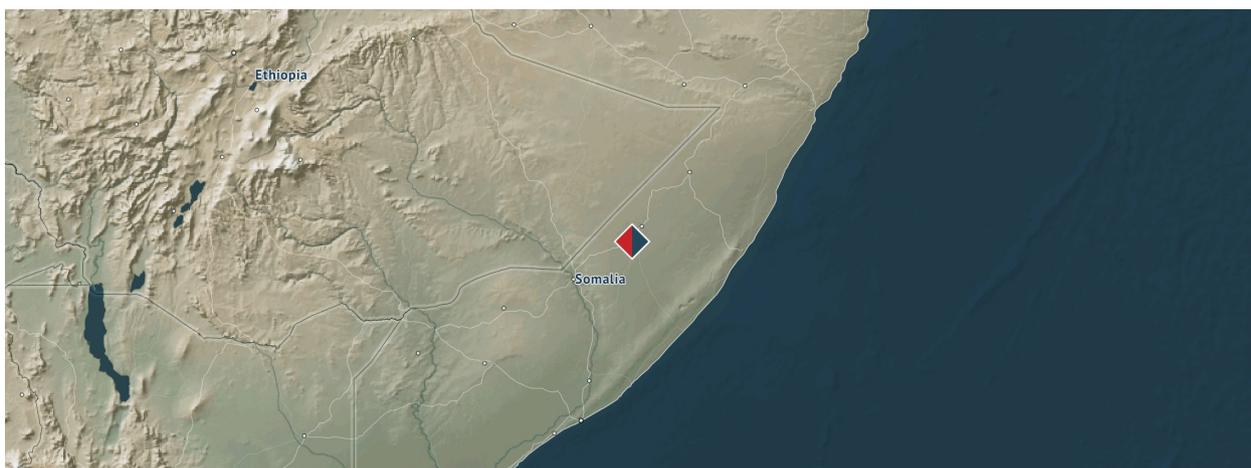




Conflict Factsheet

Droughts, Livestock Prices and Armed Conflict in Somalia

Type of conflict Main	Intensity 4 
Conflict Locality Eastern Africa	Time 2008 –ongoing
Countries Somaliland, Somalia	Resources Agricultural / Pastoral Land, Water



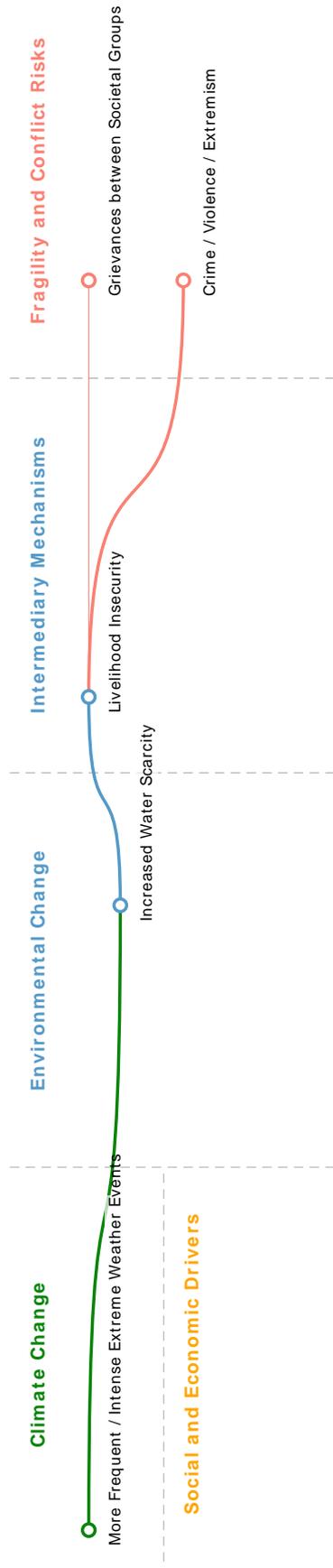
Livelihood insecurity and migration

Conflict Summary

Frequent droughts in Somalia put significant pressures on pastoral livelihoods. Droughts cause herders to sell more of their livestock than they would under normal conditions, resulting in plummeting livestock prices and deteriorating rural incomes. Widespread poverty and lack of economic alternatives, in turn, provide incentives for illicit activities and for joining armed groups such as Al Shabaab, which offer cash revenues and other benefits to their fighters. Especially the record drought of 2011 is believed to have considerably swelled the ranks of the militant Islamist group.



