoing conflict monitoring. In contrast, the research revealed that certain conflicts were perceived as not prevalent, including border violence or incitement (27%) and cattle rustling (7%). Notably, a significant portion of respondents expressed uncertainty regarding some forms of conflict, with 30% unsure about the prevalence of border violence and 13% uncertain about police brutality. These findings suggest potential gaps in awareness or varying regional experiences with these conflicts, emphasizing the need for localized assessments and tailored communication strategies to address these disparities in understanding and experience. Overall, the data underscored that the most significant challenges in the DRC, as identified by the respondents, were illegal settlement, armed robbery, and gender-based violence, suggesting a need for robust strategies to address these issues comprehensively. Figure 16 shows the distribution of the prevalent conflicts in DRC.

Figure 16: Prevalent Conflicts in DRC
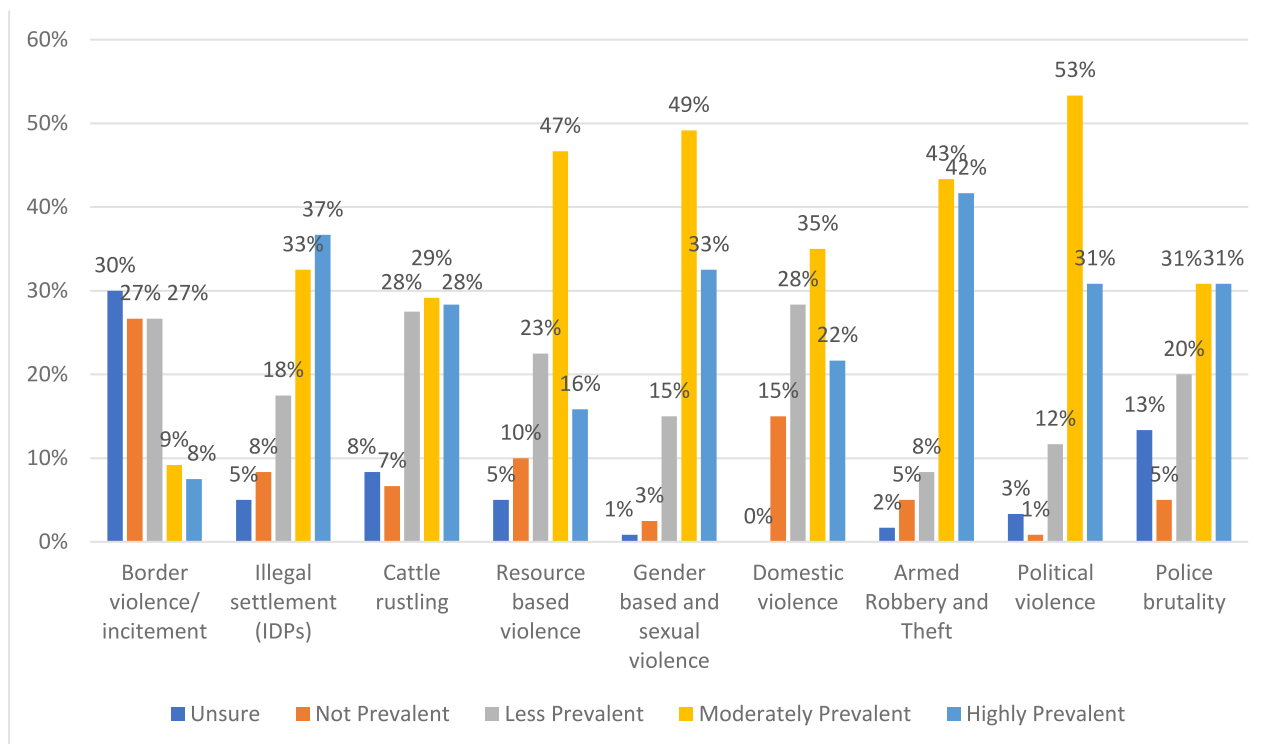
Source: CMT Research Findings

Drivers of conflict in DRC

The study also sought to understand the key drivers of ongoing conflicts in DRC. Multiple armed groups and rebel groups/banditry were identified by 65% of the respondents as prominent driver of the conflicts. High levels of unemployment especially among the youth was also identified as another highly prominent conflict driver, with 59% of the respondents recognizing its significance. The results in Figure 17 further showed that 53% of the respondents mentioned that the proliferation of small arms and light arms was the most prominent driver of conflict in DRC. Unaddressed historical grievances and revenge killings were recognized by 43% of the total respondents as the most prominent drivers of conflicts in DRC. Political, and economic marginalization and climate change impact were mentioned by 23% of respondents as the least prominent driver of conflict in DRC.

One of the human rights activists who participated in the FGD noted that:

> The conflicts in North and South Kivu provinces can be traced back to 1996 when rebels from Uganda and Rwanda entered the DRC and later overthrew President Mobutu. The major cause of fighting is the competition for resources, particularly the control of the different mines that exist in both North and South Kivu. Rwanda has supported the M23 rebel group with weapons.

Figure 17: Key Conflicts in DRC
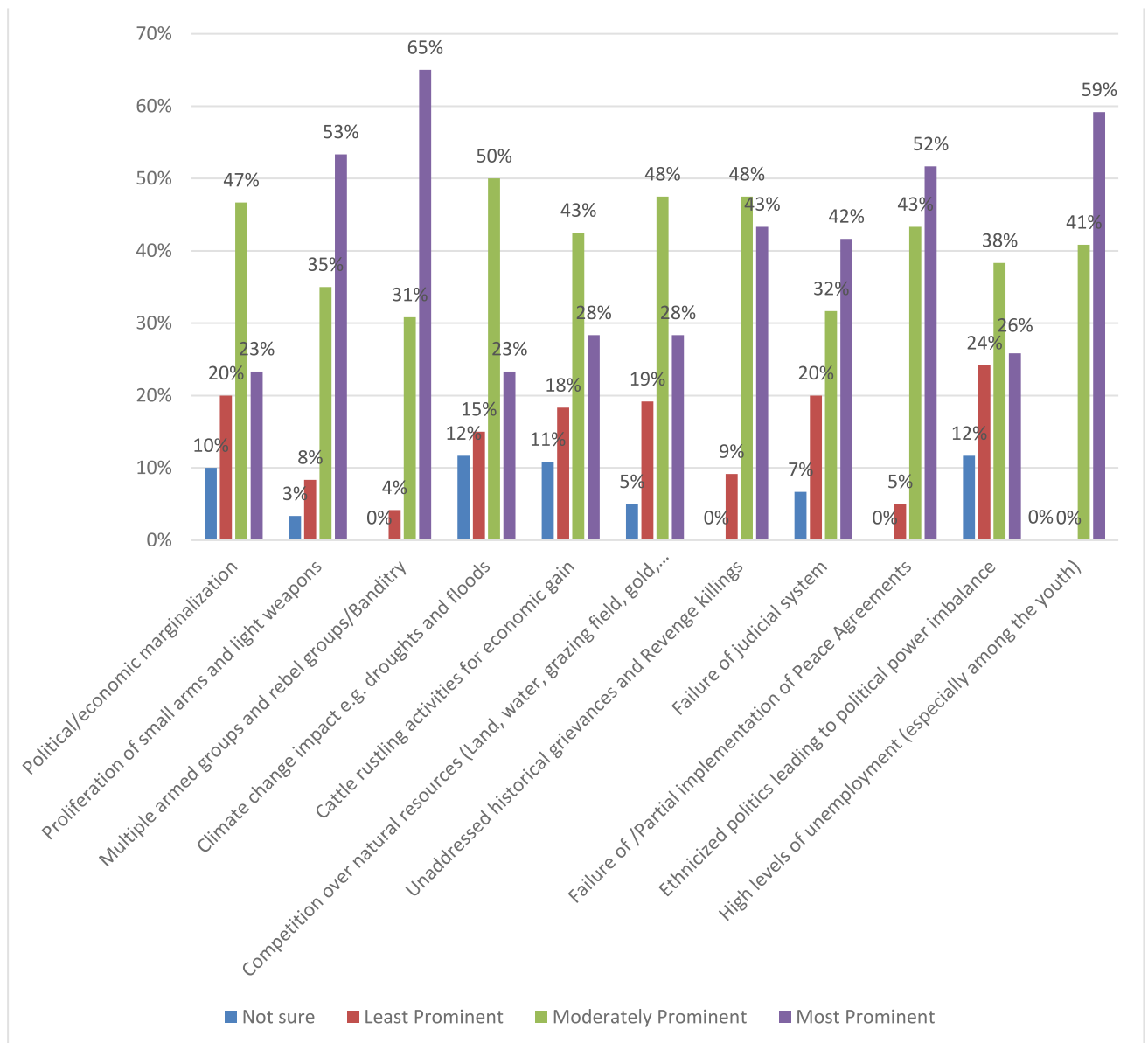
Source: CMT Research Findings

Actors of the DRC conflict

CMT sought to understand the actors responsible for the ongoing conflict in DRC. Neighboring states and international state actors (such as neighboring countries, AU, UN, and EU) were identified as the most responsible for conflicts occurring in DRC with approximately 64% of the respondents considering them as highly accountable. Additionally, political leaders were identified by 53% of the respondents as highly responsible for conflicts in DRC (Figure 18). Indeed, multinational corporations had a substantial impact as actors in the ongoing conflict in DRC, this is according to 39% of the respondents. Government security forces such as the army and police followed closely with 38% of the respondents saying that they were most responsible for the conflict in DRC. Cultural leaders were the least responsible actors in the ongoing conflict, this is according to 8% of the total respondents.

These findings reveal a complex network of actors in the DRC. The level of involvement and accountability varies and thus understanding their role in the conflict is essential for addressing the root causes of the conflict and promoting peace and stability in the DRC.

The focus group discussion participants provided in-depth insights into the persistence of conflict in the DRC, particularly in the eastern regions. These reflections highlighted the enduring and multifaceted nature of these conflicts, their historical roots, and their ongoing impact. The Religious Leader from Goma emphasized that the origins of conflict in Eastern DRC could be traced back to 1994, with the influx of refugees from the Rwandan genocide. This period marked a significant turning point, as the presence of Hutu refugees was perceived as a security threat by Rwanda, leading to the 1996 invasion of Eastern DRC. The subsequent overthrow of Mobutu Sese Seko's regime in 1997 introduced a period of instability, characterized by competing interests over the region's abundant natural resources. The religious leader highlighted the evolving nature of the actors involved, including regional governments, rebel groups like M23, and multinational corporations. He identified resource competition, particularly control of mining zones, as the primary driver of conflict, with ethnic tensions often being manipulated to serve these underlying interests.

The Lecturer from Université Catholique La Sapientia de Goma reinforced this perspective, explaining that while the names of rebel groups change over time, the core dynamics of resource

competition and governance failure persist. He pointed out that groups like M23 emerged due to the DRC government's breach of peace agreements, such as the 2009 accord with the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP). Additionally, the lecturer noted that Rwanda's support for M23 and other interventions have fueled the conflict, while issues like land grabbing, ethnic tensions, and power struggles exacerbate instability. He stressed the connection between ethnic favoritism in political appointments and the broader resource-based conflicts. The Communication Head at Mission de l'Organisation des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République démocratique du Congo, translated as the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) offered insights into international efforts to stabilize Eastern DRC through the UN peacekeeping mission. Established in 1999, MONUSCO has aimed to protect civilians, disarm rebels, and support peacebuilding. However, its limited success and the persistence of over 260 armed groups have drawn criticism. The mission's phased withdrawal, endorsed by the UN Security Council, reflects both public frustration and the need for local forces to take on greater responsibility. However, this withdrawal raises concerns about creating a security vacuum that could worsen the region's instability.

On the issue of ethnic social exclusion, the Religious Leader downplayed its role as a direct driver of conflict, instead identifying resource competition as the primary factor. Ethnic divisions, he argued, are often manipulated to exploit resources. The Lecturer, however, pointed out that ethnic exclusion is evident in the allocation of power and resources, with government appointments often reflecting ethnic biases. This dynamic exacerbates conflicts, particularly when access to wealth and control over resources are at stake. Together, these narratives underscore the complexity of the DRC's conflicts, revealing a web of historical grievances, resource-driven rivalries, and governance challenges. Efforts to address these issues will require a holistic approach, incorporating local, regional, and international initiatives to foster sustainable peace and stability.

Figure 18: Actors of the Conflicts in DRC
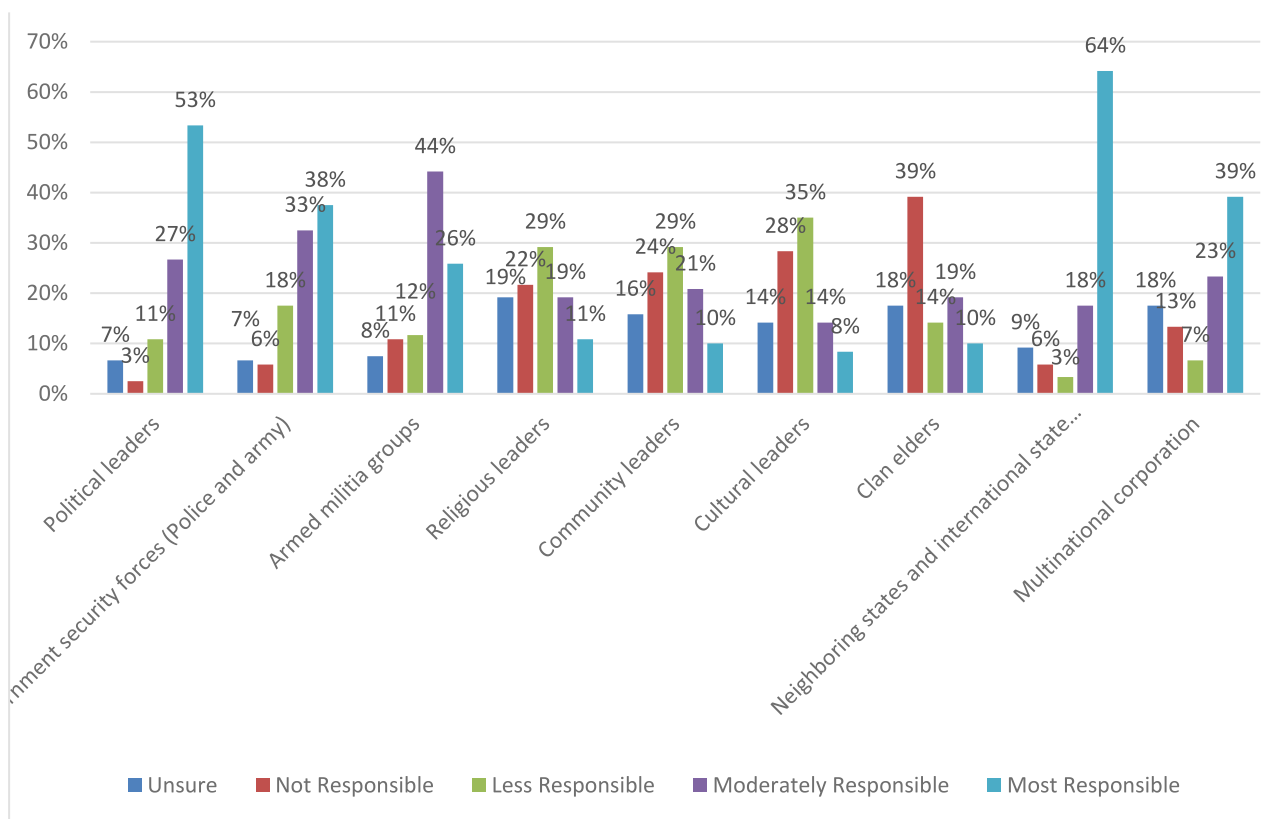
Source: CMT Research Findings

Institutions responsible for resolving conflicts in the DRC

Concerning effective conflict resolution in DRC, 31% of the respondents recognize religious institutions as very effective in resolving conflicts. Indeed, religious organizations and authorities have been instrumental in resolving disputes and advancing peace in the country. Peace committees were recognized by 28% of the respondents as very effective in conflict resolution in DRC. The local peace committees' bodies are significant in community-level peace initiatives. Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), both local and international, were perceived as highly effective in conflict resolution, with 86% of respondents considering them valuable contributors. Similarly, men's organizations or groups were regarded as effective by 77% of the respondents. Overall, a range of actors was identified as impactful in resolving conflicts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These included religious institutions, peace committees, and councils of elders, women's groups, youth organizations, government bodies, judicial systems, NGOs, Civil

Society Organizations (CSOs), men's organizations, and the international community. This diverse network of contributors highlights the importance of collaboration and the multifaceted approach required for sustainable conflict resolution in the DRC. Consequently, understanding the roles and effectiveness of these institutions is essential for promoting sustainable peace and stability in DRC. Figure 19 shows the distribution of organizations effective in resolving the conflicts in DRC.

Figure 19: Organizations effective in resolving conflicts in DRC
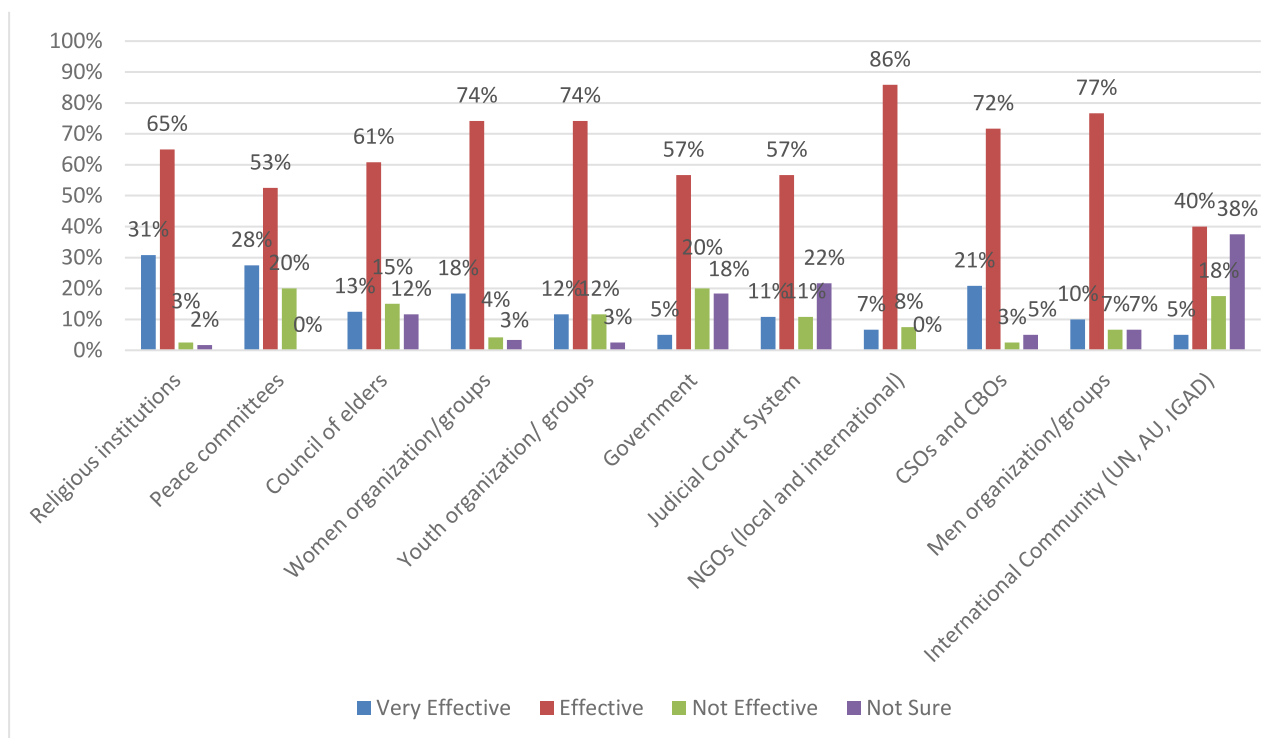
Source: CMT Research Findings

Challenges to resolving conflict in DRC

The study also sought to understand the challenges to resolving conflicts in the DRC. Lack of political goodwill was identified by 73% of the respondents as the most significant challenge to resolving the ongoing conflict (Figure 20). A fragile government, under constant pressure from armed groups and political factions, was identified as the second most significant challenge in resolving conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), with 64% of respondents highlighting it as a critical issue. Additionally, international interference by external actors, including neighboring states and international organizations such as the UN, EU, AU, and IGAD,

was cited as a significant obstacle by 63% of the total respondents interviewed. Moreover, poor economic development in the region was also viewed by 63% as a key challenge, further complicating efforts to address conflict sustainably. These findings underline the complex interplay of internal and external factors hindering effective conflict resolution in the DRC.

In summary, DRC faces significant challenges in achieving effective conflict resolution, with issues related to lack of political goodwill, pressure from armed and political, international interferences, and poor economic development in the region recognized by the majority as very challenging addressing these challenges and fostering consensus among stakeholders is essential for lasting peace and stability in DRC. Figure 20 shows various challenges in resolving conflicts in DRC distributed in percentage.

Figure 20: Challenges to peace restoration in DRC
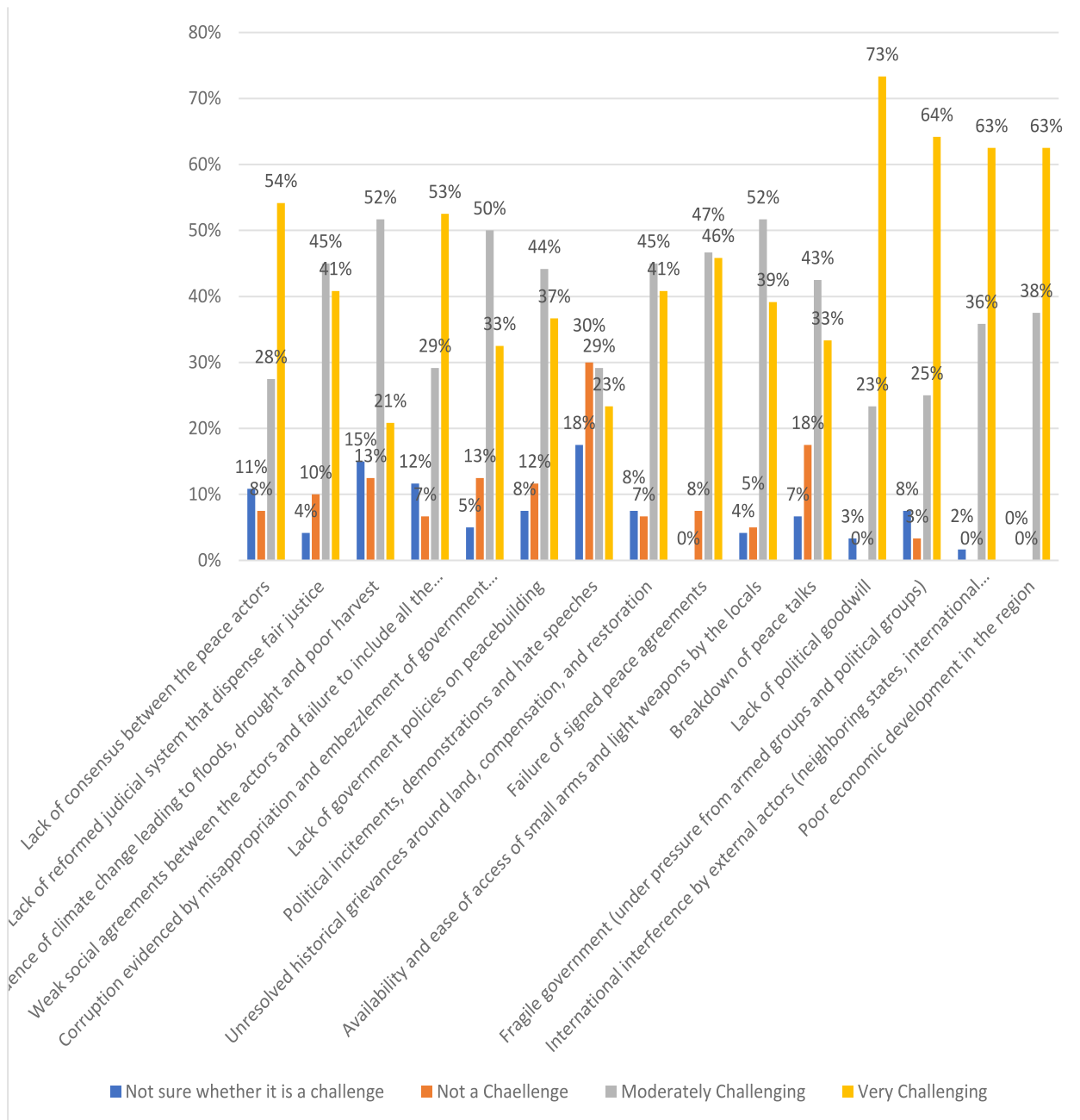
Source: CMT Research Findings

Recommendations for Resolving Conflict in DRC

The respondents gave the following recommendations that could be adopted to help resolve the conflict in DRC.

To Government

The respondents highlighted significant shortcomings in the DRC justice system, which they argued failed to resolve ongoing conflicts effectively. This failure is rooted in systemic inefficiencies, corruption, and perceived bias within the judicial framework, which undermine trust in formal mechanisms for conflict resolution. The inability of the justice system to address grievances adequately has led to an environment where impunity thrives, further exacerbating tensions and perpetuating cycles of violence. To address this issue, respondents proposed establishing a fair and equitable justice system in the DRC. Such a system would prioritize impartiality, accountability, and efficiency in handling cases related to conflict.