Conceptual Model



Context Factors



Agricultural / Pastoral Land, Water

Trade restrictions
Water-stressed Area

History of Conflict
Inadequate Infrastructure
Lack of Alternative Livelihoods
Weak Institutions



Conflict History

Somalia is currently facing multiple intertwined security and development challenges. Frequently, local conflicts erupt between different communities striving for access to scarce resources and political dominance in a highly uncertain environment. Established in 2012, the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) is struggling to establish functioning state structures against the background of serious drought, famine and armed opposition by the militant Islamist group Al Shabaab. Persistent insecurity in many parts of the country discourages investors and aid organisations, hampers Somalia's development and perpetuates a vicious cycle of impoverishment and further violence.

High vulnerability to drought

This situation is aggravated by Somalia's high vulnerability to droughts. Evidence suggests that extreme weather events are becoming more frequent and more severe in the Horn of Africa and especially in Somalia as a result of climate change. The number of drought events per year has significantly augmented in the past 30 years and rain events have tended towards instances of unanticipated and heavy rainfall (Hove, Echeverría & Parry, 2011). At the same time, drought-sensitive sectors such as livestock rearing and marketing make up for the livelihoods of roughly 60% of Somalia's population and are a linchpin of Somalia's economy. Livestock officially accounts for almost 40% of Somalia's GDP and more than half of Somalia's exports (Maystadt & Ecker, 2014). Formal mechanisms to cope with drought based on credit and insurance are mostly unavailable, public safety nets are absent and traditional coping mechanisms are often constrained by resource competition, violent conflict, and barriers to pastoralist mobility (Tran, 2011; Maystadt & Ecker, 2014).

Loss of livelihoods, illicit activities, and violent conflict

As a result, destocking of herds is the dominant and often only available coping strategy used by pastoralists in times of drought. Yet, this can lead to sharply declining livestock prices, as large numbers of households sell their animals on already strained local markets. The depression of livestock prices, in turn, reduces herders' income and hence purchasing power, which is already diminished by drought-induced spikes in staple food prices (Maystadt & Ecker, 2014).

To avoid hunger and destitution, many pastoralists flee drought areas and become dependent on relief aid in camps, such as Dadaab in northern Kenya (IDS, 2012;). Lacking economic alternatives, others turn to illicit and sometimes violent activities such as charcoal burning, banditry and livestock raiding (see [Piracy off the Coast of Somalia](#)). These can provoke local conflicts and profit criminal organisations, which generate important revenues by taxing these activities (see Conflict between the Sa'ad and Suleiman of the Habar Gidir and [Climate Change, Charcoal Trade and Armed Conflict in Somalia](#)).

Most importantly, drought induced hardship is assumed to be an important factor behind the success of the militant Islamist group Al Shabaab. Evidence from the 2011-2012 famine suggests that an important number of drought-affected herders started supporting the rebel group in exchange for food and cash revenues (Heilprin, 2011; Maystadt & Ecker, 2014).

Bans on Somalian livestock imports



Drought-induced pressures on Somalian pastoralists are further compounded by a number of trade barriers. Indeed, frequent import bans by the Arab Gulf Countries, the main importers of Somalian livestock, limit the possibilities of herders to market animals outside of the local economy and thereby tend to aggravate drought-induced pressures on livestock prices. Furthermore, they reduce the purchasing power of rural households by depreciating the Somalian shilling and raising the price of imported commodities such as petrol, rice, sugar, and wheat flour. Following the outbreak of Rift Valley Fever in the Horn of Africa, Saudi Arabia imposed a ban on Somalian livestock imports between 2000 and 2009, which had a crippling effect on Somalia's rural economy (Holleman, 2002; Maystadt & Ecker, 2014). Moreover, livestock trade in Somalia is challenged by poor infrastructures and access to markets, underdeveloped legal frameworks, high information costs, and high uncertainty regarding the origin and health conditions of traded animals (Ballantyne, 2014; Godiah et al., 2015).

Resolution Efforts

In response to these challenges, the FGS as well as the autonomous regions of Somaliland and Puntland have initiated different projects, which focus on improving livestock health, disseminating livestock market information and facilitating livestock exports. However, the effectiveness of these measures is limited by important capacity constraints and as yet insufficient coordination at the regional level.

Adapting to frequent drought

Due to Somalia's fragile political situation, national drought adaptation strategies remain limited. In recent years, the country has profited from two regional projects advocating for pastoralist mobility across borders and the sustainable use of water resources in the Horn of Africa. These were funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) (Hove, Echeverría & Parry, 2011). In 2014, the African Water Facility (AWF) offered a 3 million Euro grant to the Republic of Somalia to support the preparation of a water resources management and investment plan. The grant also promotes investments in multipurpose water uses, integrated water supply for rural populations and livestock, rural sanitation and hygiene as well as livelihood diversification through small scale high value irrigated crop production (AWF, 2014).