The respondents highlighted that a lack of good governance based on the rule of law and respect for human rights poses a significant barrier to effective conflict resolution in the DRC. Good governance encompasses accountability, transparency, equitable law enforcement, and a commitment to uphold human rights, all of which are fundamental to addressing underlying grievances and fostering trust between the government and its citizens. The absence of these principles undermines the credibility of government institutions and exacerbates societal divides, fueling discontent and allowing conflicts to persist. To address these challenges, there is a need for the DRC government to promote good governance rooted in the rule of law. This calls for strengthening legal frameworks, ensuring the impartial application of justice, and committing to reforms that enhance the functionality and accountability of state institutions.

Further, respect for human rights should be central to these efforts, as it establishes a moral and legal foundation for addressing conflicts, protecting vulnerable populations, and fostering reconciliation. Additionally, the respondents suggested the need for the government of DRC to foster inclusivity in governance, where diverse voices are represented in decision-making processes, which can mitigate the sense of marginalization that often drives conflict. By prioritizing these principles, the government can rebuild trust, enhance state legitimacy, and create a conducive environment for sustainable peace and development in the DRC.

There is also a need to stabilize the exchange rate to alleviate economic instability, which often fuels unrest. The respondents noted that the fluctuating value of the Congolese franc not only exacerbates the cost of living but also contributes to resource mismanagement and economic grievances. Hence, a stable exchange rate could improve public confidence in the government, attract foreign investment, and reduce economic inequalities that often serve as root causes of conflict. Indeed, economic stability is essential for creating an environment conducive to peacebuilding, as it addresses the material needs of the population and diminishes motivations for joining armed groups.

The respondents also urged the government to engage in dialogue with the M23 rebel group, particularly since previous agreements have yet to be fully implemented. This suggestion recognizes that unresolved grievances often reignite conflicts. By reopening discussions with M23, the government can address lingering issues, ensure mutual commitments are upheld, and work toward a sustainable resolution. Effective dialogue must incorporate mechanisms for monitoring and verifying the implementation of agreements. Further, respondents emphasized the need for the government to honor signed peace agreements and uphold human rights. Ensuring respect for agreements builds trust with conflicting parties and international stakeholders, while adherence to human rights fosters a culture of accountability and justice. This approach would help to address grievances that often lead to cycles of violence.

Finally, the respondents urged African leaders, including those in the DRC, to acknowledge and address the West's influence on the region's stability. They argued that external actors often exploit Africa's resources by perpetuating instability, creating an environment conducive to foreign intervention and economic exploitation. This perspective calls for a re-evaluation of foreign partnerships and policies that prioritize African sovereignty and resource control. Strengthening regional alliances and adopting Afro-centric approaches to governance and resource management are essential steps in countering such external influences.

To the INGO's, CSO's and other Multinational Agencies

Respondents stressed the importance of involving citizens in peace processes, recognizing that inclusive governance is vital for sustainable conflict resolution. The respondents noted that an all-inclusive peacebuilding strategy that engages community leaders, civil society organizations, and local stakeholders in dialogue ensures that peace initiatives address the concerns and aspirations

of all affected groups. Additionally, citizen participation fosters ownership of peace agreements and helps prevent the marginalization that often leads to the resurgence of conflict. This approach will promote transparency and build trust among all stakeholders and the people of DRC.

ETHIOPIA

The conflict level of Ethiopia is 2.45 This suggests that Ethiopia is at the confrontational level of conflict characterized by ongoing tensions and pockets of localized conflicts of minimal intensity. This level of conflict requires peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives to prevent further escalation of the already existing tensions. In the scenario that the tensions are not resolved, the grievances can intensify to a crisis.

Figure 21: Map of Ethiopia

Source: Ethiopian Statistical Service

Age Bracket of the Respondents

Analysis of the age bracket of respondents who participated in the study from Ethiopia reveals a diverse distribution across age groups. The largest group of respondents who filled out the questionnaire falls in the range of 27-35, comprising approximately 36% (43) of the total participants (Figure 22). This indicates the notable participation of young adults in the CMT study. The age group 36-50 showed a substantial number of respondents filled out the questionnaire, with approximately 31% (38) of respondents falling within this bracket. The age group of 18-26 comprised 26% (32) of the total respondents. The age group above 50 constituted the least number of respondents comprising 7% (8) of the respondents. Results in Figure 22 show the distribution of the age bracket of the respondents from Ethiopia who participated in the research.

Figure 22: The age Bracket of respondents from Ethiopia
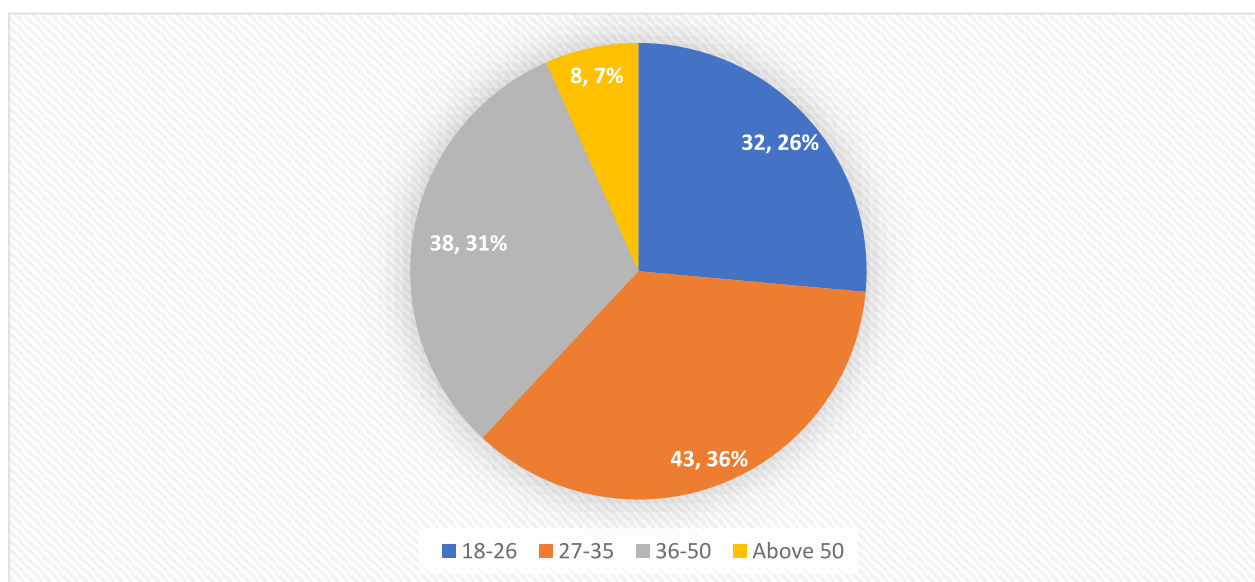
Source: CMT Research findings

Gender distribution of respondents

In terms of gender distribution male respondents who filled out the questionnaire were the largest making up 55% of the total respondents who participated in the study. The female respondents constituted 45% of the total respondents. Even though male respondents were more than female respondents, the gender distribution in the CMT study appeared relatively balanced, with both male and female participants playing essential roles in the insights of the conflict situation in Ethiopia. Figure 23 below shows the representation of the gender respondents in Ethiopia.

Figure 23: Gender Distribution of Respondents
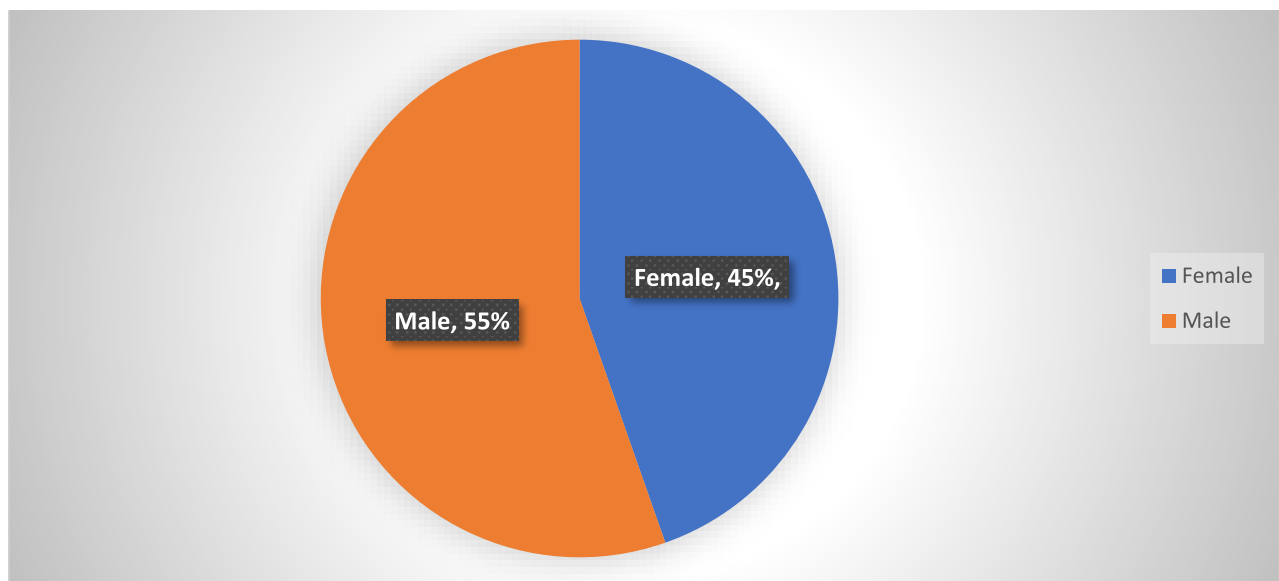
Source: CMT Research Findings

Occupation of the respondents from Ethiopia

The study also sought to understand the occupation of the respondents to comprehend the context of the study participant's daily experiences in conflict of the nation. Government and public civil servants comprised the highest respondents who filled out the CMT questionnaire, with 24 respondents accounting for 21% of the total respondents. Academia had the second-highest respondents, with 23 respondents accounting for 20% of the total respondents. Business (Private) had 18 respondents, accounting for 16% of the total respondents. Religious leaders had a minimal representation in the study, with 11 respondents, accounting for 10% of the total. Civil society organizations were slightly more represented, with 13 respondents making up 11% of the total. Media practitioners contributed 9 respondents, while social services were represented by 10 respondents, comprising 9% of the total. The healthcare sector had the least representation, with only 1 respondent accounting for 1% of the total participants. Despite these variations, it is evident that the respondents were drawn from a diverse range of occupations, providing a broad spectrum of perspectives on the issues under study. Figure 24 below shows the distribution of the occupation of respondents from Ethiopia.

Figure 24: Occupation of the respondents from Ethiopia
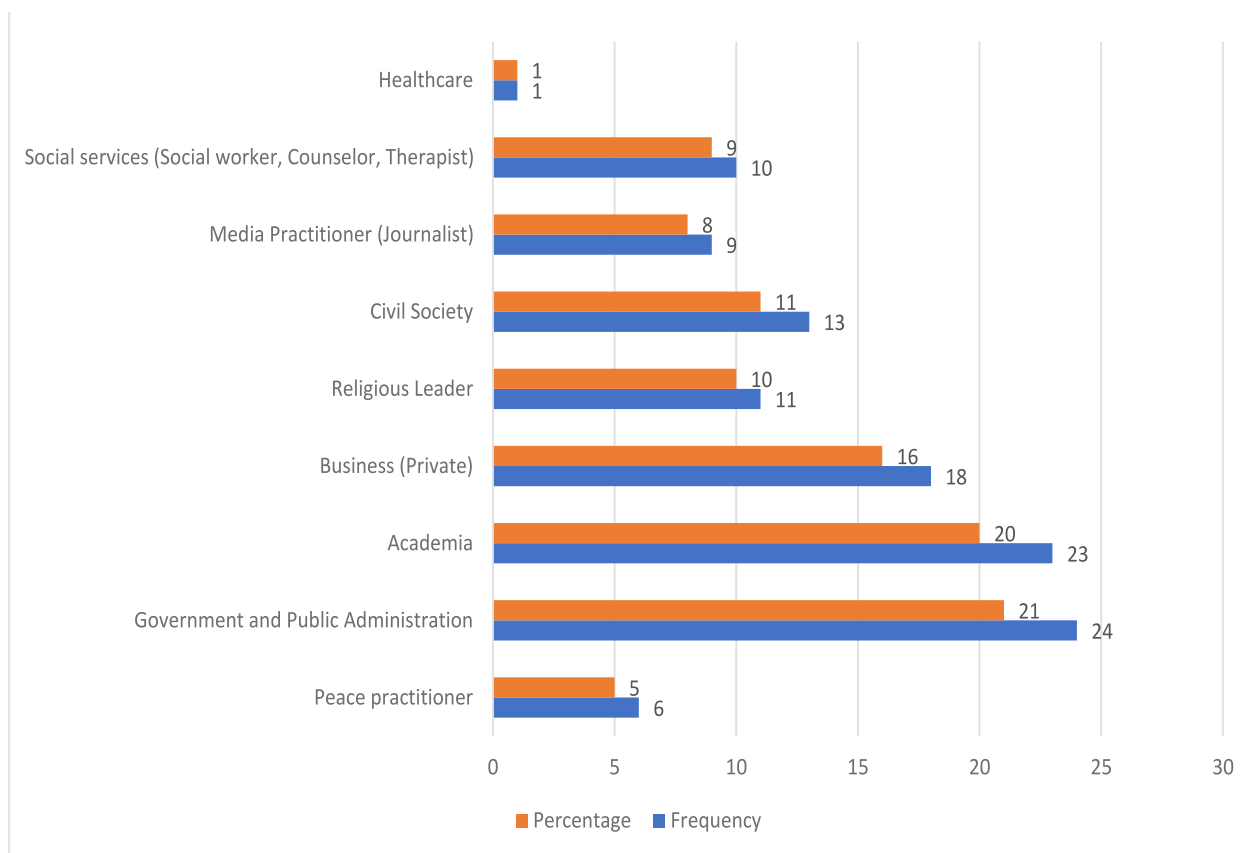
Source: CMT Research Findings

Years of work experience of the respondents

The study sought to understand the level of experience of the respondents to have a clear understanding of various perspectives, behaviour, decision-making processes, and expertise that inform various conflict intervention mechanisms in Ethiopia. A significant proportion of the respondents 76, accounting for 66% of the respondents had more than 5 years of experience in their relative professions. Another 32 respondents, accounting for 28%, had 3-4 years of work experience. Respondents who had 1-2 years were 6, constituting 5% of the total respondents. Finally, only one respondent, representing 1% of the total respondents, had below one year of work experience. This shows that the respondents who participated in the study were knowledgeable about the prevailing conflicts Figure 25 shows the years of experience of respondents distributed in percentage and frequency.

Figure 25: Ethiopia Respondents years of work experiences
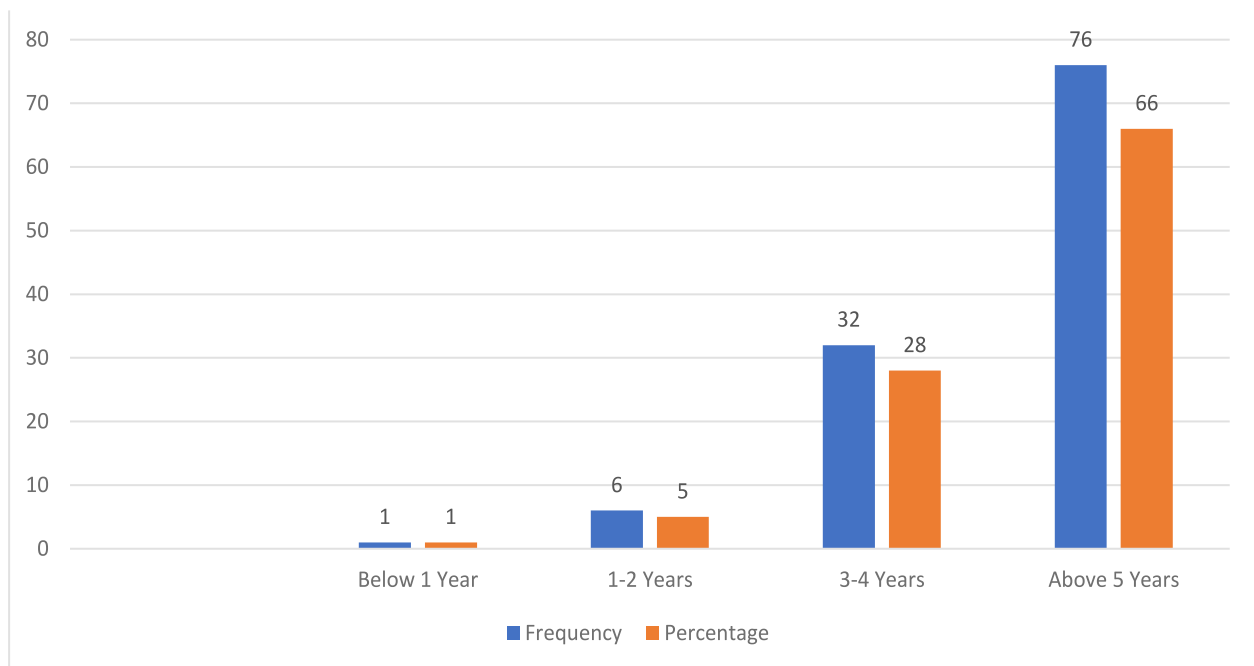
Source: CMT Research Findings

Analysis of Stakeholders

Additionally, the research aimed to comprehend the affiliations of the respondents who completed the CMT questionnaire with various stakeholders. Results in Figure 26 indicate that 43% of the total respondents interviewed were community members. This highlights the fact that individuals directly affected by the ongoing conflict situation in Ethiopia filled out the CMT questionnaire bringing in lived experience. The youth group was represented by 13% of the total respondents. Other notable stakeholders include the government (10%), religious leaders (8%), women groups (9%), and CSO/CBOS (8%). Finally, cultural leaders, local peace committees, lawyers, and journalists had the least number of stakeholders with each having one respondent. The above highlights the collaborative nature of 2024 research in engaging diverse stakeholders. Figure 26 below shows the frequency and percentage distribution of the CMT research stakeholders.

Figure 26: Stakeholder of the Respondents from Ethiopia
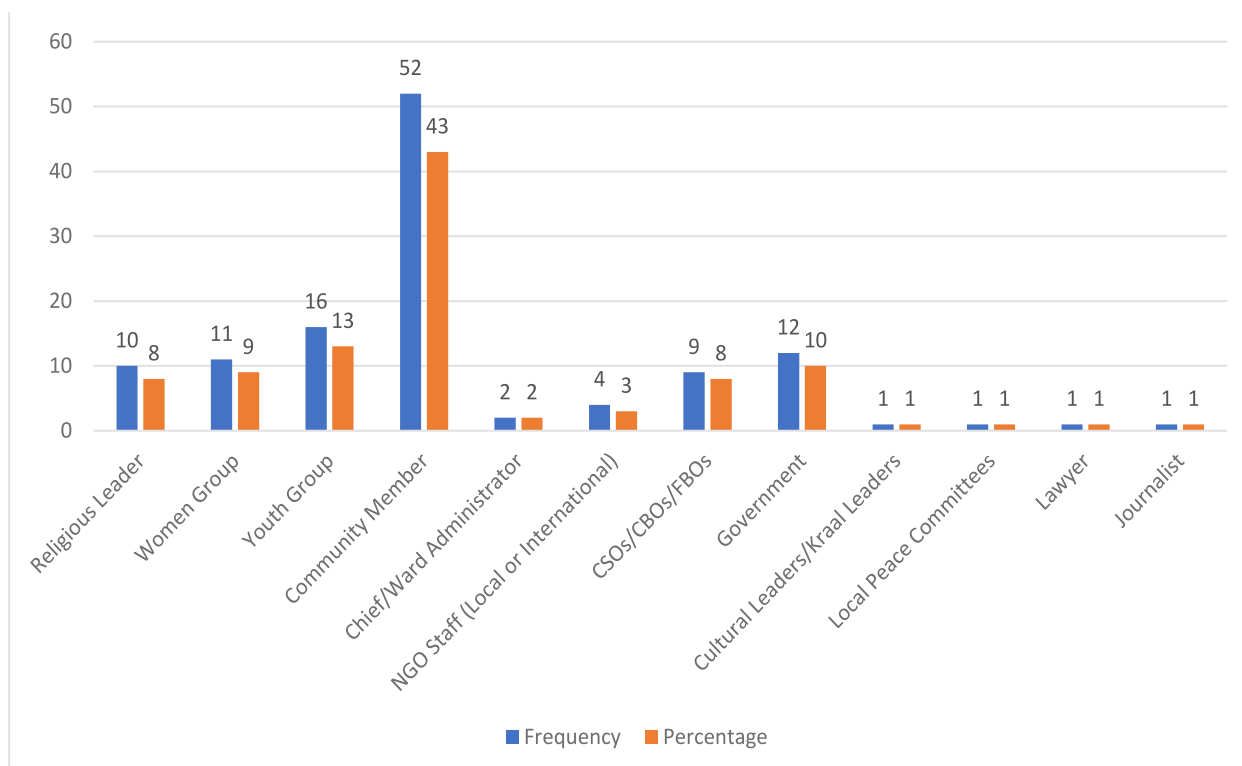
Source: CMT Research Findings

Understanding Conflict in Ethiopia

Prevalent Conflict in Ethiopia

Border violence and incitement were identified by 36% of the respondents as the most prevalent conflict in Ethiopia. Indeed, territorial disputes have been key issues that have caused political violence in Ethiopia, with some states like Tigray demanding cessation from the federal government of Ethiopia. Other notable conflicts in Ethiopia reported include police brutality (28%), armed robbery, and theft (25%), and illegal settlements (23%). In Ethiopia, domestic violence and political violence were identified by 12% of respondents as highly prevalent forms of conflict. Additionally, resource-based violence was highlighted by 8% of respondents, while cattle rustling and gender-based sexual violence was noted as highly prevalent by 5% and 4% of respondents, respectively. These findings underscore the varied nature of conflicts in Ethiopia, with domestic and political violence emerging as the most pressing challenges, alongside other

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forms of violence that reflect deep-rooted socio-economic and cultural tensions. Figure 27 below shows the distribution of prevalent conflicts in Ethiopia.

Figure 27: Prevalence of Conflict in Ethiopia
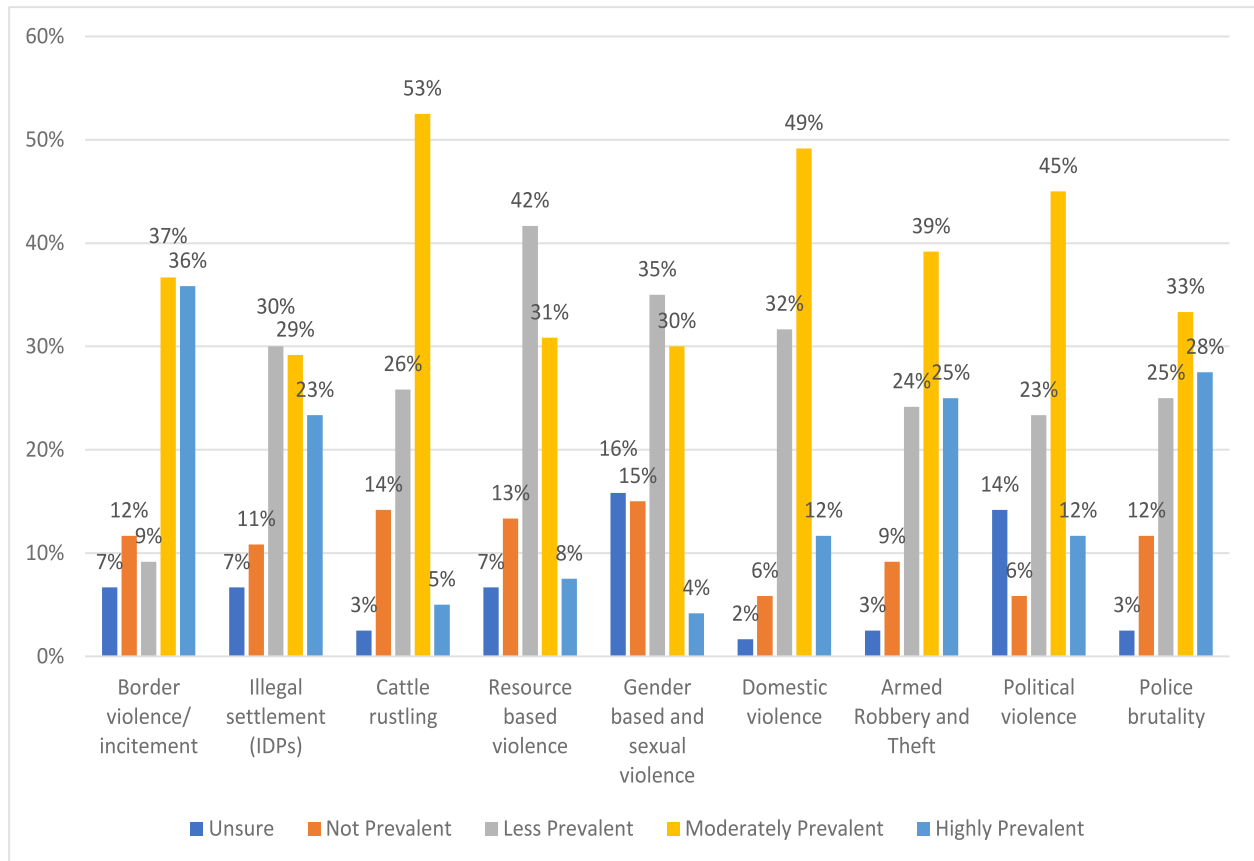
Source: CMT Research findings

Drivers of Conflict in Ethiopia

The study also evaluated the key drivers of the ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia. The most prominent driver of conflict is the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, with approximately 51% prevalence (Figure 28). The easy availability of arms and weapons has escalated conflict and violence in Ethiopia. A high level of unemployment, especially among youth, was identified by 48% of the respondents as the most prominent conflict driver in Ethiopia. Competition over natural resources was identified by 44% of the respondents as a moderately prominent driver of conflict in Ethiopia. Additionally, climate change impact was identified by 41% of the respondents as the moderate driver of conflict in Ethiopia. Subsequently, the data reveals a complex web of conflict drivers in Ethiopia, with the proliferation of small firearms, high levels of unemployment,

competition over natural resources, cattle rustling, unaddressed historical grievances, and revenge killings among the prominent factors that trigger conflict in Ethiopia. Understanding the prevalence and impact of these drivers is crucial for conflict resolutions and peace-building efforts in Ethiopia. Figure 28 shows the distribution of conflict drivers in Ethiopia in percentages.

Figure 28: Key Conflicts drivers in Ethiopia
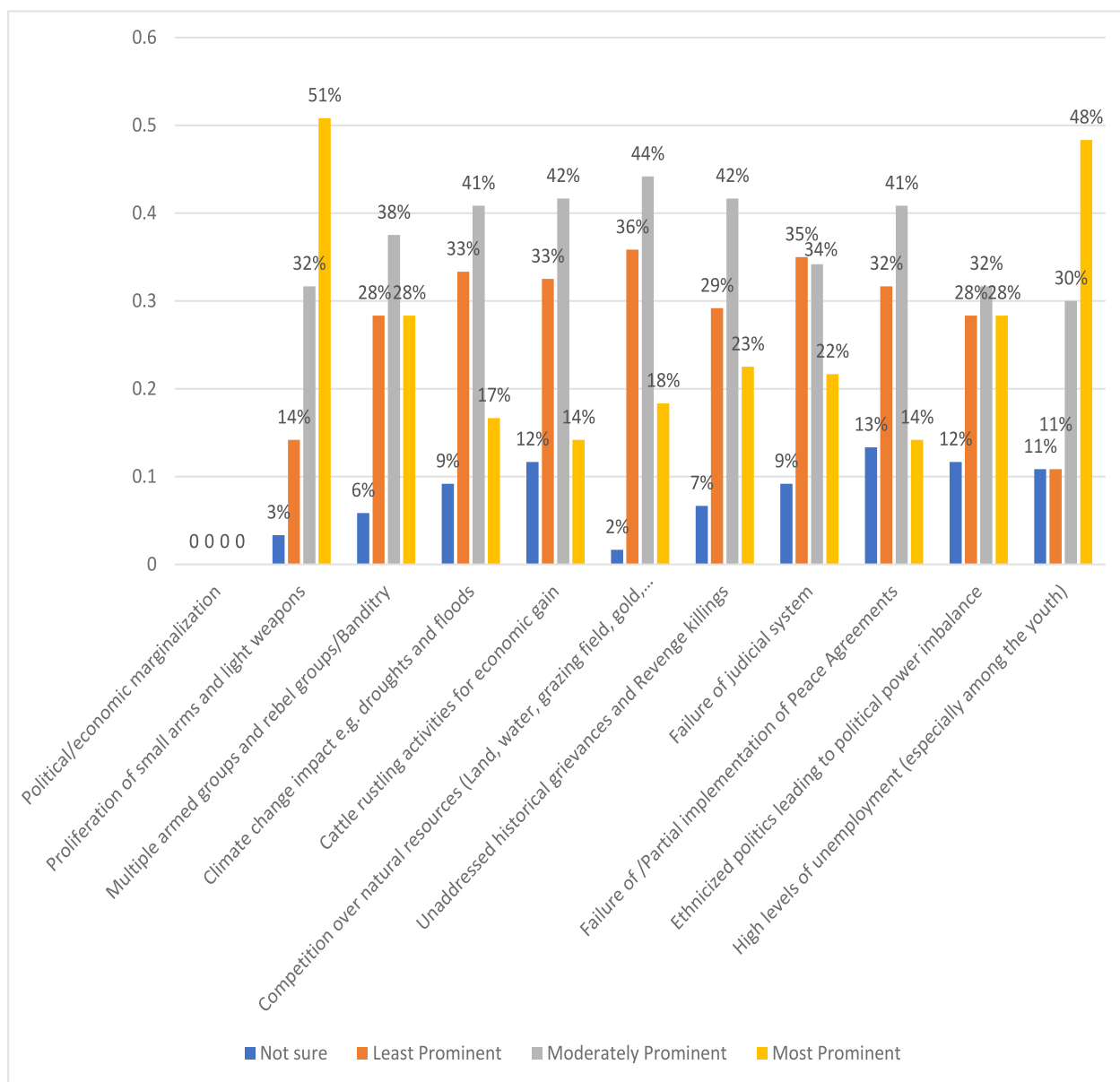
Source: CMT Research Findings

Actors of Conflicts

To solve the conflict amicably, the study analyzed the key actors of Conflict in Ethiopia. The findings in Figure 29 revealed that armed militia groups were perceived to be the most responsible for conflicts, with 81% of the respondents citing them as key actors in the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. This highlights the impact of militia groups in Ethiopia. Political leaders were identified as the second most responsible group for the ongoing conflict, with 74% of respondents highlighting them as key actors. This suggests that political leaders hold a significant role in the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. According to 54% of the respondents, clan elders were moderately responsible for the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia followed closely by government securities which were cited by 39% of the respondents as moderately responsible for the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. Interestingly cultural leaders were mentioned by 53% of the respondents as less responsible for the ongoing conflict. Figure 29 shows the distribution of actors responsible for conflict in Ethiopia.

The analysis of conflict in Ethiopia, based on the interviews conducted, highlighted the multifaceted causes of violence in the nation. A key driver identified was the manipulation of ethnic identities by political leaders. According to one of the human rights activists interviewed, "politicians have turned ethnic groups against one another, creating a volatile environment of mistrust and animosity." This tactic has deepened ethnic divisions, undermined national unity, and perpetuated cycles of violence, necessitating efforts to address the root causes of such manipulation. Similarly, the instrumentalization of religious groups for political purposes was reported to exacerbate tensions. Instead of serving as neutral grounds for reconciliation, religious institutions were co-opted for political maneuvering. This trend not only eroded the unifying potential of faith-based organizations but also bred new conflicts, further destabilizing Ethiopia's societal fabric.

The unequal distribution of resources has historically fueled tensions among Ethiopia's ethnic groups. Ethnic biases and favoritism in resource allocation have created a pervasive sense of injustice and marginalization. As one youth coordinator observed, "resource allocation had not only been unequal but also deeply biased, perpetuating grievances among communities in Ethiopia." Ethnic-based conflicts have become entrenched due to such practices. one of the respondents in the focus group discussions (FGDs) emphasized that Ethiopia's ethnic diversity,

encompassing over 86 ethnic groups, has been both a source of cultural richness and a root of conflict. A community leader noted that unmet economic needs among these groups often lead to competition and tension. She stated, "When economic interests clash, the fabric of social cohesion unravels." The manipulation of land and resource disputes by political elites further compounds these issues. A university professor referenced the Guji-Amaro conflict as a case where political leaders exploited land disputes to deepen divisions.

Political ideologies have also played a significant role in exacerbating ethnic tensions. A religious leader remarked, "Political ideologies not only create factions but also fuel animosities," highlighting the impact of political agendas in intensifying conflicts. Additionally, the presence of private armies has perpetuated violence and hindered resolution efforts, with the same religious leader calling for addressing the root causes of conflicts, whether rooted in ethnicity, resources, or political struggles. High unemployment rates, particularly among the youth, were cited as another critical factor driving instability. The disenfranchisement of unemployed youth made them vulnerable to recruitment by political factions or extremist groups, which exploited their frustrations with promises of change or economic incentives. This dynamic has escalated political instability and violence. The interplay between political agendas and religious beliefs was reported to disrupt societal harmony further.

Political actors instrumentalized religion, as evidenced by activities of groups like the Fano rebels, supported by factions within the Amhara community and the Orthodox Church. Incidents such as the burning of mosques in the Gurage area underscored the dangerous fusion of religious and political conflicts. Finally, the scarcity of economic resources, particularly arable land, was identified as a significant source of tension. Competition for limited resources often escalated into violence. Addressing these issues required equitable distribution and sustainable development policies aimed at reducing disparities and promoting social stability.

The analysis reveals a diverse range of perceptions regarding the responsibility of the ongoing conflict in Ethiopia. Political leaders and Militia groups were seen as the most responsible while clan leaders and the government played significant roles in the conflict dynamics in Ethiopia.

Figure 29: Actors Responsible for Conflict in Ethiopia
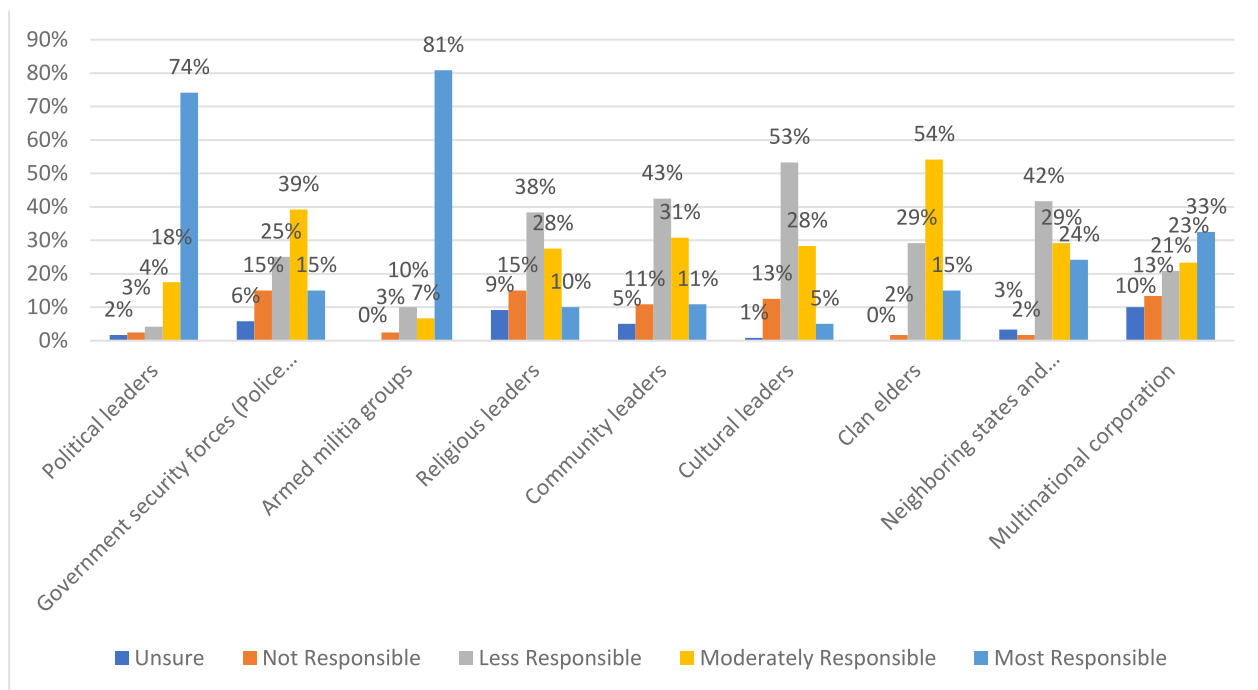
Source: CMT Research Findings

Institutions effective in solving conflicts in Ethiopia

Regarding key institutions that plays key role in solving conflict in Ethiopia, men groups was found very effective in resolving disputes with 37% of the total respondents interviewed rated it highly effective (Figure 30). Government was also perceived to be very effective by 30% of the respondents. This shows that the government has a significant role in conflict resolution in Ethiopia. Further, 54% of the respondents also identified the peace committee as effective in solving conflict in Ethiopia. Women groups and local NGOs were each identified by 45% of the respondents as effective in solving the crisis in Ethiopia. This highlights the positive role these groups play in conflict resolution in Ethiopia. These results reveal a varying perception regarding the effectiveness of different groups and institutions in resolving conflicts in Ethiopia. Men's groups, government entities, and international organizations were regarded as very effective in resolving conflicts in Ethiopia, according to respondents. Peace committees, women's organizations, and NGOs were also seen as effective contributors to conflict resolution. Understanding these perceptions is critical for promoting effective conflict resolution strategies in Ethiopia, as it highlights the institutions and groups that communities view as trustworthy and

capable of addressing disputes. This data can guide policymakers and stakeholders in prioritizing collaborations and interventions that leverage the strengths of these identified entities. Figure 30 provides a detailed distribution of the institution's respondents identified as responsible for conflict resolution efforts.

Figure 30:Institutions that are effective in solving conflict in Ethiopia
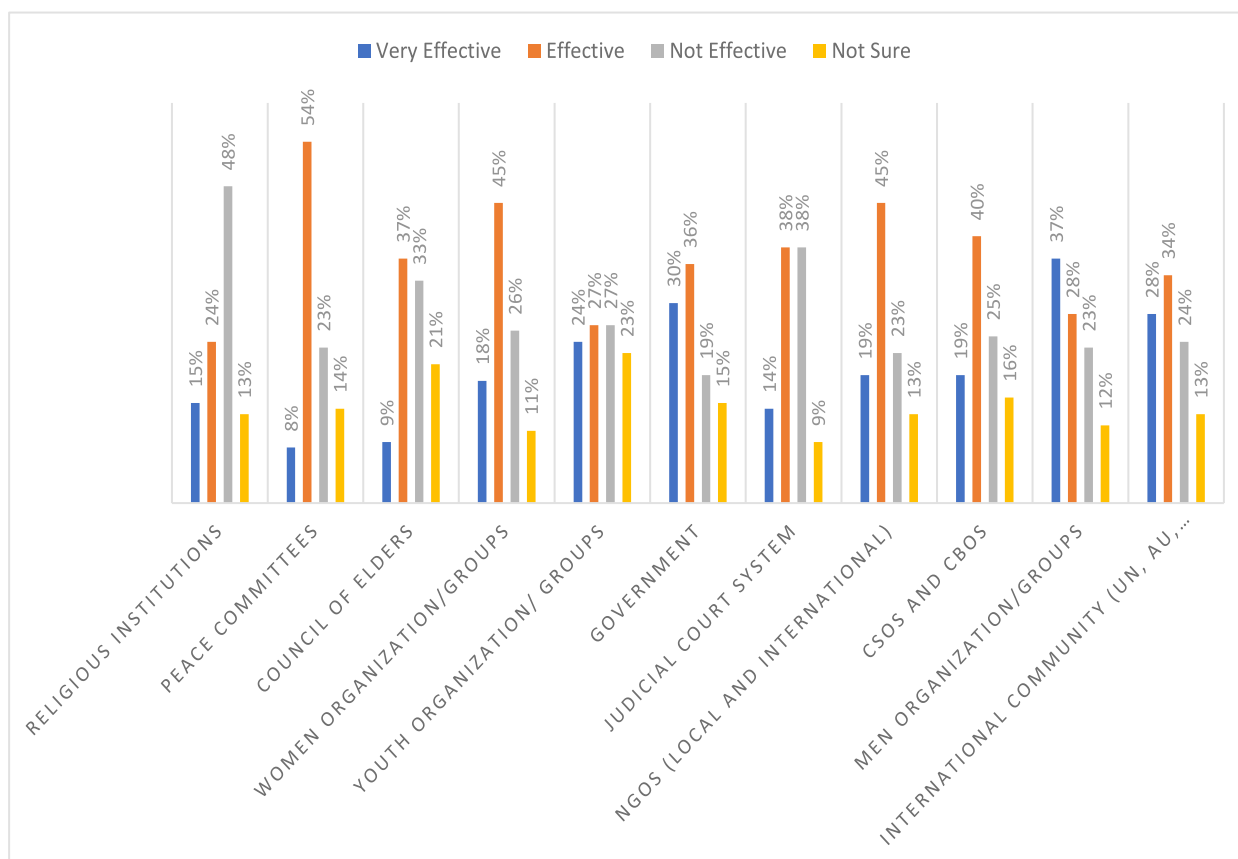
Source: CMT Research findings

Challenges to resolving conflict in Ethiopia

Unresolved historical grievances around land compensation and restoration were identified as a significant challenge, with 45% of the respondents considering it very challenging (Figure 31). This highlights the complexity of the existing land issues which are yet to be resolved. Weak social agreements between the actors and failure to include all the stakeholders were identified by 44% of the respondents as the second most challenging factor to resolving the conflict in Ethiopia. This shows the importance of inclusion in the peace process. Additionally, a lack of political goodwill was identified by 42% of the respondents as a very challenging aspect of peace resolutions. The

lack of government policies in peacebuilding was identified by 63% of respondents as a moderately challenging factor in achieving conflict resolution in Ethiopia. This finding underscores the urgent need for the government to develop and implement targeted policies to address conflicts and foster peaceful resolutions.

Additionally, evidence of climate change—manifesting through floods, droughts, poor harvests, and resulting in poor economic development—was also identified as a moderate challenge to conflict resolution. These findings highlight the interconnected nature of economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, and peacebuilding, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach to address these issues in Ethiopia. Economic stability and proactive government policies are critical to fostering sustainable peace in the region.

During the focus group discussions and interviews, participants highlighted significant obstacles to efforts aimed at addressing conflicts through peace agreements and national dialogue. They noted that the Peace and Reconciliation Commission, established to foster reconciliation, faced challenges stemming from its lack of independence and transparency. Similarly, the National Dialogue Commission (NDC) struggled to gain public trust, with ongoing conflicts, such as those in Oromia, and the legacy of failed initiatives further complicating its mandate. A human rights activists emphasized that "public skepticism and poor timing have undermined the effectiveness of these bodies." The discussions also underscored the complexities surrounding the promise of transitional justice. Participants agreed that disagreements over historical narratives presented a major hurdle. They stressed that a comprehensive and inclusive process would be essential to reconcile these differences and promote healing.

The 2024 CMT findings reveals a diverse range of perceptions regarding the challenges of resolving ongoing conflicts in Ethiopia. Weak social agreement between actors and failure to include all stakeholders, unresolved political grievances about land and lack of political goodwill are seen as very challenging while lack of government policies on peace building, evidence of climate change leading to floods, drought and poor harvest and poor economic development in the region were perceived as moderately challenging. Understanding these challenges is crucial for addressing the root causes of conflict and developing effective peacebuilding strategies in Ethiopia.

Figure 31: Challenges in peace restoration efforts in Ethiopia
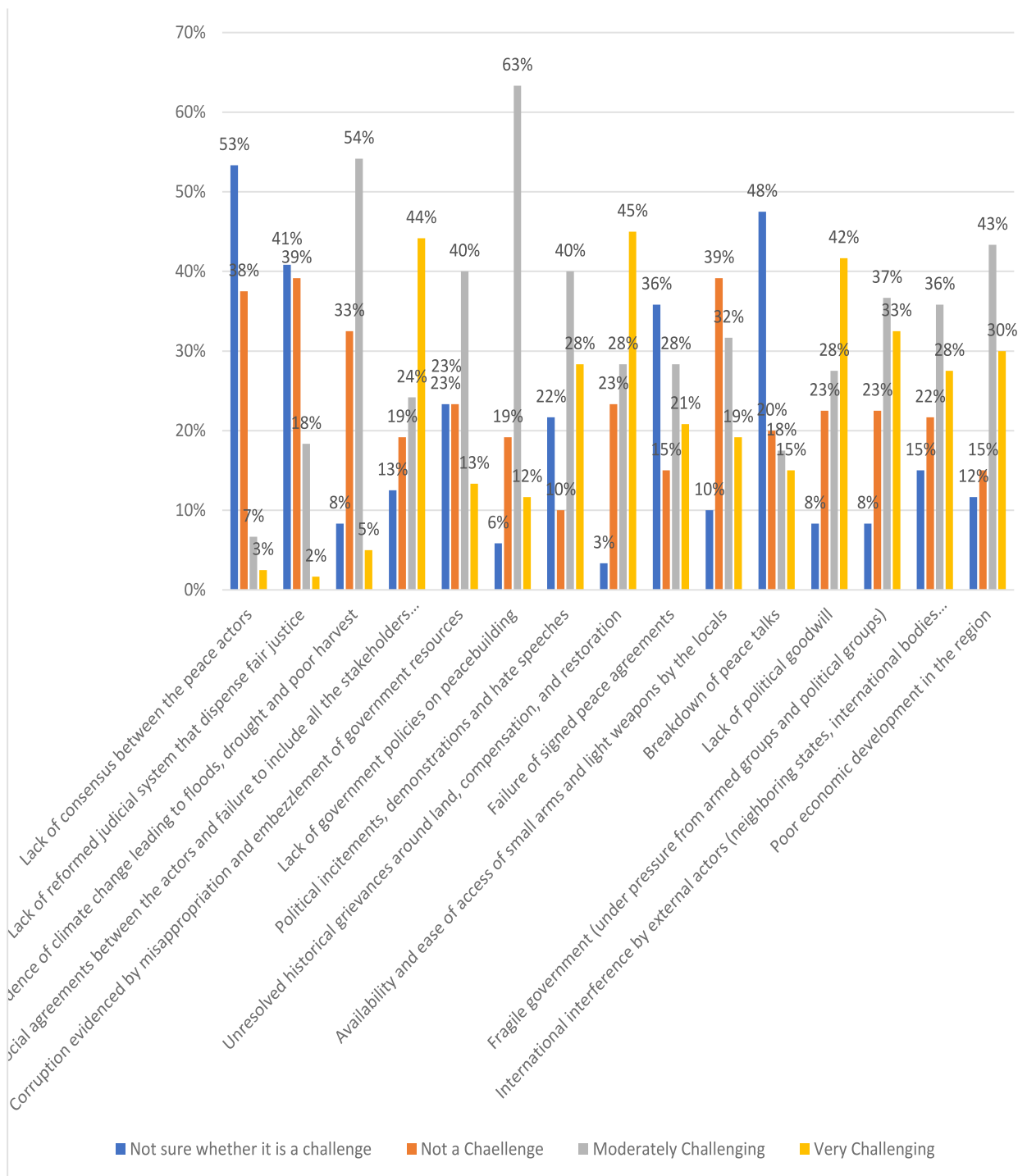
Source: CMT Research Findings

Recommendations for Resolving Conflict in Ethiopia

The respondents gave the following recommendations that could be adopted to help resolve the conflict in DRC.

To the Government

Inclusive Governance: The government must address the root causes of exclusion by implementing inclusive policies and reforms. Such measures should ensure equitable representation and participation of all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic groups in governance. This inclusivity will foster trust, reduces marginalization, and strengthen national unity.

Job Creation and Youth Empowerment: High youth unemployment rates must be tackled through initiatives aimed at creating job opportunities. Vocational training and technical education programs should be prioritized to equip young people with marketable skills. Additionally, entrepreneurship can be encouraged by offering financial support and training programs. One of the human rights activists interviewed highlighted that "listening to the people and addressing their needs through a bottom-up approach is essential to building a culture of peace." Empowering youth in this manner reduces their vulnerability to exploitation by political elites and extremist groups, making them agents of peace.

Dismantling Divide-and-Rule Tactics: The government must take deliberate steps to dismantle divide-and-rule strategies employed by political elites. Promoting a sense of national identity and shared purpose can counter these manipulative tactics. A cohesive society can emerge through campaigns and programs that emphasize unity and a collective vision for the nation's future.

Inclusivity in National Dialogue: The government must ensure the inclusivity of national dialogue processes, representing all community members and addressing diverse concerns. Open and transparent communication with the public is essential to restoring trust in initiatives like the National Dialogue Commission.

To Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

Holistic Peacebuilding: CSOs should integrate advocacy and development efforts to address the underlying causes of conflict. For instance, they can implement projects that combine community

reconciliation activities with economic development initiatives. This approach ensures that peacebuilding efforts are both relevant and sustainable.

Grassroots Involvement: Engaging communities directly in peace initiatives is vital. Grassroots movements, which prioritize the voices and needs of local communities, can play a significant role in fostering sustainable peace. By empowering these movements, CSOs can ensure that solutions are locally owned and contextually relevant.

Religious Collaboration: CSOs can act as facilitators for collaboration among religious leaders to promote reconciliation and societal transformation. By encouraging religious leaders to focus on peace, compassion, and unity, CSOs can leverage their influence to foster societal harmony and healing.

General Recommendations

Addressing Economic Inequalities: Economic hardships and resource distribution inequalities must be addressed through sustainable development policies. Equitable allocation of resources can reduce competition and tensions among different groups, creating a more stable societal fabric.

Empowering Marginalized Groups: Empowering marginalized groups through education, economic opportunities, and representation in decision-making processes is critical. Such empowerment reduces grievances and fosters a sense of belonging within the nation.