Overcoming trade barriers for Somalian livestock

In Somaliland, recent initiatives aim at improving livestock market information and animal health to overcome trade barriers and boost Somalian livestock exports. These include the definition of formal grading standards for Somalian livestock, the compilation of indigenous knowledge on Somalian livestock and the systematic dissemination of livestock market information to all relevant stakeholders, the improvement of veterinary and food hygiene surveillance services as well as research on importer requirements (especially in Saudi Arabia). They are accompanied by a set of guidelines and codes of practice, which help the enforcement of standards compliance in Somaliland and Puntland, as well as initiatives to establish institutional bodies responsible for quality control. Finally, a disease surveillance fund was set up in Somaliland to cover operational costs of rapid response teams and to procure laboratory equipment for early confirmation of trade-limiting animal diseases (ILRI, 2015a, b; Ballantyne, 2014).



Improving regional cooperation

These efforts are complemented by the Standard Methods and Procedures in Animal Health (SMP-AH) project, a regional initiative supporting the harmonisation and coordination of disease surveillance and prevention of trade-related transboundary animal diseases in the Greater Horn of Africa. The SMP-AH is coordinated by the AU Interafrican Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) and IGAD with financial support from the USAID East African regional office (ILRI, 2014).

Limited capacities remain a challenge

Locally, the improvement of health and certification standards and investments in livestock marketing infrastructures have contributed to growth in traded volumes, helped overcome import bans for Somalian livestock and generated employment and other business opportunities (IDS, 2012; Godiah et al., 2015). However, capacities of the evolving institutions remain limited. Due to financial and personnel constraints, regulatory and veterinary services are often unable to enforce adherence to quality standards and implement an effective health and certification system that is recognized internationally (Ballantyne, 2014; Mugunieri et al., 2008, 2012).

Possible next steps

Building on past efforts, several measures have been proposed to further improve rural livelihoods and advance livestock market development in Somalia, Somaliland and Puntland. Firstly, pastoralist's resilience towards ecological shocks could be improved by investments in rural infrastructures and the provision of social safety nets, weather insurance schemes, improved veterinary services and alternative income earning opportunities (Maystadt & Ecker, 2014). Secondly, investments in local climate research are needed to inform better responses and adaptation strategies to increasing weather variability (Ballantyne, 2014; Hove, Echeverría & Parry, 2011). Thirdly and most importantly, livestock market institutions need to be strengthened and livestock information dissemination systems need to be better coordinated across the Horn of Africa. Somalia is reliant on just a few livestock markets, mostly located in the Arabian Peninsula. Further cooperation with other countries of the Horn under the umbrella of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) could improve the credibility of local livestock certification and traceability systems and help Somalia diversify its export markets (ILRI, 2014).

These measures will certainly not provide a definite answer to Somalia's multiple security and development challenges, but they can help reducing pastoralist's vulnerability to increasingly frequent droughts and thus also lessen their incentives to join armed groups such as Al Shabaab.



Intensities & Influences

1 2 3 4



INTENSITIES

International / Geopolitical Intensity



Human Suffering



INFLUENCES

Environmental Influences



Societal Influences



Violent Conflict

Yes



Salience with nation

National



Mass displacement

More than 100.000 or more than 10% of the country's population are displaced within the country.



Cross Border Mass Displacement

Best estimate that more than 100.000 or more than 10% of country population are displaced across borders.



Resolution Success

Reduction in Violence

There was no reduction in violence.

-

Resolve of displacement problems

Displacement continues to cause discontent and/or other problems.

-

Reduction in geographical scope

There has been no reduction in geographical scope.

-

Causal Attribution of Decrease in Conflict Intensity

There has been no reduction in intensity

-



Entry Points for Resilience and Peace Building

Improving state capacity & legitimacy 0

Despite the various recent efforts to improve health and certification standards and advance livestock market development in Somalia, the capacities of evolving institutions remain limited. Therefore, there is still a need to ensure adherence to quality standards and implement an effective health and certification system that is recognized internationally.

Reducing trade barriers 1

In an effort to reduce non-tariff trade barriers and boost Somalian livestock exports, recent initiatives in Somaliland aim to improve livestock market information and animal health. These efforts are complemented by the Standard Methods and Procedures in Animal Health (SMP-AH) project, a regional initiative supporting the harmonisation and coordination of disease surveillance and prevention of trade-related transboundary animal diseases in the Greater Horn of Africa.

Coping with uncertainty 2

Recently, projects funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), and the African Water Facility (AWF) address issues such as pastoralist mobility across borders, strategies for sustainable water use, rural sanitation and hygiene, and livelihood diversification. Such projects aim to support drought adaptation actions that have otherwise been limited in Somalia.

Resources and Materials

Conflict References

[Climate Change, Charcoal Trade and Armed Conflict in Somalia](#)

[Piracy off the Coast of Somalia](#)

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Further information

<https://factbook.ecc-platform.org/conflicts/droughts-livestock-prices-and-armed-conflict-somalia>