Collaboration Across Different Sectors: Lasting peace requires a multifaceted approach involving all societal sectors—government, CSOs, religious institutions, and grassroots movements. Collaboration and coordination among these actors are essential to ensure comprehensive and effective peacebuilding efforts.

Promoting Unity through National Identity: Campaigns and initiatives that foster a strong sense of shared national identity can serve as a unifying force. This involves celebrating the nation's cultural diversity while promoting a collective vision for peace and prosperity.

In conclusion, achieving lasting peace in Ethiopia necessitates a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of conflict, fosters inclusivity, and empowers marginalized groups. By embracing openness, promoting collaboration, and focusing on sustainable development, Ethiopia can create a foundation for a peaceful and unified future.

SOUTH SUDAN

The CMT 2024 established the conflict level for South Sudan to be **2.6** This indicates that South Sudan is at the confrontational level of conflict where tensions and pockets of incidences of clashes are in low intensity. Indeed, the human rights watch, ACLED and Radio Tamazuj reported violent clashes between the government and various militia groups as well as intercommunal violence in the pockets of the country that resulted in deaths, injuries and displacements of some people. Consequently, this shows a need for peacebuilding and conflict intervention efforts to prevent the present tensions in South Sudan from escalating into a crisis.

Figure 32: Map of South Sudan
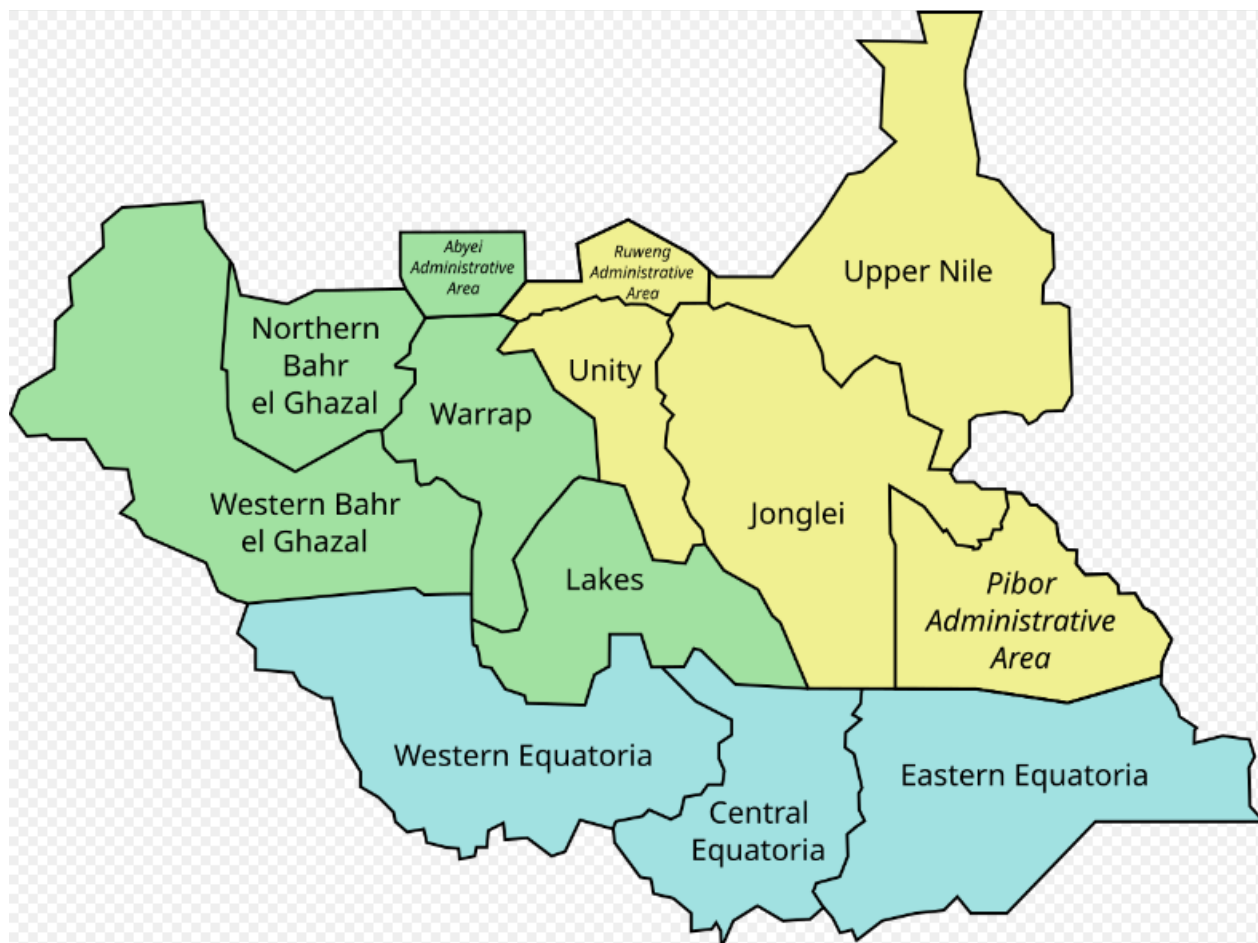
Source: State Government of South Sudan

Age Bracket of Respondents

There was different age groups represented in the 2024 CMT study conducted in South Sudan which shows a clear representation and participation of various persons across the population. Those aged between 18-26 were the highest representation, with 43 respondents, making up 33.08% of the total. This was followed by those aged between 27-35, which constituted 38 respondents, representing 29.23% of the total. Those aged 36-50 constituted 33 respondents, accounting for 25.38% of the total. The least represented group with only 16 respondents, making up 12.31% of the total were those aged 50 and above years.

Figure 33: Distribution of the Age Bracket of the Respondents from South Sudan
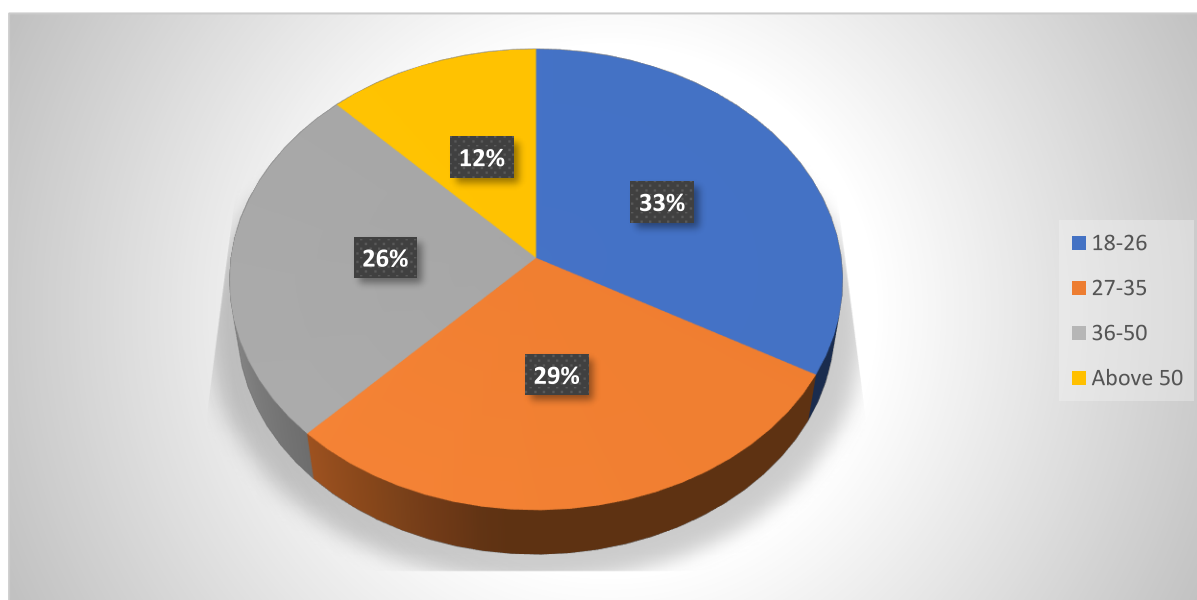
Source: CMT Research Findings

Gender Distribution of the Respondents

Regarding the gender distribution, 56.15% of the total respondents interviewed were male while 42.31% of the participants were female (Figure 34). Although slightly lower than the male representation, the female participation in the study reflects significant involvement, showcasing meaningful contributions from women. Furthermore, only 2 respondents (1.54%) chose not to disclose their gender, representing a minor portion of the total and indicating that the majority of participants provided their gender information. This balanced disclosure enhances the comprehensiveness of the data collected. While males were the majority, the substantial female participation points to a relatively balanced gender representation in the 2024 CMT research. The low number of omitted responses also suggests that most respondents were comfortable identifying their gender. Figure 34 below shows the gender distribution of the respondents who filled out the questionnaire.

Figure 34:Distribution of the Gender of the Respondents from South Sudan
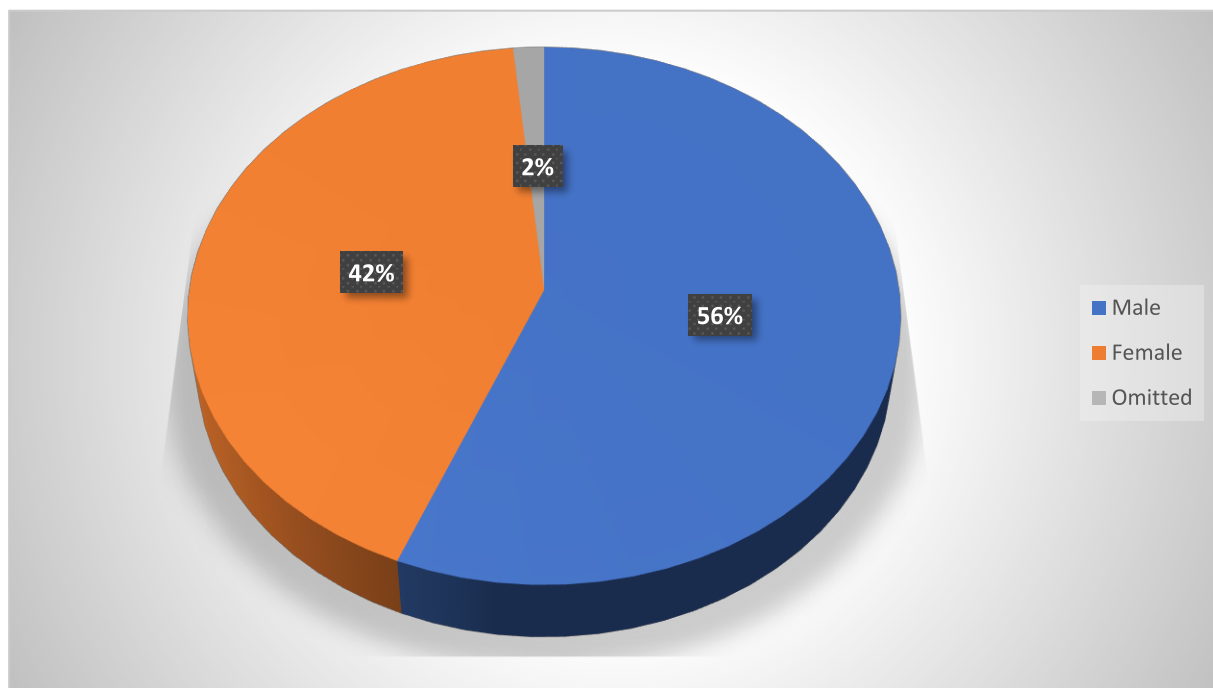
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Occupation of the Respondents

The 2024 CMT study also sought to understand the occupational background and the level of experience of the respondents to have a clear understanding of various perspectives, behaviour, decision-making processes and expertise that informs various conflict intervention mechanisms in South Sudan. There were respondents from diverse occupational backgrounds who participated in the study. The majority of the respondents who filled the questionnaire were peace practitioners, accounting for 35.5%. This was followed by media practitioners accounting for 22.46% of the total. The respondents from the civil society accounted for 13.77% of the respondents while the religious leaders and those from the private sector represented 8.7% respectively. Other respondents included individuals from the academia (5.07%), the government and public administration (3.62%), those engaged in social services (1.45%) and the individuals from the healthcare sector (0.72%). This suggests that the 2024 CMT findings has incorporated input from a range of sectors, each contributing its own unique perspective in the peacebuilding process in South Sudan. Figure 35 below shows the percentages of the distribution of the occupation of the respondents who filled the questionnaire.

Figure 35: Distribution of the Occupation of the Respondents from South Sudan

Source: CMT Research Findings

On the years of experience, the majority of the respondents had 3-4 years of experience in their respective fields of work. This was followed by those who had accumulated more than 5 years of experience. Those who had less than one of experience were the least. The distribution of the respondents with regards to years of experience suggests that most of them are generally experienced, with a significant representation of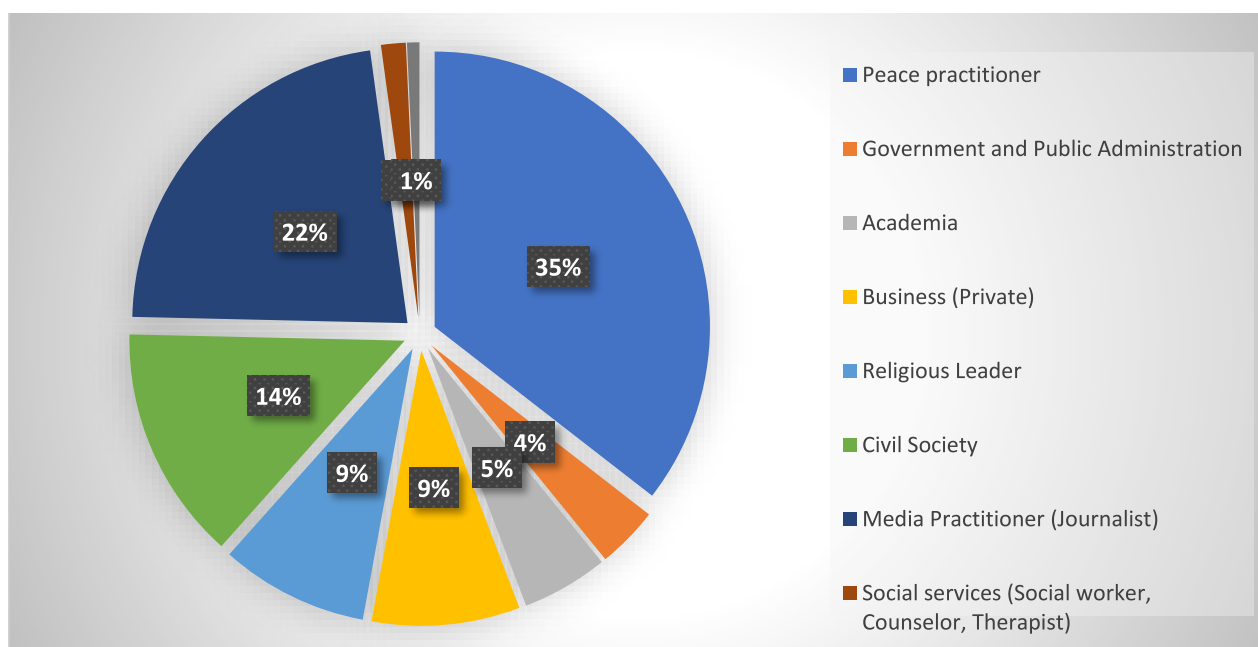 individuals who have spent a considerable amount of time in their professions. The distribution of years of experience among peace practitioners reveals that a small percentage (2.04%) had less than one year of experience, while 10.2% had 1–2 years of experience. The majority, comprising 48.98%, had 3–4 years of experience, indicating that the largest proportion of practitioners have a moderate level of experience in the field. Additionally, 38.78% of respondents had over 5 years of experience, reflecting a significant presence of highly experienced individuals who participated in the survey.

In the category of those who were working with the government and public administration, all the respondents in this sector (100%) had over 5 years of experience, highlighting a highly experienced category. In the field of Academia, about 28.57% of respondents from had 1-2 years of experience, while the majority (71.43%) had 3-4 years. This suggests that most respondents in academia who filled the 2024 CMT questionnaire are mid-level professionals. Interestingly, no respondents had less than 1 year or more than 5 years of experience, indicating a concentration of professionals with moderate levels of experience.

In the field of business (Private Sector) individuals, none of the business respondents had less than one year of experience. A small percentage (8.33%) had 1-2 years of experience, while the majority (83.33%) had 3-4 years of experience, showing that most respondents in this category were moderately experienced. There were no religious leaders who had less than 1 year or 1-2 years of experience. The majority of the religious leaders (66.67%) had 3–4 years of experience, while 33.33% had over 5 years of experience. The civil society sector had about 21.05% of the respondents with 1-2 years while 36.84% had 3-4 years of experience. A significant 42.11% had more than 5 years of experience, indicating a strong presence of seasoned professionals who participated in the study. On the other hand, a small percentage (3.23%) of media practitioners had less than one year of experience. Around 29.03% had 1-2 years, and 45.16% had 3–4 years of experience. Additionally, 22.58% had more than 5 years of experience. In the social services sector, half (50%) of respondents had less than one years of experience while none had 1-2 years or over

5 years of experience. The remaining 50% had 3-4 years of experience. Finally, in the healthcare sector, all the respondents (100%) had 1-2 years of experience. Overall, the experience levels of respondents vary significantly across sectors, reflecting the diverse range of professionals involved in the 2024 CMT study. Figure 36 below shows the distribution of the years of experience of the respondents.

Figure 36: Distribution of the Years of Experience of the Respondents from South Sudan
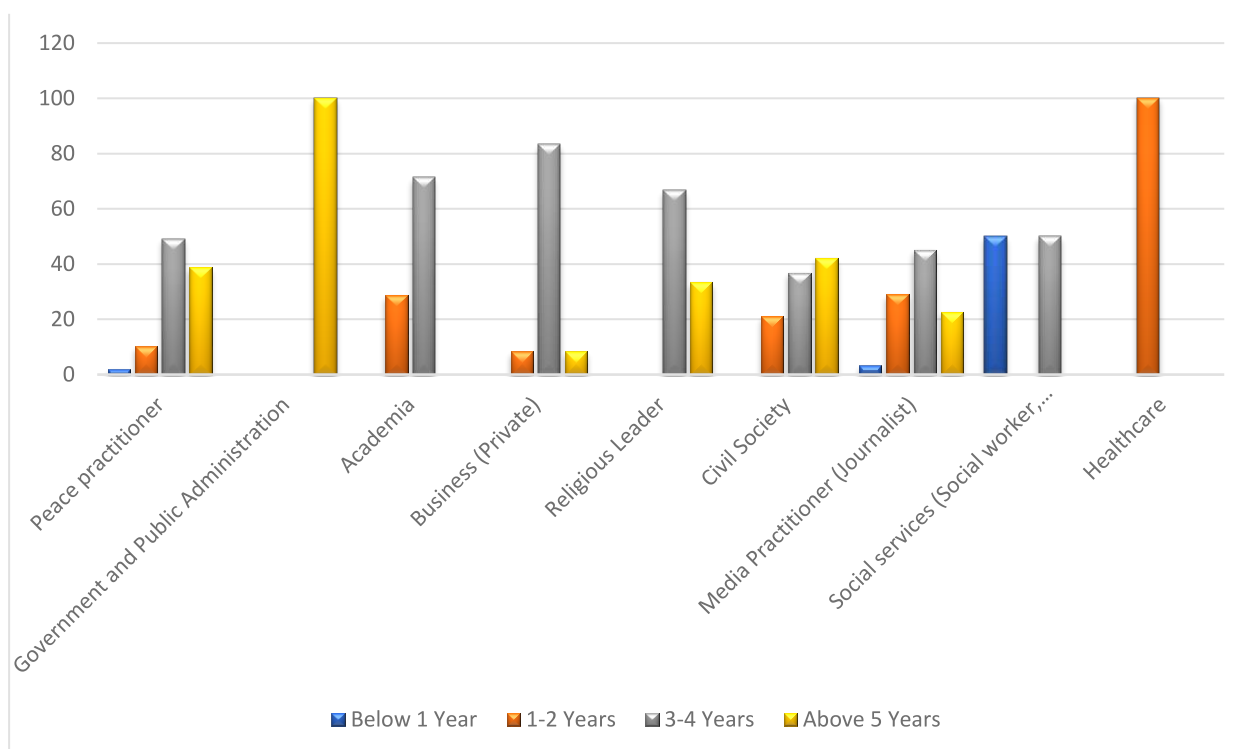
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Stakeholders of the Respondents

The respondents in the 2024 CMT study were drawn from various stakeholders. The largest group, of stakeholders comprising 32.3% of respondents, worked with the government. This was followed by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs), which constituted 20% of the respondents (Figure 37). Community members were the next significant stakeholder group, with 15.4% of respondents indicating they fell within that category. The NGO staff, both local and international, represented 12.3% of the stakeholders. Youth groups were also notable, accounting for 5.4% of the respondents. Women's groups and local peace committees each accounted for 3.1% of respondents, while religious leaders and chief/ward administrators had lower representation, with 0.8% and 1.5% respectively. Other unspecified stakeholders represented 6.2% while no respondents indicated they represented cultural leaders or kraal leaders. Figure 37 below shows the distribution of the stakeholders of the respondents.

Figure 37: Distribution of the Stakeholders of the Respondents from South Sudan
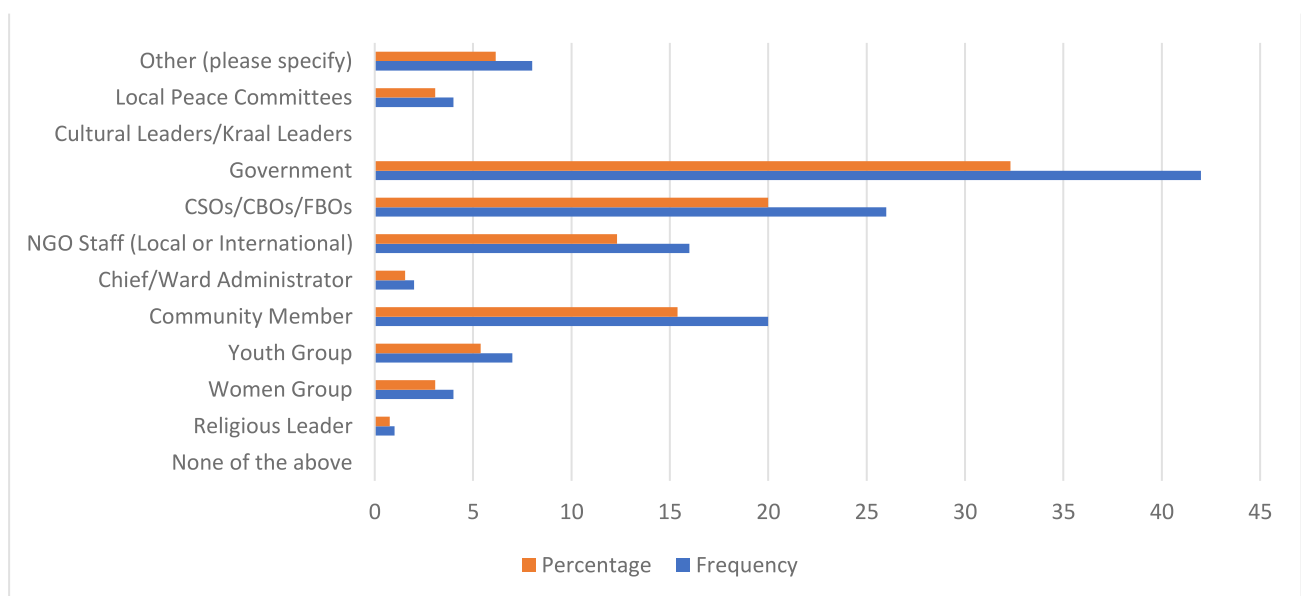
Source: CMT Research Findings

Conflicts in South Sudan

In the 2024 CMT study, respondents were asked whether the exclusion of social groups such as youth, women, people living with disabilities, and religious leaders from the peacebuilding process affected peace stability in their geographical location in South Sudan. A significant majority, 85.38% of the respondents, indicated "yes," while only 3.85% responded "no." The reasons provided by respondents strongly emphasized the negative consequences of exclusion, particularly the exclusion of youth. Many noted that excluding youth from peace-building process has made them vulnerable to manipulation, which could lead them to engage in violence or criminal activities. A student leader highlighted that youth were often the victims of war, and excluding them would not only increase crime rates but also hinder the effective implementation of peace agreements.

A recurring sentiment was that politicians might exploit the youth's exclusion, manipulating them for their political gain, thereby exacerbating conflict. Another youth leader stressed that youth were the main drivers of both conflict and peace, playing a pivotal role in the peace process. Failing to include them was considered tantamount to ignoring the root causes of conflict. Several respondents emphasized that peacebuilding must be inclusive, involving all groups, especially youth and people living with disabilities to ensure successful implementation and long-term stability. A student leader noted that youth, comprising 72% of South Sudan's population, were a majority group, and excluding them would render the peace process ineffective. Respondents expressed that it was impossible to achieve lasting peace without their active participation, as youth were deeply involved in conflicts and peacebuilding. In summary, the consensus was that youth are critical assets to the country, and their inclusion in the peace process was seen as essential for sustainable peace and security.

Further, the 2024 CMT study also sought to understand the status of the ongoing conflicts in South Sudan. Thus, during Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) sessions, the respondents were asked if they were aware of any ongoing conflicts in South Sudan. Only 20% of the respondents indicated "yes," while 7.69% responded "no." A significant majority, 72.31%, omitted the question. Among the conflicts mentioned were political violence, ethnic conflicts, and robbery with violence, which were frequently cited. Additionally, some respondents mentioned border conflicts, communal conflicts, and tribal disputes as prevalent issues. Several

respondents specified that communal conflicts and border disputes were widespread and closely related to tribal conflicts.

Other respondents identified cattle raiding, land grabbing, and inter-communal disputes as major sources of conflict in the country. It was clear from the responses that violence in South Sudan took many forms, including political violence, ethnic clashes, and communal disputes, often exacerbated by border and land disputes among communities, particularly pastoralist societies.

The respondents interviewed and participants in the focus group discussions on conflicts in South Sudan provided profound insights into the underlying causes and dynamics of South Sudan's persistent instability. One of the respondents, a development worker, succinctly described the intersection of natural resource competition, militarism, and political instability as critical drivers of conflict. He explained, "South Sudan has a great endowment of resources, yet the competition over these resources remains a key source of conflict." He further elaborated on the militarized nature of governance, noting that, "generals become politicians, and when excluded from politics, revert to militarism." This cycle is exacerbated by porous borders that facilitate the flow of arms, perpetuating violence and undermining stability. A lecturer based in Juba corroborated these points, emphasizing that the "proliferation of arms and weak rule of law" perpetuates intercommunal violence and rebellion. This challenge is compounded by systemic corruption and unequal resource distribution, which leave marginalized groups feeling excluded and forced to take up arms as a last resort.

During the focus group discussions, community leaders, youth representatives, and clergy collectively identified key factors driving conflict, such as land issues, cattle raiding, tribalism, corruption, economic challenges, youth disempowerment, and historical grievances. Land disputes were flagged as particularly contentious. The lack of clear land ownership policies and unresolved boundary disputes have turned land into a volatile issue. As one participant remarked, land is not just an economic resource but a "symbol of cultural identity and heritage." Cattle raiding, deeply rooted in cultural practices, emerged as another significant factor. One youth leader stressed that "without alternative livelihoods and security measures, the tradition of cattle raiding will remain a source of violence." This practice fuels inter-community tensions and economic instability, perpetuating cycles of violence.

Tribalism and ethnic divisions were also identified as major challenges. These divisions, often exacerbated by competition for scarce resources and political exploitation, undermine national unity. Participants called for initiatives to foster a shared national identity and address historical social divisions to build lasting peace. The discussions highlighted the pressing need for economic reforms and inclusive governance as foundational solutions to conflict. A religious leader articulated this elaborately, stating, "Unmet economic expectations often drive people to take the law into their own hands, leading to violence." Economic hardships, including widespread unemployment and lack of opportunities, were viewed as significant contributors to instability. Participants emphasized the importance of job creation, youth empowerment, and equitable resource distribution to address these challenges effectively. Corruption emerged as a pervasive issue undermining public trust in institutions and exacerbating socio-economic disparities. Participants urged the government to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms and promote transparency and accountability to restore trust and foster stability.

Prevalent Conflicts in South Sudan

The study further evaluated the prevalence of conflict in South Sudan. Results in Figure 38 shows that border violence and incitement were deemed "highly prevalent" by 33.08% of respondents, while 56.15% considered it "moderately prevalent." Illegal settlement by internally displaced persons (IDPs) was also significant, with 21.54% rating it as "highly prevalent" and 59.23% as "moderately prevalent." Cattle rustling was considered "highly prevalent" by only 3.85% of respondents, but 79.23% rated it as "moderately prevalent," suggesting its persistence in many regions. Resource-based violence followed a similar trend, with 16.15% marking it as "highly prevalent" and a large 77.69% indicating it was "moderately prevalent."

Gender-based and sexual violence, while serious, was not viewed as highly widespread, with 10.77% considering it "highly prevalent" and 9.23% as "moderately prevalent." However, the majority, 77.69%, believed it was "less prevalent." Domestic violence, in contrast, was rated "highly prevalent" by 56.15% of respondents, making it the most severe issue on the list. Similarly, armed robbery and theft were also rated as highly significant, with 55.38% identifying it as "highly prevalent." Political violence, though a serious concern, was rated "highly prevalent" by only 13.85%, while 73.08% saw it as "moderately prevalent." Police brutality was rated as "highly prevalent" by 10.77%, with the majority, 69.23%, considering it "less prevalent." In summary, the

respondents perceived domestic violence and armed robbery as the most widespread conflicts in South Sudan, followed by significant concerns over illegal settlements, border violence, and political violence. Gender-based violence and police brutality were seen as relatively less prevalent issues, though still present in some areas. Figure 38 below shows the respondents rating of the various prevalent conflicts in South Sudan.

Figure 38: Prevalent Conflicts in South Sudan
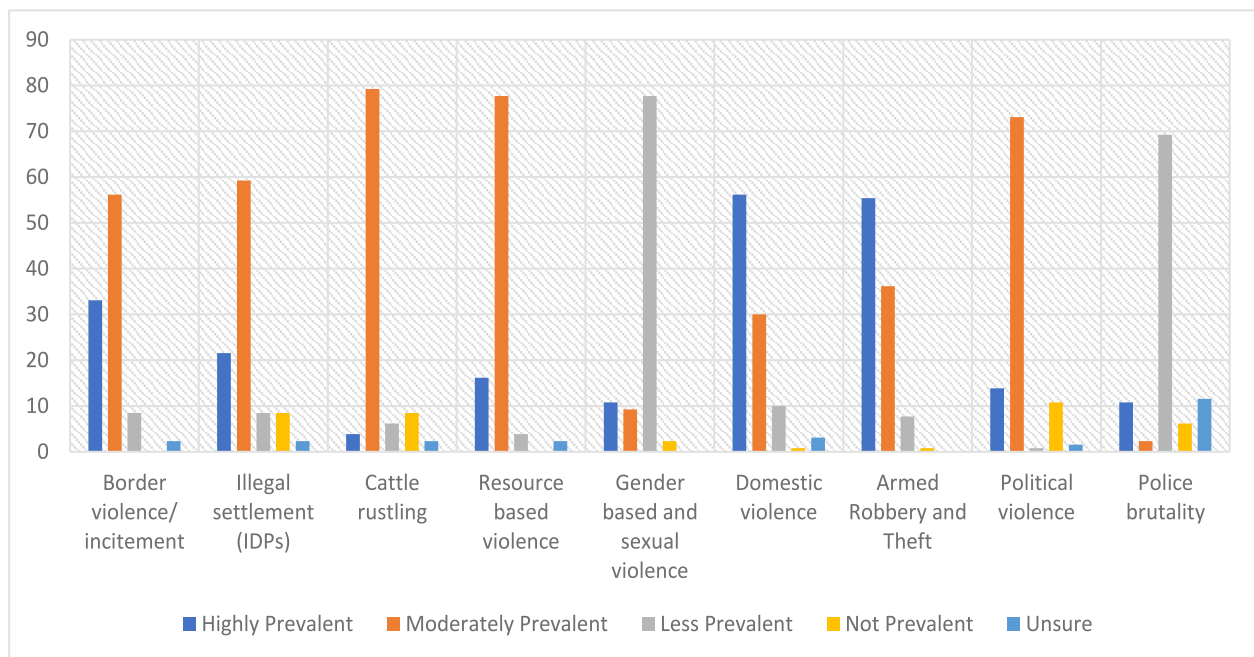
Source: CMT Research Findings

Drivers of Conflict in South Sudan

The 2024 CMT study aimed to identify the drivers of conflict in South Sudan by asking respondents to rank key factors contributing to conflicts in their specific locations, from the most prominent to the least. The respondents pointed to unaddressed historical grievances and revenge killings as the most significant driver, with 85.38% indicating it as the "most prominent" factor (Figure 39). This was followed by cattle rustling for economic gain, at63.85% of the total respondents interviewed. Other factors like high levels of unemployment, especially among the youth, were also critical, with 51.54% of respondents identifying unemployment as a major driver of conflict. Failure or partial implementation of peace agreements was another key issue, with 60% highlighting it as most prominent, reflecting concerns about governance and peace processes in South Sudan.

Political and economic marginalization and proliferation of small arms and light weapons were also notable drivers. Political marginalization was viewed as "most prominent" by 33.85% of respondents, while 26.92% indicated the proliferation of arms as a significant issue. A majority, 56.92% and 59.23% respectively, rated these factors as "moderately prominent." Climate change, including droughts and floods (36.92%), was another significant factor rated by the respondents as a highly prominent conflict driver in the region. Competition over natural resources like land, water, and minerals was marked by 87.69% of respondents as "moderately prominent" but only by 7.69% as the "most prominent," reflecting the widespread but secondary nature of resource competition.

Further, multiple armed and rebel groups were also recognized as key drivers, with 19.23% viewing them as most prominent and 66.15% seeing them as moderately prominent. Ethnicized politics and power imbalance contributed to conflict, though not as strongly as other factors, with 13.85% identifying it as highly prominent. Respondents thus, highlighted historical grievances, economic cattle rustling, and unemployment as the most pressing conflict drivers. The failure of peace agreements, political marginalization, and arms proliferation were also critical, while climate change and competition over resources played significant but more moderate roles in fueling conflicts across South Sudan. Figure 39 below shows the distribution of the drivers of the conflict in South Sudan.

Figure 39: Drivers of Conflict in South Sudan
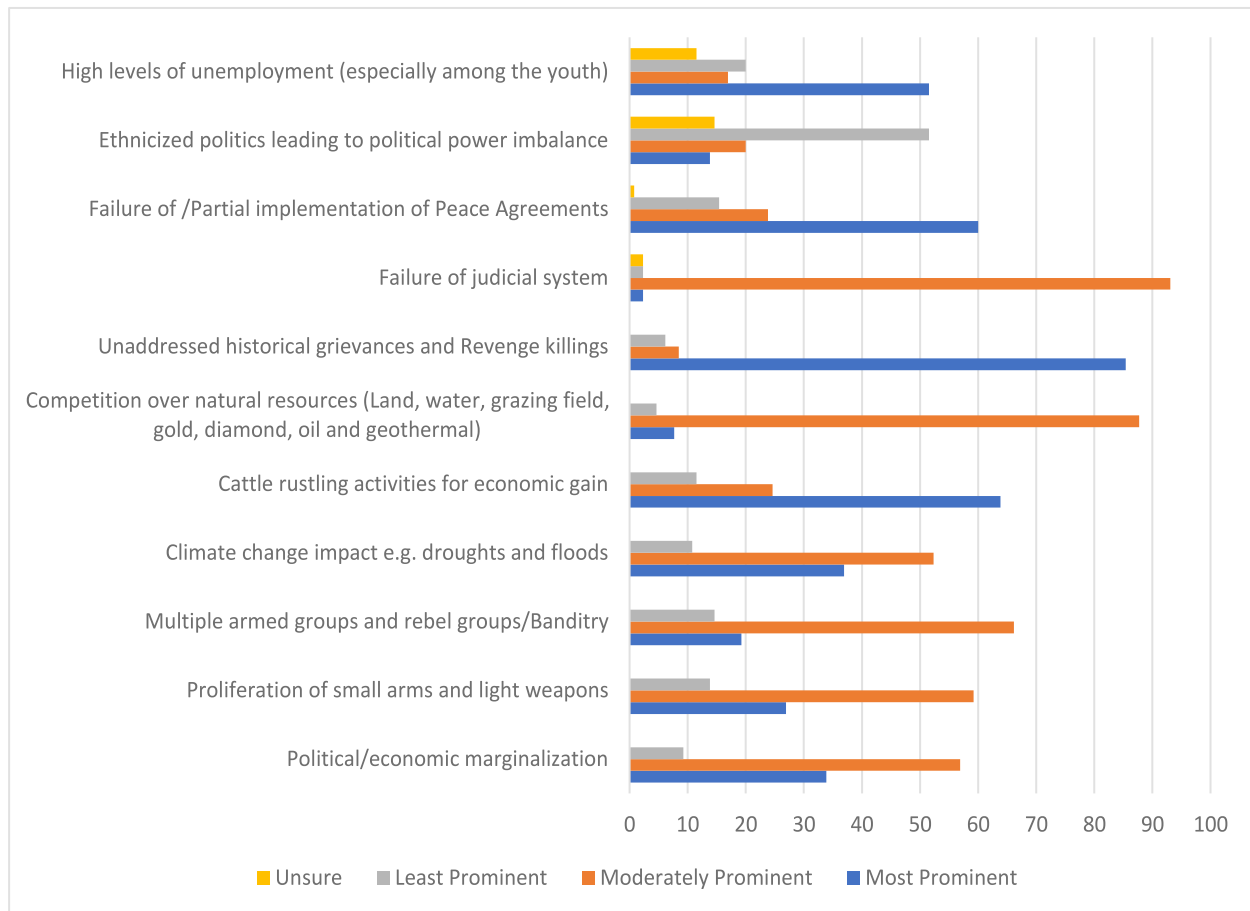
Source: CMT Research Findings

Actors of the Conflict in South Sudan

The 2024 CMT study also determined the key actors responsible for the ongoing conflicts in South Sudan. Results in Figure 40 reveal that religious leaders were overwhelmingly seen as the most responsible, with 46.92% of respondents attributing them a high degree of blame for the conflict situation. Political leaders followed closely, with 40.77% viewing them as most responsible for the unrest in South Sudan. Armed militia groups were also significantly implicated, with 27.69% identifying them as significant contributors to the conflict. A notable portion of respondents, 70%, saw government security forces (police and army) as "moderately responsible," reflecting a widespread belief in the role of state actors in perpetuating conflict. Similarly, 68.46% of respondents rated community leaders as moderately responsible, suggesting a shared perception of local actors contributing to the violence.

Cultural leaders, clan elders, and armed militia groups were also seen as moderately responsible, with 52.31%, 58.46%, and ,57.69% respectively in this category. These figures highlight the broad involvement of various societal and traditional characters in the conflict dynamics of South Sudan. Multinational corporations were largely seen as uninvolved, with 82.31% of respondents viewing them as "not responsible," indicating that economic interests were not widely perceived as significant drivers of conflict. Similarly, 44.62% did not hold neighboring states and international actors such as the AU, UN, and EU responsible, though some respondents still identified them as contributing factors, with 29.23% rating them as "less responsible." In summary, religious leaders, political leaders, and armed militia groups were viewed as the most responsible for South Sudan's ongoing conflict, while government security forces, community leaders, and cultural figures were seen as moderately involved. International actors and corporations, however, were seen as having a far lesser role in driving the conflict in South Sudan. Figure 40 below shows the distribution of actors responsible for the conflict in South Sudan.

Figure 40: Actors of Conflict in South Sudan
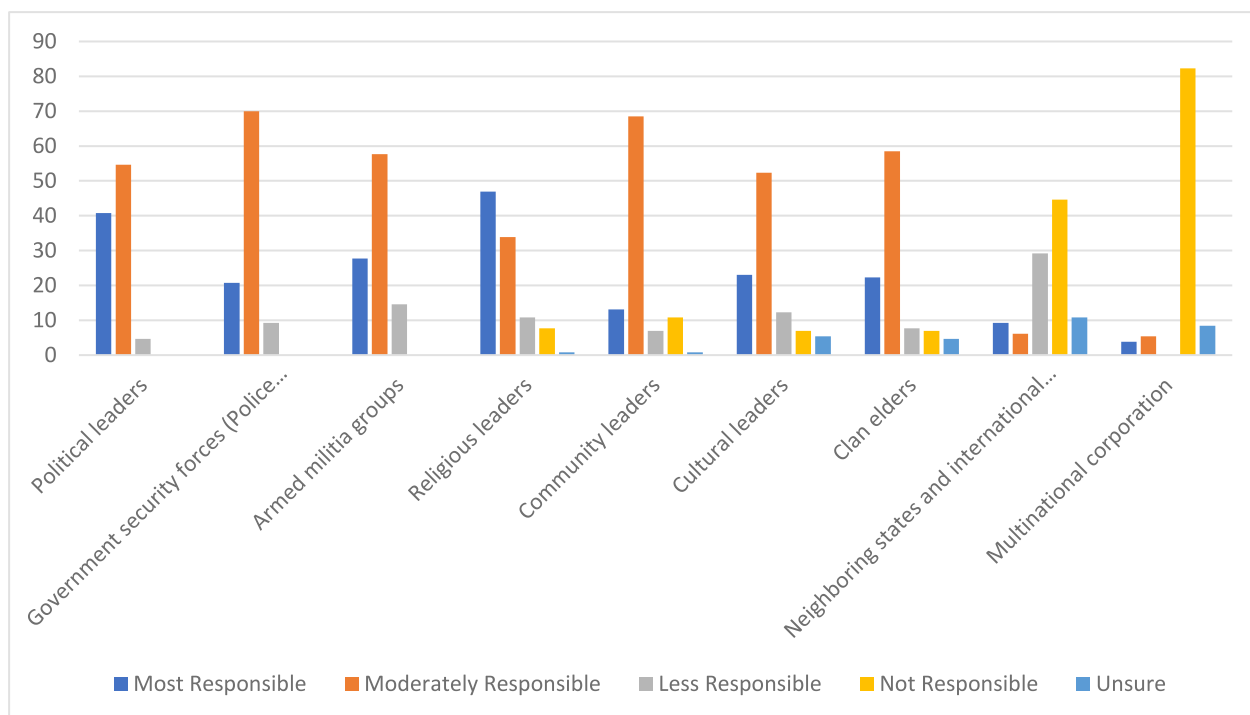
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Effectiveness of Organizations in Resolving the Conflicts in South Sudan

The 2024 CMT study examined the effectiveness of various organizations in resolving the ongoing conflicts in South Sudan, based on their past actions, activities, and initiatives. Respondents rated these organizations across several categories, from "very effective" to "ineffective." NGOs, both local and international, were seen as the most effective in conflict resolution efforts, with 63.85% of respondents rating them as "very effective" and 33.85% as "effective." Peace committees also received a high level of rating, with 40% of respondents viewing them as "very effective" and 60% considering them "effective." (Figure 41) This demonstrated strong confidence in grassroots peace initiatives and non-governmental organizations. Religious institutions were similarly regarded as influential, with 36.15% rating them as "very effective" and a majority of 59.23% seeing them as "effective." These figures highlight the perceived importance of religious bodies in fostering peace within South Sudan.

On the other hand, government involvement in conflict resolution was largely considered effective by a significant 82.31% of respondents, though only 6.92% rated it as "very effective." The judicial court system showed a similar pattern, with 90% of respondents seeing it as "effective," but only 4.62% rating it as "very effective." The Council of elders had a mixed rating, with a large portion of respondents (53.85%) finding them "effective," while 42.31% viewed them as "not effective." This suggested that while traditional leadership played a role, there were doubts about their capacity to resolve conflicts decisively. Conversely, women's organizations and youth groups were largely seen as ineffective in addressing the conflict, with 78.46% and 90% of respondents, respectively, rating them as "not effective." These figures indicated a perceived lack of influence or action from these groups in peacebuilding. Men's organizations also struggled in their perceived effectiveness, with 36.15% rating them as "not effective," though 34.62% viewed them as "very effective." This showed a split in opinions regarding their role in the peace process.

The international community (including the UN, AU, and IGAD) was overwhelmingly rated as "not effective" by 80.77% of respondents, highlighting a general sentiment of dissatisfaction with external actors' ability to resolve South Sudan's conflicts. In summary, NGOs, peace committees, and religious institutions were seen as the most effective actors in conflict resolution efforts. In contrast, youth groups, women's organizations, and the international community were widely considered ineffective, with government and judicial systems being moderately effective in the

eyes of the respondents. Figure 41 below shows the distribution of various organizations in terms of their effectiveness in resolving the conflict in South Sudan.

Figure 41: Organizations Effective in Resolving Conflict in South Sudan
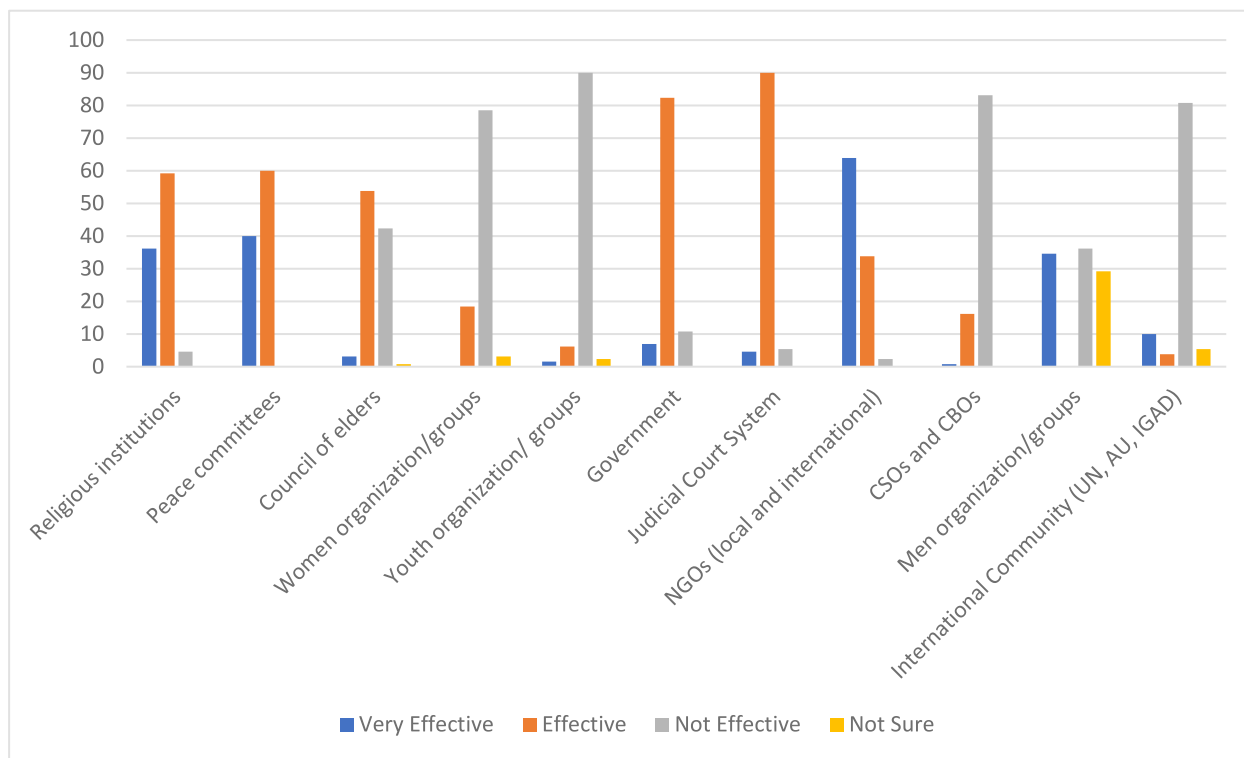
Source: CMT Research Findings

Further, the 2024 CMT study sought to understand whether there were ongoing peace restoration initiatives by various actors to restore peace in South Sudan. Thus, the respondents were asked whether peace restoration strategies, such as reconciliation or peace agreements, were currently in place, particularly by the government or other actors. The findings revealed that 90% of respondents acknowledged the existence of such strategies, while 2.31% did not, and 7.69% ignored the question. Several strategies were highlighted by the respondents, including ongoing dialogues between the South Sudanese government and holdout groups, both locally and internationally. A notable example was the "Tumaini Initiative" dialogue being held in Nairobi, Kenya. Additionally, respondents mentioned ongoing peace talks in Kenya, specifically addressing discussions between the government and armed groups that had not yet been fully integrated into peace agreements.

Locally, peace initiatives were being pursued through signed agreements, such as those between the Toposa and Bor communities and efforts like the Ngok-Twic initiative. In these cases, local peace dialogues were recognized as significant efforts to resolve longstanding grievances and ethnic conflicts. Moreover, there was an emphasis by the on national peace dialogues, regional peace initiatives, and international peace efforts facilitated by entities such as the UN, AU, and IGAD. These organizations, along with the South Sudanese government, were actively engaging in roadmap negotiations and addressing the extension of the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), which was another critical part of the ongoing efforts. Local courts were also seen as playing a role in peace restoration, as they had begun addressing cases related to ethnic violence over the past decade, offering a judicial approach to resolve grievances. In summary, the respondents recognized a wide array of peace efforts, from local and national peace dialogues to international interventions, with several initiatives focusing on reconciliation and addressing specific communal disputes, including inter-community dialogues and regional agreements.

The 2024 CMT study respondents were asked to list the peace agreements that had been signed to aid in restoring peace in South Sudan. Most respondents consistently mentioned three key agreements: the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS), and the Roadmap to the Peaceful and Democratic end of the Transitional period. Several respondents specifically highlighted the importance of these agreements in fostering peace, while some also mentioned additional local peace initiatives that were instrumental in resolving community-level conflicts. These locally signed peace agreements, in conjunction with national-level frameworks like the CPA and R-ARCSS, were noted to play a vital role in peace-building.

Respondents repeatedly emphasized R-ARCSS, and the Road-map as the main pillars of peace restoration efforts in South Sudan. There were also frequent references to local peace agreements that complemented the broader frameworks, helping to address localized disputes. Overall, the consensus was that the CPA, R-ARCSS, and the Roadmap to the Peaceful and Democratic end of the Transitional period, along with some local peace initiatives, were the cornerstone agreements contributing to the ongoing peace efforts in South Sudan.

Challenges to Resolving Conflict in South Sudan

The 2024 CMT study also assessed some of the challenges hindering the resolution of the conflict in South Sudan. The key challenge identified by the respondents was the lack of consensus between peace actors and the absence of a reformed judicial system capable of dispensing fair justice. Additionally, the effects of climate change, such as floods, droughts, and poor harvests, were noted as aggravating factors in the conflict. A significant issue raised was the weakness of social agreements among actors, compounded by the failure to include key stakeholders that is the youths, women, people with disabilities, and religious groups in the peace negotiation process. This exclusion was believed to fuel ongoing tensions.

Additionally, corruption was highlighted as a pervasive challenge, exemplified by the misappropriation and embezzlement of government resources. The lack of comprehensive government policies on peacebuilding further exacerbated the situation, as did political incitements, demonstrations, and hate speech, which heightened tensions. Another major issue was the unresolved historical grievances around land, compensation, and restoration, which continued to stir conflict. The failure of previously signed peace agreements and the availability and ease of access to small arms and light weapons among locals contributed to the breakdown of peace efforts. Further, the lack of political goodwill and the fragile nature of the government, which was under pressure from both armed groups and political factions, made progress easier. The interference by external actors, including neighboring states and international bodies like the UN, EU, AU, and IGAD, further complicated the situation. Lastly, poor economic development in the region was seen as an underlying factor that fueled instability.

When respondents were asked to rate the severity of these challenges, most considered the breakdown of peace talks (91.5%) and the failure of signed peace agreements (82.3%) as "very challenging." (Figure 42) Other significant concerns included political incitements (52.3%), international interference (43.8%), and unresolved historical grievances (36.9%). In contrast, the majority rated challenges like corruption (78.5%) and the lack of reformed judicial systems (90.8%) as moderately challenging. Poor economic development (54.6%) and weak social agreements (66.9%) were also regarded as moderate challenges. However, a smaller percentage of respondents (5.4%) were unsure whether certain issues posed significant challenges, such as access to small arms or fragile government structures. Meanwhile, some issues, such as the lack of

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government peacebuilding policies (78.5%), were not considered challenges by a notable proportion of respondents. Figure 42 below shows the distribution of the challenges to resolving the conflicts in South Sudan.

Figure 42: Challenges to Resolving the Conflict in South Sudan
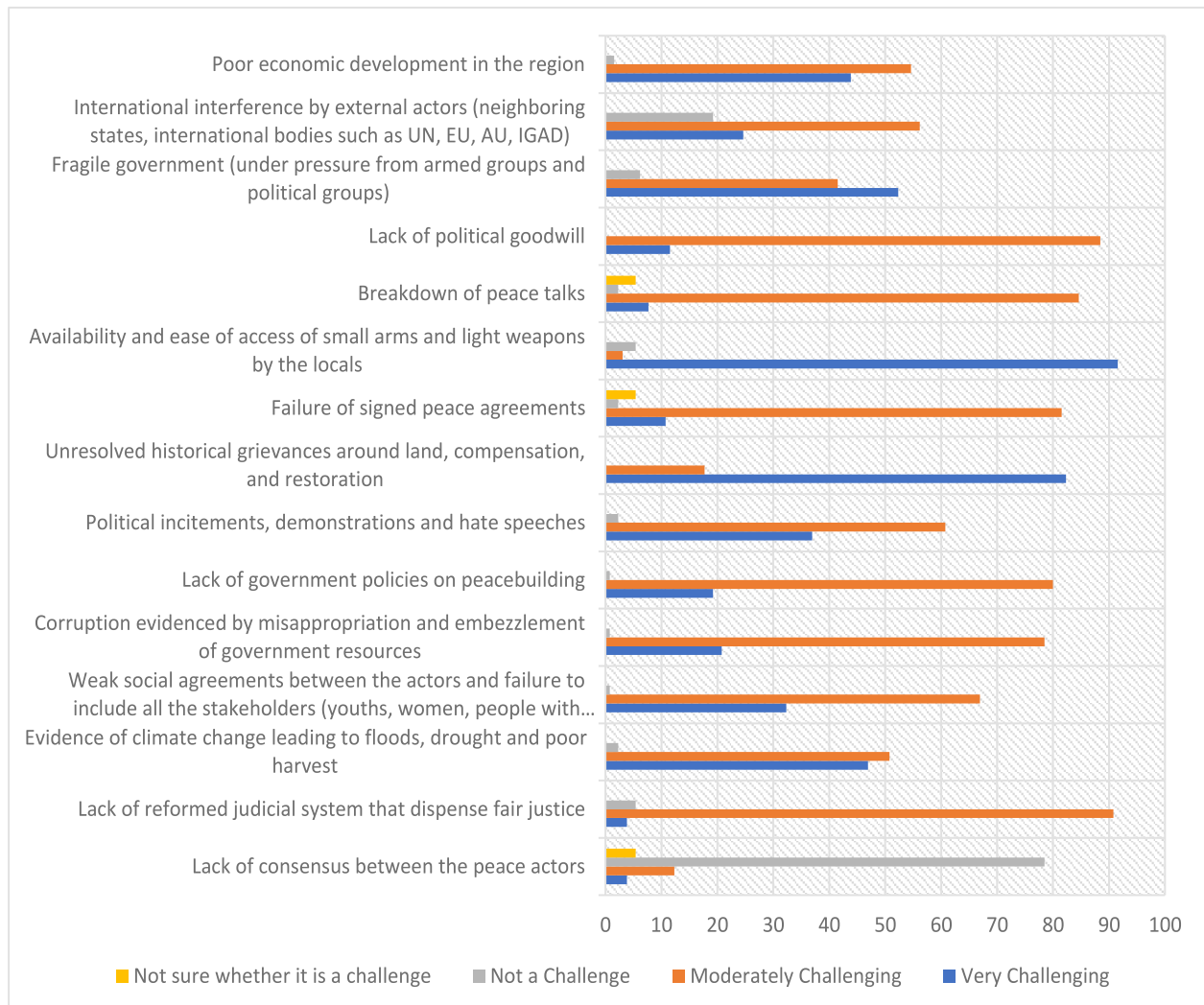
Source: CMT Research Findings

Recommendations

The 2024 CMT study also sought to gather recommendations from respondents on resolving the conflict in South Sudan. Respondents offered a variety of strategies to address the country's persistent issues.

Recommendations for the Government

A key recommendation for the government is to disarm unauthorized civilians, particularly the youth, to curb violence and restore law and order. This should be accompanied by the creation of more job opportunities to productively engage young people and reduce their involvement in conflict. Completing the permanent constitution-making process is also seen as essential for establishing a stable and legitimate legal framework for governance.

Institutional reforms, including judicial reforms, were widely emphasized for those who took part in the study. These reforms should ensure the rule of law, fair dispensation of justice, and crackdowns on corruption, where guilty officials have their assets frozen both domestically and internationally. Conducting national democratic elections was overwhelmingly recommended to restore political legitimacy and remove corrupt officials.

The government was also urged to implement anti-corruption reforms, strengthen law enforcement institutions, and promote bilateral relations with influential international actors such as the United States to foster peace and economic growth. Establishing clear land ownership policies was identified as vital for resolving disputes and promoting equitable access to resources.

Recommendations for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

CSOs were encouraged to play a central role in promoting national unity and addressing tribalism and ethnic divisions. By fostering dialogue and reconciliation initiatives, CSOs can contribute to reducing inter-communal violence and creating a sense of shared identity. They should also actively support the empowerment of youth through education, vocational training, and advocacy for their inclusion in governance structures.

Another critical area for CSO involvement is in the establishment and facilitation of a Commission for Forgiveness and Reconciliation. This body could address historical grievances, promote healing, and pave the way for long-term peace. CSOs can also lead community-driven campaigns to reduce reliance on harmful practices like cattle raiding by introducing alternative livelihoods.

General Recommendations

General recommendations highlighted the need for collaborative efforts between the government, CSOs, and regional and international stakeholders to address the complex drivers of conflict.

Respondents emphasized signing peace agreements with holdout groups to pave the way for democratic elections and political stability.

Investments in economic recovery, particularly in technology and agriculture, were suggested as sustainable ways to empower communities and foster development. The importance of reducing the size of government, ensuring the independence of the electoral commission, and improving infrastructure were also stressed.

Addressing the proliferation of arms, both within communities and across borders, was identified as a priority to restore state legitimacy and capacity. Respondents also called for inclusivity in governance, ensuring that women and youth, who represent a significant proportion of the population, are meaningfully engaged in decision-making processes.

Finally, tackling corruption, upholding human rights, and promoting inclusive governance were viewed as critical steps toward building trust and creating a peaceful and equitable future for South Sudan. Through these combined efforts, South Sudan can address its underlying challenges and move toward sustainable peace and development.

KENYA

Figure 43: Map of Kenya

The conflict level for Kenya is **2.2** This finding shows that Kenya is experiencing confrontational level of conflict. The study findings are discussed in details in the subsequent sub- section.

Age Bracket of the Respondents

The 2024 CMT study collected date from 233 respondents who participated in the survey both online and through FGD as well as Key Informant interviews. Findings in Figure 44 show the age distribution of the respondents. The largest group was aged 27-35, making up 32.6% (76 respondents) while those aged 18-26 followed, representing 27.9% (65 respondents). The third group, aged 36-50, accounted for 28.8% (67 respondents), while respondents above 50 made up the smallest portion at 10.7% (25 respondents).

Figure 44: Age Bracket of the Respondents from Kenya
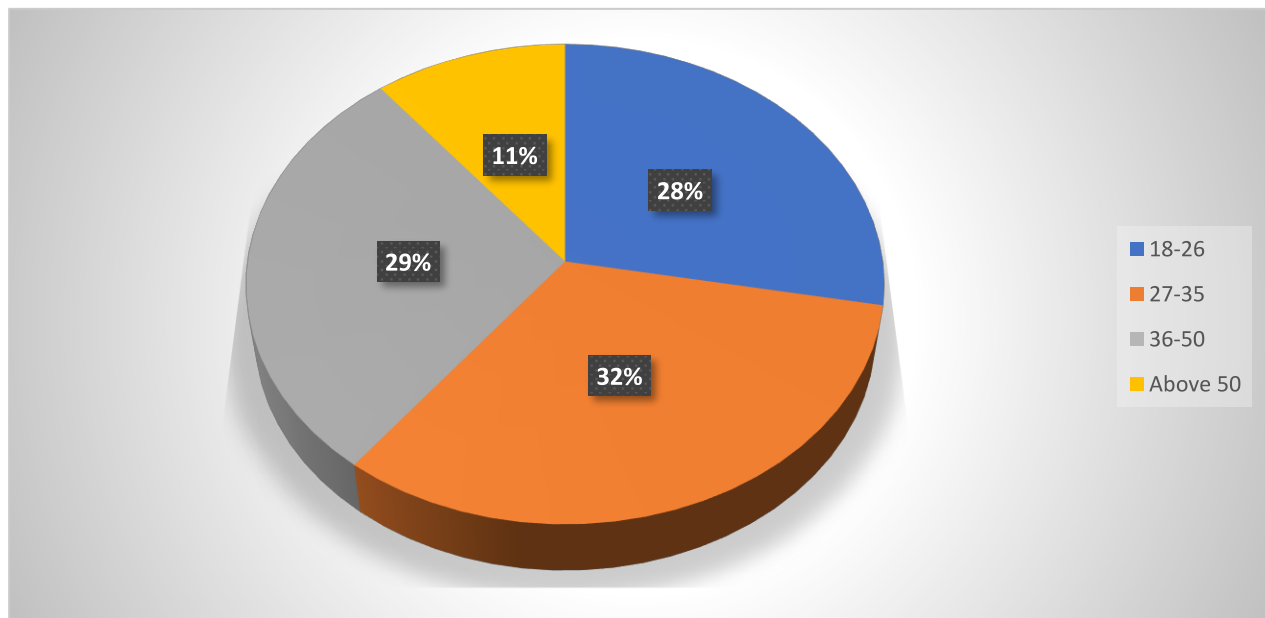
Source: CMT Research Findings

Respondents by Gender

In terms of gender distribution, 130 respondents were male, representing 56.5% of the total, while 100 respondents were female, accounting for 43.5%. Figure 45 below shows the distribution of the gender of the respondents.

Figure 45: Distribution of Gender of the Respondents
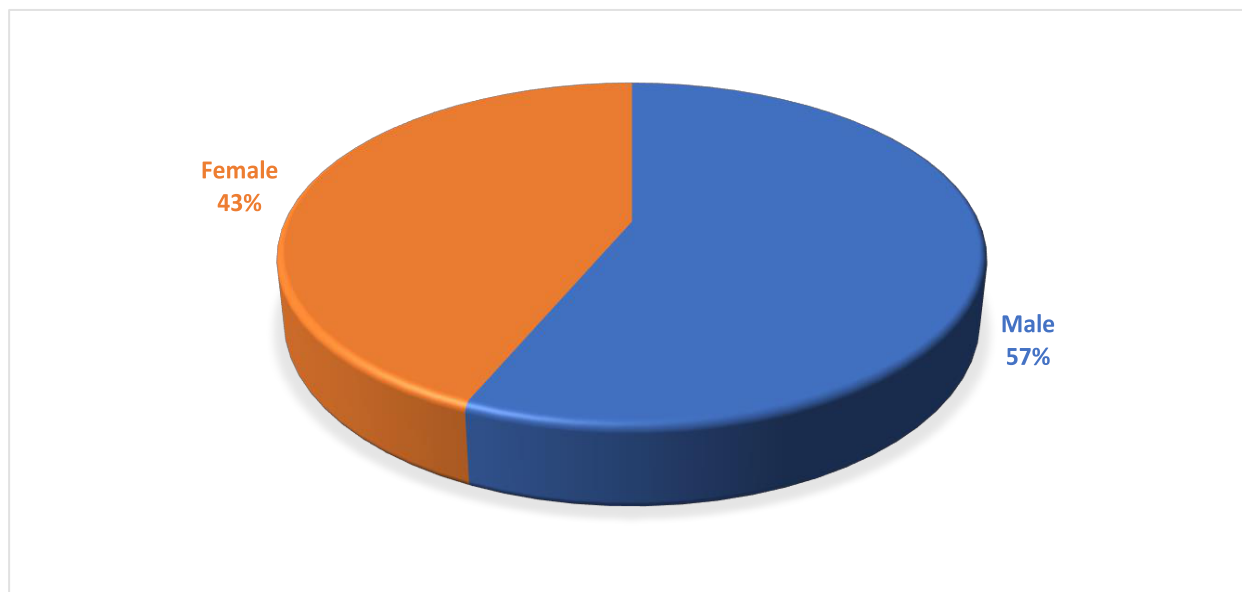
Source: CMT Research Findings

Occupation and Experience of the Respondents

The study findings revealed that the largest proportion of respondents were peace practitioners, making up 18% of the total. Business (private sector) participants followed closely with 16.86%, and those from civil society comprised 15.71%. Respondents in social services (such as social workers, counselors) accounted for 13.41%. Government and public administration professionals constituted 10.34%, while those from the healthcare sector represented 7.28%. Academia participants constituted 8.05%, and religious leaders formed 6.13%. Finally, media practitioners (journalists) represented the smallest portion, contributing 4.21% of the respondents. Figure 46 below shows the distribution of the respondents in terms of their occupation.

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Figure 46: Distribution of the Occupation the Respondents from Kenya
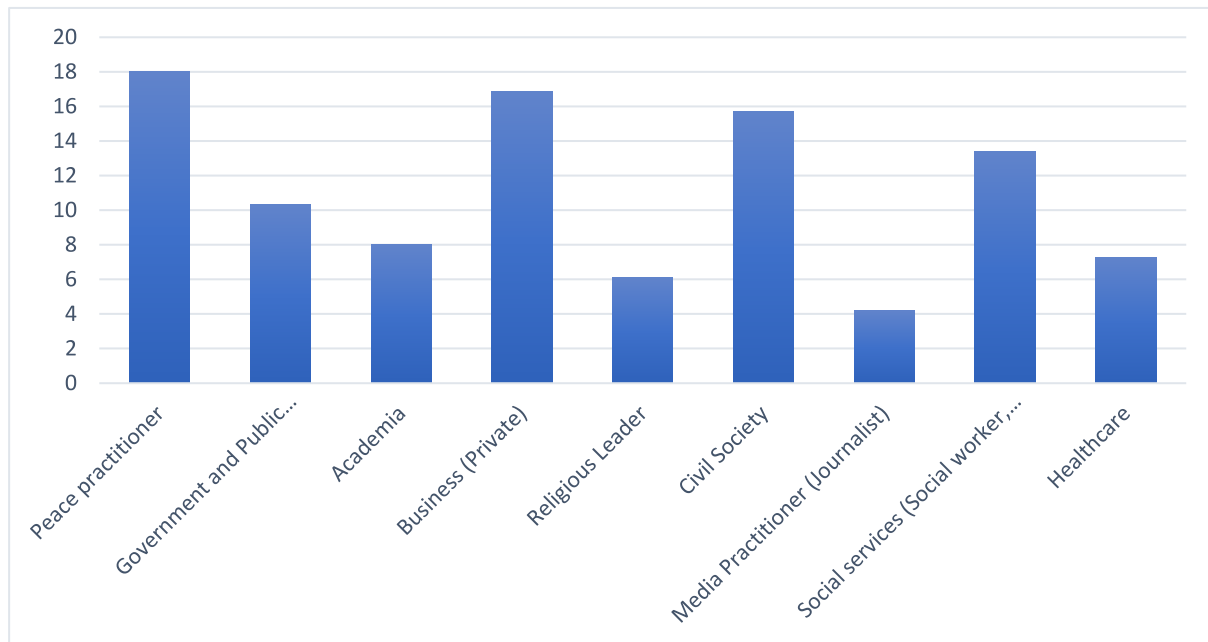
Source: CMT Research Findings

In terms of years of experience and the occupations of respondents who participated in the study, the findings revealed a varied distribution across different sectors. Among peace practitioners, 25.53% had less than one year of experience, 14.89% had 1-2 years, 12.77% had 3-4 years, and the majority, 46.81%, had over 5 years of experience (Figure 46). For those working in government and public administration, 11.11% had less than one year of experience, while 37.04% had 1-2 years, 11.11% had 3-4 years, and 40.74% had more than 5 years. In academia, the highest proportion, 42.86%, had 3-4 years of experience. Meanwhile, 19.05% had less than one year, 9.52% had 1-2 years, and 28.57% had more than 5 years of experience. Among those in business (private), 13.64% had less than one year of experience, 25% had 1-2 years, 27.27% had 3-4 years, and 34.09% had over 5 years. For religious leaders, 6.25% had less than one year of experience, 18.75% had 1-2 years, 18.75% had 3-4 years, and the majority, 56.25%, had more than 5 years.

In civil society, 4.88% had less than one year, 7.32% had 1-2 years, 31.71% had 3-4 years, and 56.10% had over 5 years. Among media practitioners (journalists), 36.36% had less than one year, 9.09% had 1-2 years, 18.18% had 3-4 years, and 36.36% had more than 5 years of experience. For those in social services (social workers, counselors, therapists), 11.43% had less than one year, 22.86% had 1-2 years, 22.86% had 3-4 years, and 42.86% had over 5 years of experience. Finally,

in healthcare, 31.58% had less than one year of experience, 10.53% had 1-2 years, 26.32% had 3-4 years, and 31.58% had more than 5 years. Figure 47 below shows the distribution of the experience of the respondents who participated in the study.

Figure 47: Distribution of the Years of experience of the Respondents from Kenya
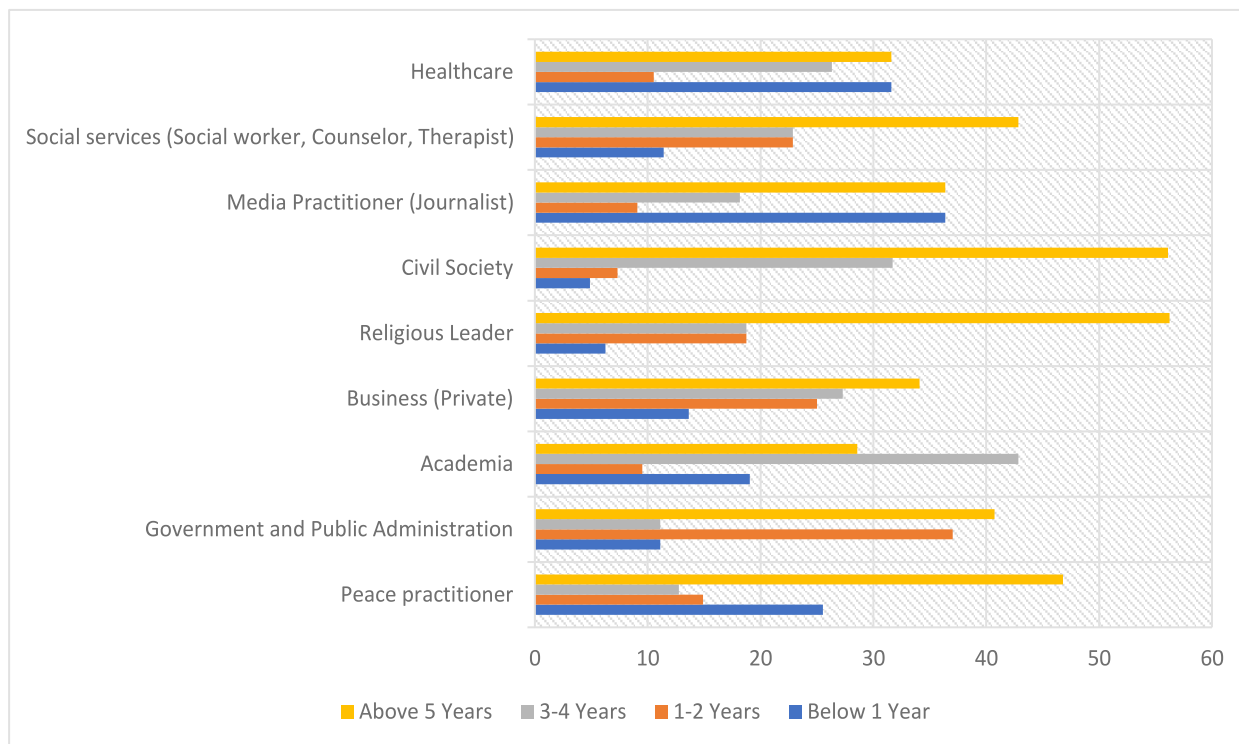
Source: CMT Research Findings

Stakeholders of the Respondents

The 2024 CMT research aimed to identify the category of stakeholders represented by the respondents who filled the questionnaire. The majority, 26.71%, identified as members of youth groups, while 19.86% were affiliated with CSOs, CBOs, or FBOs. A notable portion, 15.88%, categorized themselves as community members. Respondents who worked for the government accounted for 7.94%, and women group members represented 7.58% of the total. Similarly, local peace committee participants made up 7.58%, and religious leaders and NGO staff each contributed 5.78%. A smaller percentage, 1.81%, did not fit into any of the listed categories, while chiefs or ward administrators comprised 0.72%, and cultural or kraal leaders made up 0.36%. This distribution reflected the diverse range of stakeholders involved in the study as shown in figure 48 below.

Figure 48: Stakeholders of the Respondents from Kenya
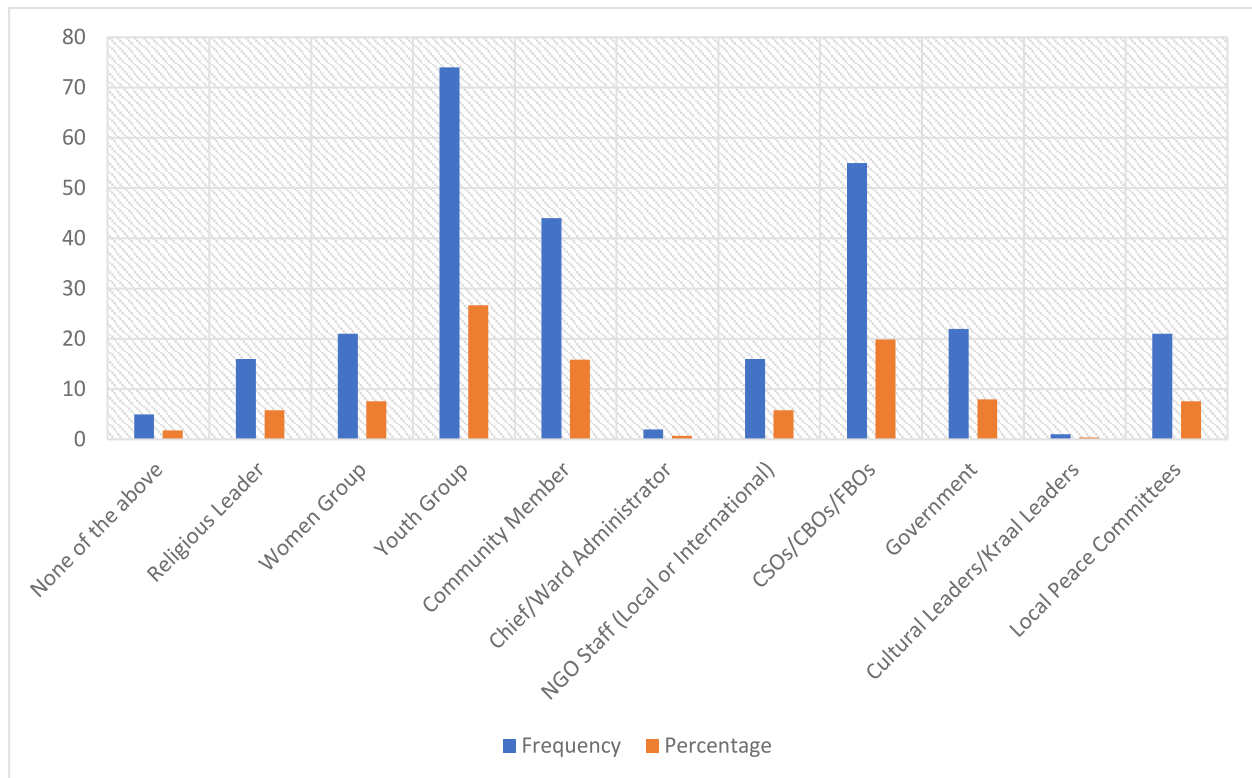
Source: CMT Research Findings

Conflicts in Kenya

The 2024 CMT study sought to understand the existing conflicts in Kenya. Thus, when respondents were asked whether the exclusion of specific social groups, such as youths, women, people with disabilities, or religious leaders from the peacebuilding process affected peace stability in their geographical locations in Kenya, 83.19% of them affirmed that it did, while 11.21% disagreed. A minority of 5.6% expressed uncertainty on the matter. The reasoning behind these responses emphasized that exclusion often breeds resentment, as marginalized groups feel left out of crucial decision-making processes. Several respondents pointed to recent protests led by Generation Z in Kenya as an indicator of the frustration and discontent felt by youths who perceive themselves as excluded from governance structures. They argued that inclusivity is vital, particularly since marginalized groups like the youth and people with disabilities play pivotal roles in advocating for peace in their communities. When these groups are excluded, it not only affects social cohesion but also fosters conflict and disrupts peace efforts. Furthermore, exclusion was seen to undermine

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democracy and perpetuate inequality, especially as youths, women, and people with disabilities form a large portion of Kenya's population and are among the most vulnerable to the impacts of conflict.

The respondents noted that marginalized groups, especially youth, often become susceptible to manipulation by extremist groups, further exacerbating instability. Similarly, women and people living with disabilities face unique challenges, including victimization, displacement, and other forms of violence, which further underscores the need for their involvement in peacebuilding processes. A lack of inclusivity was deemed a key driver of discontent and unrest, and many argued that excluding these groups from peace efforts meant ignoring their valuable insights and contributions, which could otherwise enhance peacebuilding strategies. In summary, the majority of respondents recognized that for sustainable peace to be achieved, all segments of society must be included in the process. Marginalizing or excluding any group, particularly those most affected by conflict, was seen as detrimental to long-term peace and stability.

In Kisumu County, respondents in the Focused Group Discussion (FGD) highlighted several conflict dynamics experienced in 2024, identifying key sources and drivers of tensions. Economic, political, and resource-based conflicts emerged as significant contributors, along with environmental and human-wildlife challenges. Each of these conflict types was discussed in detail, revealing underlying factors and patterns. Economic conflicts featured prominently, particularly those driven by high food prices and youth unemployment. While government intervention in reducing food prices has brought temporary relief, the persistent issue of youth unemployment has exacerbated criminal activities and intra-household violence.

Conflicts in markets and development projects were also cited, with disputes at Kibuye Market arising from leadership and resource allocation issues. Urban planning initiatives, such as the relocation of the Kisumu bus park and the allocation of stalls at Uhuru Market, caused friction between locals and the county government. A local politician described the challenges, stating,

> At county level response to conflicts is very bad because it is development related where the county feels that they cannot backtrack on their development agenda through urban planning and restructuring, where the county of Kisumu think they conduct public participation but the process is very flawed. But mostly they do dialog by having a series of meetings with traders to agree, sometimes it goes to the courts for redress.

Additionally, disputes over Keroka Market between Nyamira and Kisii counties persisted despite court rulings, with traders refusing to relocate due to inadequate alternatives.

Cross-border conflicts were another significant concern, with ethnic and boundary disputes between Kericho and Nyakach communities taking center stage. These conflicts were fueled by political incitement, unresolved boundary issues, and historical injustices. The border of Sondu/Sigoit between Kisumu and Kericho Counties remained a hotspot, driven by revenue collection disputes, stock theft, and political intolerance. Participants noted that perpetrators of violence were often outsiders, transported from other regions. A similar border issue persisted between Narok and Kilgoris counties, despite numerous peacebuilding efforts.

Political factors played a major role in conflict dynamics, particularly during election periods. Election-related violence was linked to hired goons inciting unrest, with the Nandi and Luo communities often clashing during campaigns. Respondents also highlighted rising political violence in Kisii, where even church gatherings became venues for political confrontations. Youth unemployment exacerbated these issues, with idle youth being recruited into criminal gangs and used by politicians to instigate clashes. The government's bottom-up economic agenda was criticized for failing to address these challenges, leaving promises unfulfilled.

Resource-based conflicts included illegal grazing, cattle theft, and water-based disputes. Illegal grazing and cattle theft often escalated into ethnic and commercial conflicts, particularly along the Nandi, Kericho, and Nyakach borders. Respondents noted the use of schoolchildren to smuggle cattle across borders. Water-based conflicts emerged from disputes over fishing rights and the management of beach resources. Local fishermen clashed with beach management units over access to fishing areas, with fishing cages perceived as a threat to their livelihoods. Environmental and human-wildlife conflicts arose from flooding and habitat destruction. Families displaced by floods faced inadequate support from the county government, while environmental degradation led to human-wildlife interactions, particularly around Lake Victoria and Loma Conservancy. Baboons, displaced due to deforestation for charcoal burning, invaded homes and destroyed crops.

Ethnic exclusion and perceptions of nepotism further fueled tensions in the region. Respondents criticized the current government for promoting ethnic favoritism in managerial appointments and resource distribution. Nepotism and clannism in county offices exacerbated these feelings, with some non-Luo communities reporting marginalization. Similar complaints were voiced in Kericho,

where sub-ethnic exclusion created discontent among locals. School dropouts in Kericho were reported to worsen social exclusion, particularly as industrial parks neared completion and locals lacked the technical skills required for jobs. Despite these challenges, some respondents observed a decline in ethnic conflicts, attributing this to improved collaboration among political leaders and a growing sense of national unity. A community peace practitioner remarked,

> I have not witnessed any ethnic conflicts for the past year because you realize that as Kenyans we have woken up and realized that being a Luo or a Kikuyu or a Kalenjin doesn't help in any way and it has not been beneficial in any way. Also, leaders have come together to work together to embrace one nation one country philosophy and this has helped calm down the political heat in the country.

The 2024 CMT questionnaire also sought to gauge whether respondents were aware of ongoing conflicts within their localities. A significant majority, 81.97%, acknowledged the presence of such conflicts, while 13.3% reported no ongoing conflicts in their areas. Additionally, 4.72% were unsure about the existence of conflicts. Respondents provided various examples of the conflicts, identifying tensions between the government and citizens, particularly protests by the younger generation, referred to as Generation Z (Gen Z). These protests were often sparked by dissatisfaction with government leadership and policies, including the controversial 2024 Finance Bill. Respondents further highlighted the broader societal discontent, pointing to economic challenges such as the rising prices of goods and services. They noted the growing divide between the government and Gen Z, citing widespread protests against government policies and accusations of police brutality.

During a focus group discussion in Nairobi, representative from Catholic, Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) articulated concerns about the government's handling of the finance bill and its implications for the population. The representative noted that the government was not receptive to public concerns, describing the bill as punitive and oppressive. They highlighted the people's pleas for dialogue and the removal of contentious clauses, contrasting this with the government's response, which involved deploying force. "It responds with brutal force," they said, referencing recent events in places such as Githurai and Kitengela, as well as incidents within Nairobi CBD and the Kenyan parliament on the 27th of June 2024. The representative suggested that the full extent of the aftermath was not yet clear, but reports indicated significant casualties.

They observed that the conflict was primarily youth-driven but noted the participation of other demographic groups, warning that the situation, if unchecked, could escalate into a broader crisis with potentially severe consequences, including regime change. Another CJPC representative in further attributed the conflict to a government unwilling to listen, suggesting that some aspects of the finance bill might be influenced by external forces. They indicated that this situation had been ongoing throughout June 2024, with rumors suggesting it could extend further. They expressed frustration with the government's approach, particularly the use of military force, as if dealing with an external threat. The representative criticized the government for disregarding public dissent and swiftly passing the contentious finance bill, characterizing this as undemocratic and dismissive of the people's power.

To address the situation, the FGD participants emphasized the need for dialogue, stating, *"We need to sit together and listen."* The FGD participants argued that leaders should heed the widespread discontent expressed through demonstrations and consider shelving the bill until an agreement could be reached. Specific issues within the bill were highlighted, including an eco-levy that would impact essential items like sanitary pads and diapers. They also pointed out provisions that would adversely affect young people engaged in online work, as the government sought to tax their already limited earnings. Additionally, the representative criticized proposed taxes on freehold land, invoking historical sacrifices made during the Mau Mau era. They stated, "the blood that was shed by the Mau Mau and our Arab forefathers was enough sacrifice, enough taxation." This sentiment underscored the emotional weight of the land taxation issue, which they deemed unacceptable. Overall, the CJPC representative called for leadership that respects public opinion and prioritizes dialogue to foster peace and stability, highlighting the emotive and practical concerns tied to the finance bill.

Additionally, respondents mentioned specific localized conflicts such as banditry in regions like West Pokot and Laikipia, resource-based disputes between pastoralists, and inter-communal clashes in Baringo and Turkana counties. These conflicts were exacerbated by competition over natural resources like water and grazing land, particularly in drought-affected areas. Gender-based violence, intergenerational conflicts, and human-wildlife conflicts also emerged as significant issues in certain areas. Overall, the responses painted a picture of a country grappling with multiple

layers of conflicts ranging from political dissatisfaction, economic hardships, ethnic and resource-based violence, to civil unrest driven by a frustrated and disillusioned youth population.

Prevalent Conflicts in Kenya

The 2024 CMT study aimed to explore the prevalent conflicts in Kenya by gathering insights from respondents on various types of conflicts and human rights violations. Respondents were asked to rate these conflicts based on their perceived prevalence, using categories such as highly prevalent, moderately prevalent, less prevalent, and not prevalent. According to the findings presented in figure 48, gender-based and sexual violence (36.5%), domestic violence (37.8%), resource-based violence (31.8%), and political violence (27.0%) were among the most highly prevalent issues, with significant proportions of respondents indicating these as critical problems. Cattle rustling (24.5%) and police brutality (23.2%) also emerged as notable concerns, though slightly lower in ranking.

Moderate prevalence ratings revealed police brutality (37.3%), political violence (36.5%), and domestic violence (32.6%) as dominant concerns. Armed robbery and theft, resource-based violence, and gender-based violence also figured prominently, each garnering over 30% of the respondents' votes for moderate prevalence. In the less prevalent category, police brutality (25.8%) and domestic violence (21.0%) were still considered significant, while illegal settlements of internally displaced persons (IDPs), cattle rustling, and border violence saw a more divided opinion, with a notable proportion of respondents deeming them less relevant. Interestingly, 29.2% of respondents believed illegal settlement issues were not prevalent at all. Additionally, some respondents were unsure about the prevalence of certain conflicts, particularly concerning illegal settlements (12.4%), cattle rustling (9.9%), and border violence (10.3%). There were also instances where respondents omitted their opinions on particular conflicts, with rates ranging from 1.7% to 3.4%, the highest omission observed for border violence. The data painted a complex picture of conflict in Kenya, with varying degrees of concern across different types of violence and human rights violations. Figure 49 below shows the distribution of conflict in Kenya.

Figure 49: Distribution of Prevalent Conflicts in Kenya
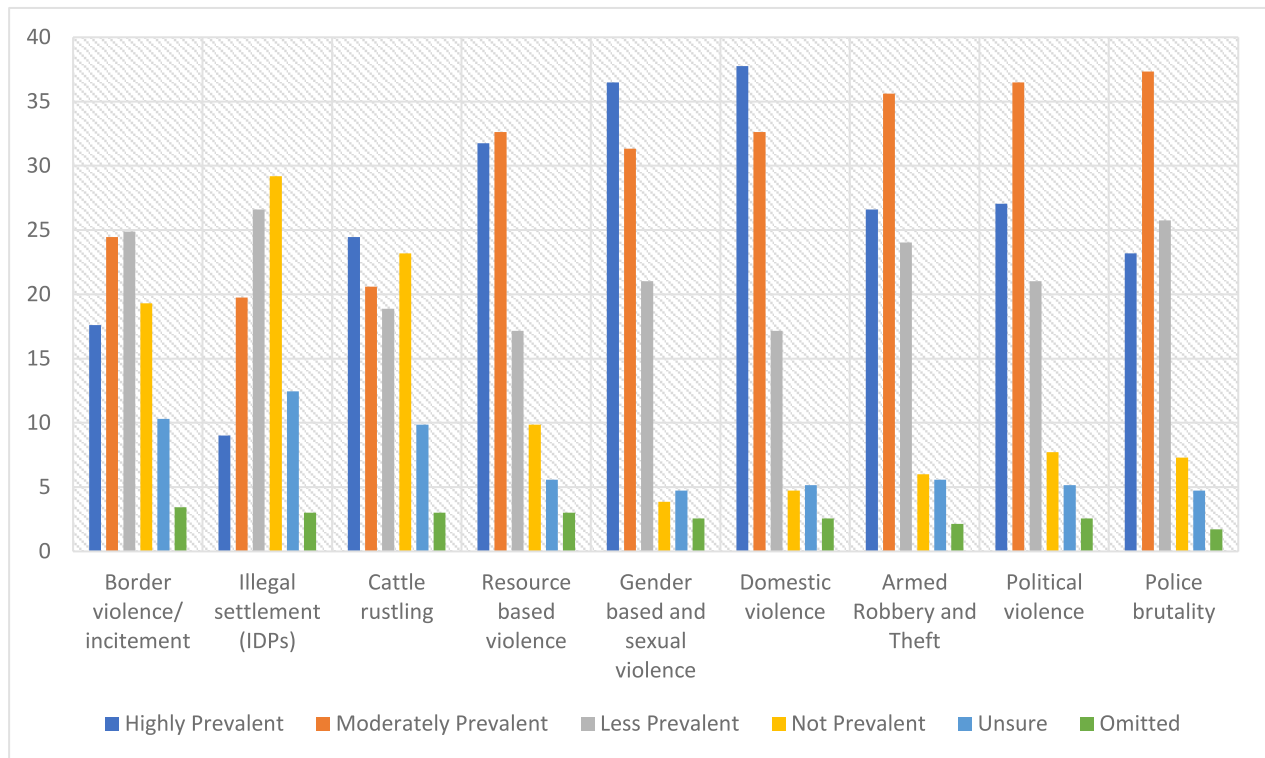
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Conflict Drivers in Kenya

The 2024 CMT study further assessed the key drivers of conflicts in Kenya by asking respondents to rank these drivers based on their perceived prominence. The findings in Figure 49 revealed that high levels of youth unemployment stood out as the most prominent driver, with 76.7% of respondents highlighting this issue. Climate change impacts, such as droughts and floods, were also a significant concern, with 42.2% of respondents identifying them as highly prominent, followed by political and economic marginalization (41.0%). Ethnicized politics, leading to political power imbalances, was also ranked highly by 36.7% of respondents. Moderately prominent drivers included competition over natural resources like land, water, and minerals (33.0%), the existence of multiple armed groups and rebel groups (30.4%), and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (30.5%). Failure within the judicial system (36.4%) was seen as another moderately significant issue contributing to conflict. Historical grievances and revenge killings were also recognized as moderately prominent, with 32.1% of respondents noting their influence.

In Kenya, cattle rustling is often rampant in the North-Rift regions of Kenya. A small but notable percentage of respondents expressed uncertainty about several drivers, particularly the failure of the judicial system (10.7%) and cattle rustling (12.9%). Overall, the findings indicated that economic issues, particularly unemployment and resource competition, along with political dynamics and environmental challenges, were the most critical factors driving conflict in Kenya. The complexity of these drivers reflects the multifaceted nature of the conflicts affecting the country. Figure 50 below shows the distributions of the drivers of the conflicts in Kenya as identified by the respondents.

Figure 50: Drivers of Conflict in Kenya
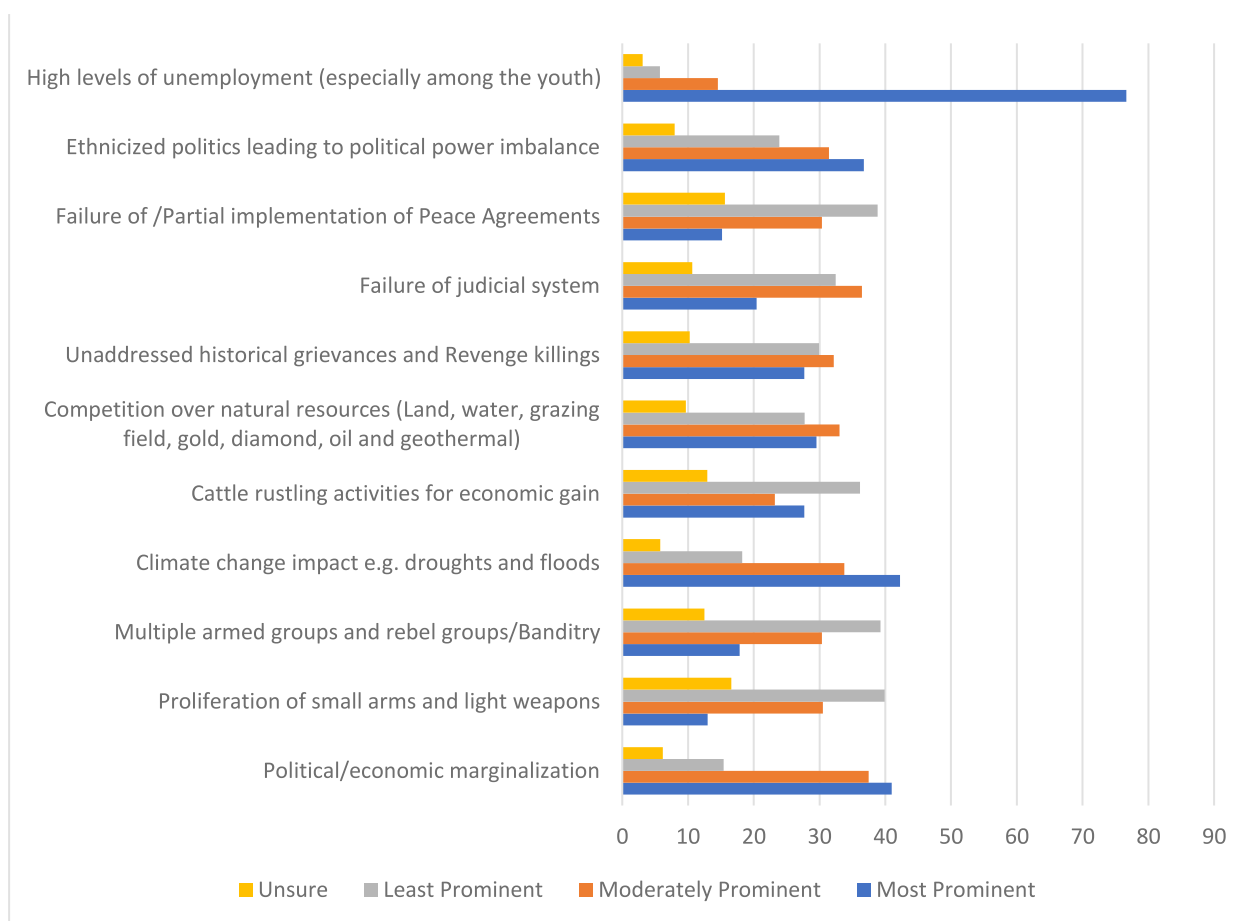
Source: CMT Research Findings

Actors of the Conflict in Kenya

The study further identified the actors perceived as responsible for the conflicts in Kenya. Respondents were asked to rate various groups and individuals based on their perceived level of responsibility. Political leaders were overwhelmingly seen as the most responsible, with 56.3% of respondents (Figure 50) identifying them as the primary contributors to the conflict. Government security forces, including the police and army, followed with 36.8% of respondents viewing them as most responsible. Armed militia groups were also notable, though fewer respondents (19.9%) saw them as the primary actors driving conflict. Moderately responsible actors included community leaders (31.8%) and government security forces (30.9%), suggesting that while these groups were not always seen as the principal drivers of conflict, they still played a significant role. Religious leaders and cultural leaders were also considered moderately responsible by 25.6% and 25.9% of respondents, respectively.

In contrast, clan elders, neighboring states, and multinational corporations were more often seen as less responsible. For instance, 29.9% of respondents indicated that clan elders played a minimal role in fueling conflict, while 26.0% held a similar view about international actors like neighboring countries, the AU, UN, and EU. Moreover, a significant portion of respondents (28.4%) expressed uncertainty about the role of multinational corporations, indicating a lack of clear consensus on their involvement. Interestingly, 19.0% of respondents felt that armed militia groups were not responsible for the conflict, reflecting divided opinions about their role. Religious leaders and cultural leaders also received notable proportions of votes indicating they were not responsible, with 26.0% and 20.9%, respectively. Overall, the findings pointed to political leaders and security forces as the main actors responsible for conflict in Kenya, with significant involvement from other groups, such as militia groups, but less consensus around the roles of international actors and corporations as shown in figure 51 below.

Figure 51: Actors of Conflict in Kenya
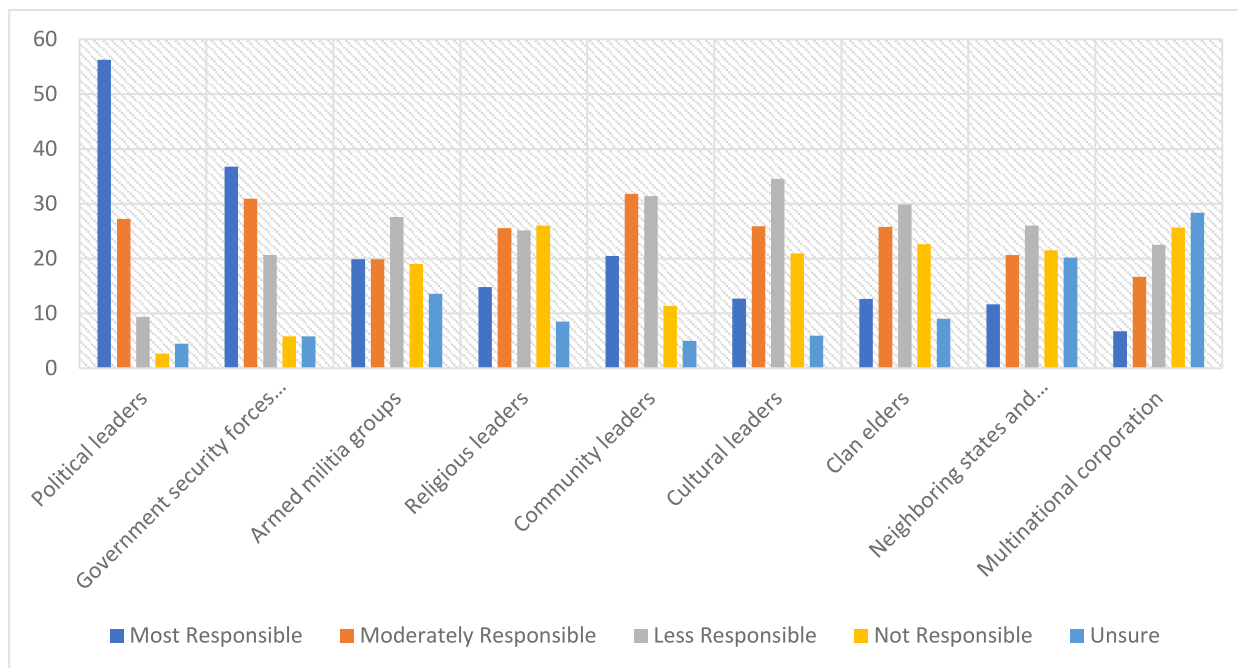
Source: CMT Research Findings

The Effectiveness of institutions in Resolving the Conflicts in Kenya

The 2024 CMT study examined the effectiveness of various institutions in addressing conflicts in Kenya by asking respondents to rate their performance. Peace committees emerged as the most effective, with 37.5% of respondents considering them "very effective" in resolving conflicts. NGOs (local and international), CSOs, and CBOs also ranked highly, with 25.2% and 27.7% of respondents, respectively, viewing them as very effective. Religious institutions were also seen as impactful, with 23.5% rating them as very effective, followed closely by youth organizations (24.9%). In terms of overall effectiveness, peace committees again stood out, with 42.4% of respondents viewing them as "effective." Women's organizations and youth groups also received strong ratings, with 49.8% and 41.3% of respondents identifying them as effective. NGOs and CSOs/CBOs maintained strong performances, with over 53% of respondents rating them as effective, highlighting their ongoing importance in conflict resolution efforts.

On the other hand, the Kenyan government and the judicial court system were viewed less favorably. Only 11.6% of respondents considered the government to be very effective, and a mere 6.2% felt the same about the judicial court system. Additionally, 43.8% of respondents rated the government as "not effective," with similar sentiments for the court system (40.4%). There was

significant uncertainty about the role of the international community, with 22.7% of respondents unsure about its effectiveness. This was reflected in other groups, particularly men's organizations, where 16.6% were unsure. Overall, the study highlighted that peace committees, NGOs, and local organizations were viewed as the most effective in addressing conflicts, while government and judicial systems faced greater criticism for their ineffectiveness. The findings suggest that grassroots and community-based efforts were more trusted to resolve conflicts than formal state institutions. Figure 52 below shows the distribution of the effectiveness of various organizations in addressing conflict in Kenya as identified by the respondents.

Figure 52: Organizations Effective in Resolving conflict in Kenya
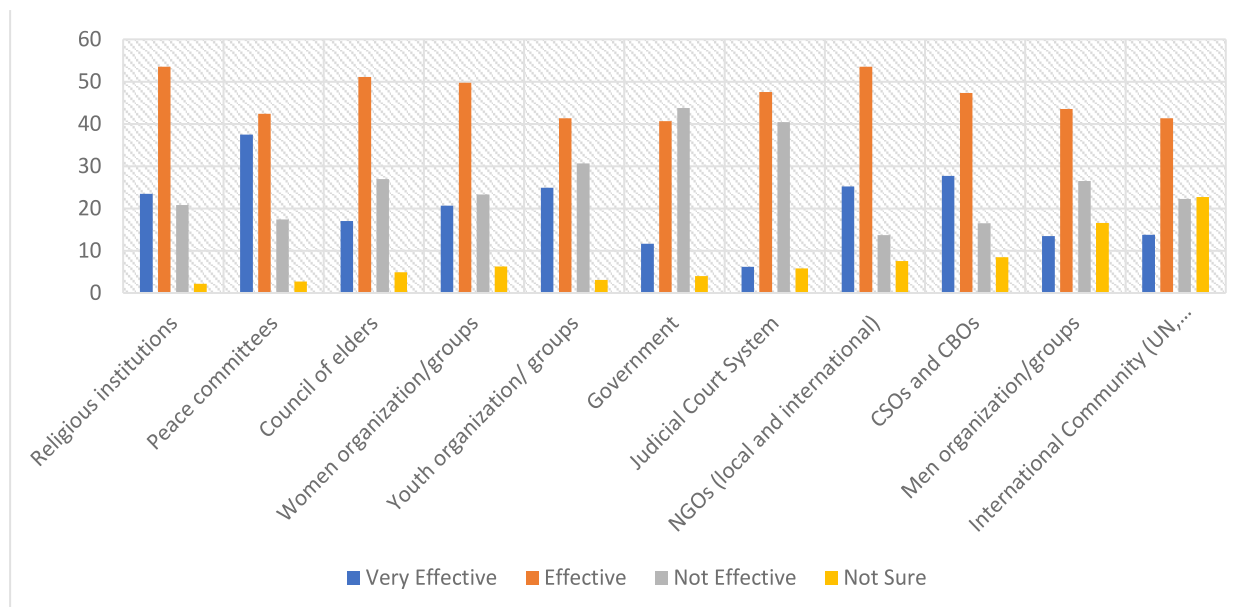
Source: CMT Research Findings

Peace Initiatives in Kenya

The 2024 CMT study aimed to assess whether there were existing peace restoration initiatives in Kenya. Respondents were asked whether there were ongoing strategies such as reconciliation or peace agreements being used by the government or other actors. A total of 34.33% of respondents confirmed that there were ongoing peace restoration efforts, while 33.48% stated that no such initiatives existed, demonstrating a significant contrast. Additionally, 26.18% were unsure, and 6.01% omitted the question. Respondents highlighted various strategies. Some pointed to grassroots efforts involving groups such as village elders, and church leaders. Local actors,

including peace committees and local peace actors, played a significant role in fostering reconciliation and mediating peace agreements. Religious leaders were also involved in peace talks, and local NGOs, in partnership with international organizations such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and the European Union.

Other respondents mentioned initiatives such as the inter-community dialogues facilitated by local and national government actors. The government and civil society organizations (CSOs) were also involved in holding meetings, peace talks, and dialogue with warring communities, particularly in conflict-prone areas like the Northern Rift and between Turkana and Samburu communities. Several strategies have been employed to address underlying conflicts, including community mediation, fostering intermarriages, diplomatic efforts, and deploying security forces to maintain order. International actors, such as the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), and regional organizations, have also played critical roles in supporting peace processes through peacekeeping missions and facilitating dialogue among conflicting parties. Respondents highlighted the diversity of initiatives aimed at restoring peace across the country. However, contrasting opinions regarding the presence and impact of these initiatives underscore uneven perceptions of their effectiveness and visibility, pointing to the need for more inclusive and widely recognized peacebuilding efforts.

With regard to existing peace agreements, respondents in the study provided various examples of peace agreements in Kenya. Some referenced the Kenyan National Dialogue and Reconciliation process, particularly the Kofi Annan-mediated peace agreement following the 2007 post-election violence. Other agreements included the Nakuru Peace Accord and border peace agreements, particularly those between political leaders and peace actors, as well as between the national government and the opposition. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), also known as the Naivasha Agreement, was highlighted, although it pertained to the Sudanese conflict rather than a Kenyan issue. Respondents also mentioned local peace efforts, such as cross-border agreements between Kenya and Uganda, the Lokiriama Peace Accord, and local community agreements in areas like Laikipia County to address conflicts over pastoral resources.

Several respondents pointed to peace initiatives related to land disputes, such as the Giriama Ranch Agreement and agreements concerning cattle rustling and cross-border peace. Specific treaties like the Chemelil Peace Accord, the Kendu Bay Peace Agreement, and the Homabay Accord were also

mentioned, demonstrating regional efforts at conflict resolution. Despite these examples, many respondents indicated that they were unsure of the existence of peace agreements or could not recall specific names. This reflects a varying degree of awareness regarding both national and local peace processes, with some only familiar with high-profile agreements, while others cited smaller, localized efforts. Some respondents also referred to agreements that were not observed or effectively implemented, underscoring challenges in the peace restoration efforts in Kenya.

Challenges of Resolving the Conflicts in Kenya

The 2024 CMT study sought to explore the challenges faced in resolving conflicts in Kenya. Respondents were asked to rate several potential obstacles to peace restoration efforts in their specific geographical locations. The most significant challenges identified included the misappropriation and embezzlement of government resources, which was marked as "very challenging" by 58.37% of respondents (Figure 52). Additionally, political incitement, demonstrations, and hate speech were also seen as highly challenging (58.25%). Respondents highlighted the lack of a reformed judicial system that could dispense fair justice (48.85%) and weak social agreements as contributors to ongoing conflict. The inclusion of all stakeholders, especially youths, women, people with disabilities, and religious groups was noted as crucial, with failures to do so cited as likely causes of conflict by 35.90% of participants.

Other major concerns included historical grievances around land and compensation (42.92%), the fragility of the government (52.27%) under pressure from armed and political groups, and external international interference from neighboring states and international bodies like the UN, EU, AU, and IGAD (44.79%). Moderate challenges included climate change (46.81%), leading to environmental issues like floods, drought, and poor harvests, which were seen as contributors to conflict by 31.96% of respondents. Availability and access to small arms and light weapons by locals were also moderately challenging, along with the lack of political goodwill and poor economic development in conflict regions. On the less critical side, a smaller portion of respondents considered international interference (15.06%) and climate change (9.58%) to not be significant challenges. Overall, the study highlighted how the intersection of political, economic, and environmental factors alongside weak governance structures and corruption contributed to the difficulties in restoring and maintaining peace in Kenya. Figure 53 shows the distribution of the challenges to resolving the conflicts in Kenya as identified by the respondents.

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Figure 53: Challenges to resolving conflict in Kenya
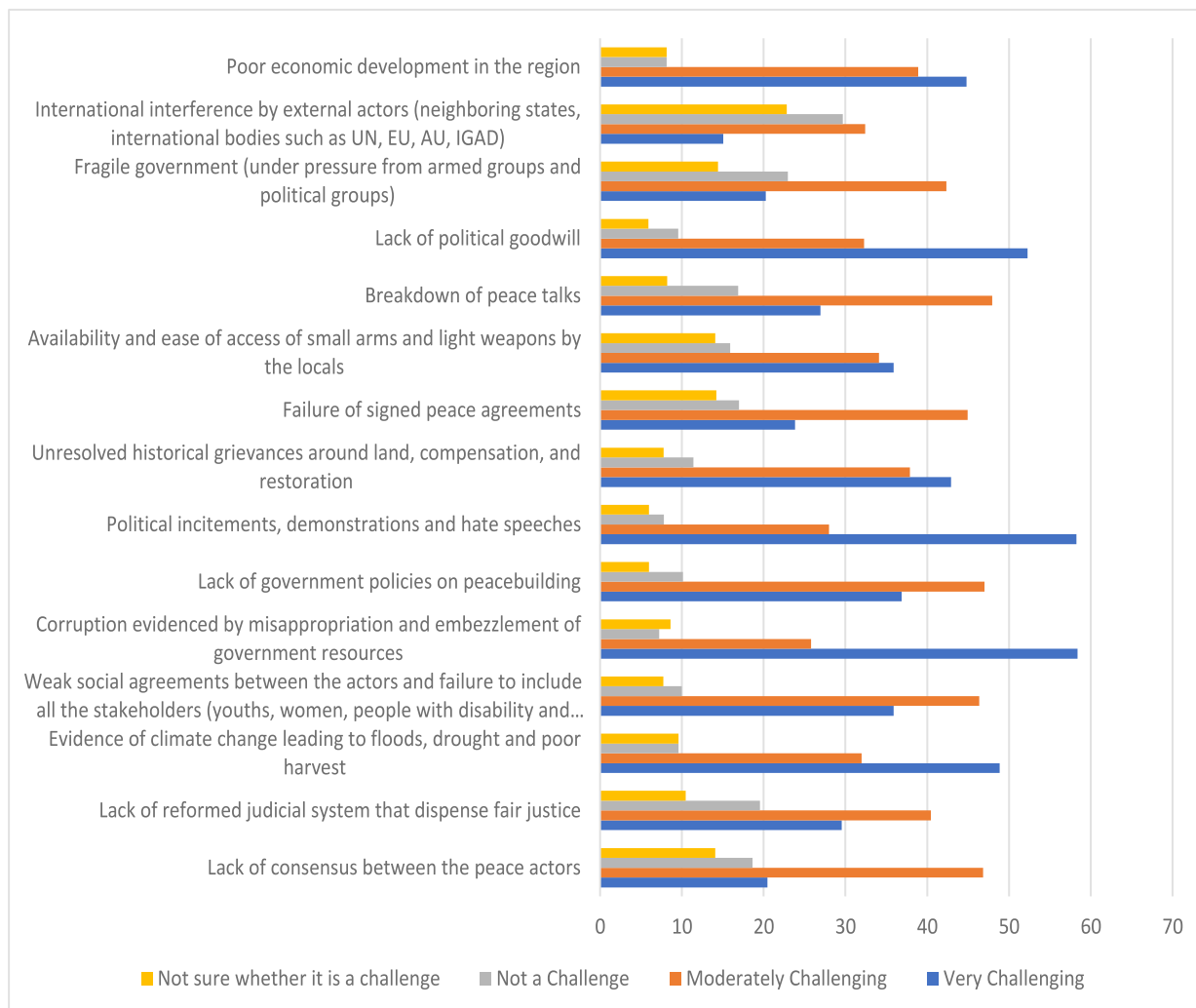
Source: CMT Research Findings

Recommendations

The 2024 CMT study sought to identify effective strategies for resolving ongoing conflicts in Kenya. Respondents were asked to recommend ways in which various actors, including the government, peace actors, youth, religious leaders, and NGOs, could contribute to achieving peace and stability.

Government

For the government, the recommendations emphasized the need to be more responsive to citizens' needs by adopting inclusive governance approaches. The government was urged to ensure justice

through dialogue and prompt responses to grievances, fostering equity in resource distribution and public positions across all communities. Strengthening conflict early-warning systems and enhancing networking among security agencies were highlighted as critical measures. Respondents also called for shared infrastructure, such as markets, schools, and hospitals, along disputed or border areas to encourage social cohesion. County and national governments need to allocate specific budgets for peacebuilding activities and establish a comprehensive national peace policy framework to guide these efforts. Additionally, the government needs to create more employment opportunities for youth devoid of corruption, ethnicity, and nepotism, while addressing poverty and historical injustices to ensure equitable development.

Further, it was recommended that the government employ sincerity in resolving land disputes, for instance, by using agencies like the National Land Commission to demarcate clear boundaries in contentious areas such as Sondu/Sigoit between Kisumu and Kericho. A key suggestion was for politicians to actively promote grassroots peacebuilding initiatives and for the government to involve diverse groups in decision-making processes. Continuous public engagements targeting specific sectors were also deemed necessary to ensure development projects address the needs of affected communities.

Civil society organizations (CSOs)

For civil society organizations (CSOs), respondents emphasized their critical role in conducting civic education to enhance understanding of governmental and county functions and responsibilities. Thus, the CSOs should continue with persistent community sensitization campaigns, fostering dialogue, and engaging diverse stakeholders to promote peacebuilding processes. Their involvement in organizing awareness campaigns on peacebuilding and disaster preparedness was highlighted as a shared responsibility with the government. CSOs were also encouraged to support peace treaties and reconciliation efforts, ensuring that citizens understand and respect agreements.

General Recommendations

General recommendations included creating inclusive peace structures at all levels, engaging youth, women, and other marginalized groups in decision-making processes, and fostering inter-ethnic and inter-religious understanding. Respondents also called for promoting democratic

leadership and strict adherence to the Constitution of Kenya (2010) as a foundation for governance. They emphasized the importance of addressing the root causes of conflict through economic development, job creation, and fighting corruption to reduce societal grievances. In conclusion, sustainable peace was seen as achievable through inclusive dialogue, good governance, and community-based peacebuilding initiatives that empower local stakeholders.

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APPENDIX

CMT QUESTIONNAIRE

The Centre for Research, Training, and Publication (CRTP) of Hekima University College, based in Nairobi - Kenya, is conducting a multi-phase study to assess the conflict situation in various countries in Eastern Africa. This survey seeks to gather information that shall be used to monitor conflict for strategic intervention across the region. Your participation in this survey will be greatly appreciated. For past research series please visit our website: https://crtp.hekima.ac.ke/ and https://www.hekima.ac.ke/

Section A: Preliminary Questions

Q1a. Please indicate your age bracket?

[ ] 18-26   [ ] 27-35   [ ] 36-50   [ ] Above 50

Q1b. Please indicate your gender?

[ ] Male   [ ] Female   [ ] others (specify)

Q1c. Please indicate which country you are reporting on?

[ ] DRC   [ ] Ethiopia   [ ] Kenya   [ ] South Sudan

Q1d. Please specify the geographical location (e.g. state, county, district, province or region) in the country that you are reporting on/giving information on?

Q2. Please indicate your main occupation and the years of experience you have in the field.

Profession	Below 1 year	1-2 years	3-4 years	Above 5 years
Peace practitioner				
Government and Public Administration				
Academia				
Business (Private)				
Religious leader				
Civil Society				
Media Practitioner (Journalist)				
Social services (Social worker, Counselor, Therapist)				
Healthcare				
Others (Specify)				

Q3. Please tick which group of stakeholder listed below that you represent

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Stakeholder Type	Please Tick
Religious Leader	
Women Group	
Youth Group	
Community Member	
Chief/Ward administrator	
NGO Staff (Local or International)	
CSOs/CBOs/FBOs	
Government	
Cultural leaders/Kraal leaders	
Local Peace Committee	
Others (Specify)	

Q4. Does exclusion of social groups (youths, women, people loving with disability or religious leaders) in the peace building process affects the peace stability of your specific geographical location?

Yes……………………………..No………………….Not Sure……………………

Explain……………………………………..

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Q5. Are you aware of any on-going conflict in your country?

 [ ] Yes   [ ] No   If Yes, which ones?..

Q 6a. Is there any country that have joined your country (s) on the on-going conflict?

[ ] Yes   [   ] No,   if Yes, which ones?...

Section B: Conflict, Conflict drivers and Conflict resolution

Q7. Which of the following conflicts or human rights violation are present in your specific geographical location. Kindly rate the following according to what you perceive as highly prevalent, moderately prevalent, less prevalent, not prevalent and unsure? (Please Tick)

Conflicts	Highly Prevalent	Moderately Prevalent	Less Prevalent	Not Prevalent	Unsure
Border violence/ incitement					
Illegal settlement (IDPs)					
Cattle rustling					
Resource based violence					
Gender based and sexual violence					

Domestic violence				
Armed Robbery and Theft				
Political violence				
Police brutality				

Q8. Please select the key conflict drivers in your specific location according to what you perceive as the most prominent to the least prominent driver?

Conflict drivers	Most Prominent	Moderately Prominent	Least Prominent	Not sure
Political/economic marginalization				
Proliferation of small arms and light weapon				
Multiple armed groups and rebel groups/Banditry				
Climate change impact e.g. droughts and floods				
Cattle rustling activities for economic gain				
Competition over natural resources (Land, water, grazing field, gold, diamond, oil and geothermal)				
Unaddressed historical grievances and Revenge killings				
Failure of judicial system				
Failure of /Partial implementation of Peace Agreements				
Ethnicized politics leading to political power imbalance				
High levels of unemployment (especially among the youth)				
Others (specify)				

Q9. Out of the actors listed below, please rate those you believe are responsible for the conflict situation in your specific location? Please rate according to who you perceive as most responsible, moderately responsible, less responsible, not responsible and unsure? **(Please tick)**

Actors	Most Responsible	Moderately Responsible	Less Responsible	Not Responsible	Unsure
Political leaders					
Government security forces (Police and army)					

Armed militia groups					
Religious leaders					
Community leaders					
Cultural leaders					
Clan elders					
Neighboring states and international state actors (such as neighboring countries, AU, UN, EU)					
Multinational corporation					
Others (Please specify)					

Q10.How effective have the following institution or organizations been effective in resolving conflicts in the past?

Institution/ Organization	Very Effective	Effective	Not Effective	Not Sure
Religious institutions				
Peace committee				
Council of elders				
Women organization/groups				
Youth organization/ groups				
Government				
Judicial Court System				
NGOs (local and international)				
CSOs and CBOs				
Men organization/groups				
International Community (UN, AU, IGAD)				
Others (Please specify)				

Q11. Please indicate the extent to which you have observed the following situations as an indicator of peace stability in the past one year in your specific location?

Description of the Conflict	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
There is protection and promotion of fundamental human rights, which include upholding principles such as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion and belief, and the right to education and healthcare.				
There is an absence of direct and structural violence, including armed				

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	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
conflict, terrorism, political repression, and human rights violations				
There is increased social cohesion and cooperation witnessed by inter-ethnic peaceful coexistence and inter-ethnic marriages				
There are effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts peacefully, through judicial court process or traditional dialogue, mediation, negotiation, and reconciliation processes				
There is an observed increase in youth and women employment				
There is an enabling environment that allows economic activities to prevail without interruption				
There is perceived equitable resource distribution and services by the government				
There is a sense of trust and cooperation between the government and the citizens fostering stability				
There is perceived low level of corruption				

Q12 Please indicate to what extent have you observed the following situation that show that your region is experiencing socio-political tension that can result into conflict?

Pre-conflict	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
There is increase of access to light weapons by ordinary citizens				
There is increase in political-based hate speeches, peaceful demonstrations and workers strike				
There is rise in the level of criminal activities/gang groups e.g. mugging				
There are cases of ethnic social discrimination and exclusion by government authorities				
Increased cattle rustling activities				
Lack of gender inclusion and social groups (women, youth, labour/workers association, people with disability) in conflict management process				

There are increased incidences of disappearance of men, women and young people in the community				
Unresolved historical grievances/revenge attack and killings				
There is lack of the full implementation of Peace Agreements				
There is an increased complaints of economic hardships e.g. High cost of living				

Q13. In your opinion, to what extent have you observed the following scenarios that show there is open conflict in your specific location region (confrontation conflict level?)

Confrontation	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
There are occasional low key armed conflict in the country (between different armed groups/government forces, etc)				
There is frequent acquisition of small arms and light weapons by residences.				
There are reported cases of police brutality in the process of enforcement government orders such as disarmament process				
There are violent demonstrations/riots (by civilians, opposition, civil servants) against perceived government oppression and exclusion				
There is perceived erosion of governance structures, (the judicial courts) weakening state institutions, and challenging the legitimacy of the government				
There are rampant abuses of fundamental human rights through the suppression of freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, and freedom of religion and belief, e.g., media censorship.				
There is an increased political incitement /negative propaganda that tend to generate violence				
There are frequent incidences of inter-ethnic/cross-border clashes				
There are cases of people being pushed out of their homes and other personal properties for political reasons (e.g. 'ethnic cleansing')				

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There are increased reports on violation of human rights e.g. armed robbery, gender and sexual based violence, police brutality			
There is disruption of economic activities due to conflicts/violence (such as trading, food supply, market activities etc)			

Q14 Based on the following active armed conflict indicators, please rate your observation on the presence of armed conflict in your region

Active armed conflict	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
There are increased incidences of armed conflict such as armed clashes and bombing of civilians and civilian infrastructure in your country				
There is a total breakdown in law and order with the government forces struggling to protect life and property of the citizens				
Several armed groups have emerged and are claiming control of strategic locations of your specific location thus challenging the government legitimacy.				
There is a deterioration of the humanitarian situation putting the people affected by conflict on pressure as they lack access to clean water, food and medical attention				
There is widespread displacement of civilians from their homes and communities as they flee into camps and neighboring countries				
The government is mobilizing its military troops and weapons to be deployed to the affected region.				
There is heightened outbreak of inter-communal violence (ethnic, religious or political)				
There is media information blackout				
There is disruption of economic activity, including damage to infrastructure, disruption of trade routes, and loss of livelihoods, leading to economic instability and hardship for affected populations				
There are ongoing diplomatic efforts to call the warring parties for a ceasefire, mediate				

the conflict and provide humanitarian assistance to the affected population				

Q15. Please rate the following statements based on your perception/ view on the decline of the armed conflict (outcome level)

Conflict Intervention level	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
There is presence of international peace keeping bodies such as UN, AU & SADC, East African Standby Force deployed to intervene in the regions affected by conflict				
There are increased conflict intervention activities by third party facilitators pressuring the main actors to end the hostilities (mediation, negotiation, peace talks, sanctions)				
Humanitarian corridors are open and the urgent needs of the civilians/displaced people are being addressed				
There is evidence of reduced conflict in the country due to peace talks between the rival groups				
An inclusive transitional governance structure has been or is being established to oversee the transition from conflict to peace				
People are seen as slowly taking on normal daily activities like resumption of business				
Reconciliation and peace building programs have been initiated				
There is ceasefire (the parties from both sides have agreed to suspend their aggressive actions)				
The protagonist have agreed to sign a peace agreement				

Q16. Please rate the following post-conflict reconstruction indicators in your region based on your perception on the frequency of observation

Post-Conflict Reconstruction	Not Observed	Rarely Observed	Sometimes Observed	Consistently Observed
The parties to the conflict have agreed to demobilize their forces				
The citizens holding arms illegally are surrendering to the government in a demilitarization/disarmament and reintegration program				
There are ongoing reconstruction and rehabilitation activities such as building of roads, schools and hospitals to ensure that essential services are available to the citizens.				
Truth, justice and reconciliation tribunals have been established to address the grievances and promote reconciliation				
There are efforts by both the transitional government and the civil society to focus on socio-economic development programs aimed at addressing poverty, inequality, and unemployment				
There is a wider inclusion in the peace-building process/activities (includes women, youth, different ethnic groups, religious group)				
There is reduced tension and fear between different ethnic/religious/armed groups				
The refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) are returning to their homes				
There is improved economic situation for citizens (resumption of economic activities, opening of markets/shops)				
The causes of conflict are currently being addressed				
There is international assistance in the promotion of good governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights through institution-building and capacity-building efforts.				

Q17 a. Are there any peace restoration (like reconciliation or signing of peace agreements) strategies that are currently being used by the government or other actors to restore peace in your country/location?

[   ] Yes   [   ] No

Q17b. If yes, please indicate the strategies undertaken locally (local actors), regionally (regional actors e.g. neighboring countries) and internationally (by international organization e.g UN or AU).

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18. List any peace agreements that have been signed towards peace restoration in your country

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Q19. Please rate the following challenges to peace restoration efforts in your specific geographical location

Challenges	Very Challenging	Moderately Challenging	Not a Challenge	Not sure whether it is a challenge
Lack of consensus between the peace actors				
Lack of reformed judicial system that dispense fair justice				
Evidence of climate change leading to floods, drought and poor harvest				
Weak social agreements between the actors and failure to include all the stakeholders (youths, women, people with disability and religious groups) in peace negotiation process likely to cause conflict				
Corruption evidenced by misappropriation and embezzlement of government resources				
Lack of government policies on peacebuilding				
Political incitements, demonstrations and hate speeches				
Unresolved historical grievances around land, compensation, and restoration				
Failure of signed peace agreements				

Availability and ease of access of small arms and light weapons by the locals				
Breakdown of peace talks				
Lack of political goodwill				
Fragile government (under pressure from armed groups and political groups)				
International interference by external actors (neighboring states, international bodies such as UN, EU, AU, IGAD)				
Poor economic development in the region				

Q20. Based on your experience and own opinion, please recommend on the best strategies to peace stability for government, peace actors, youth, religious leaders, NGOs etc?

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