تقييم الأدوار والمصالح
في القـــرن الأفـــريقـــي

Assessment of Roles and Interests in the Horn of Africa

FINAL REPORT – EXTENDED VERSION

TRENDS Research and Advisory Symposium

"Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Assessment of Roles and Interests"

Abu Dhabi
November
22– 2022

CONTENTS

Foreword

Since its establishment in 2014, Trends Research and Advisory has served as a national platform and international forum for policy-focused research, publications, events, and the exchange of ideas. Our core efforts are dedicated to exploring and understanding regionally and globally significant issues and themes in order to enable evidence-based policy directions. Equally, the purpose of expanding public understanding of particular policy issues is accomplished through a program of public events, conferences, seminars, and symposia.

It therefore gives me tremendous pleasure to present the final report of the TRENDS Research and Advisory symposium titled «Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Assessment of Roles and Interests," held in Abu Dhabi on 22 November 2022.

This symposium, proposed henceforth as an annal event, is part of a broader effort to monitor the evolution of region-specific issues, which, due to their strategic importance, attract geopolitical interest from extra-regional actors. The Horn of Africa has long occupied the attention of external powers focused on establishing access to the African continent and ensuring that counter-piracy efforts support the free movement of shipping essential to the global economy.

Considerable effort was dedicated over the course of the symposium to examining the determinants of political instability and maritime insecurity, with economic privation and fragile governance emerging as primary drivers. The involvement of regional and global powers competing for control and access to strategic resources was also identified as a major driver. The history of the region clearly shows that self-interested rivalries among foreign powers are exploited by domestic political and non-state actors to perpetuate instability in the region.

Consensus gradually emerged among participants that common security concerns are best addressed through coordinated activity based on mutual understanding among regional States. The neutral involvement of third parties (countries, regional and international organizations) was also assessed to be important in securing peace. Accordingly, it is in the spirit of multilateralism and cooperation that policy recommendations are proposed below to establish the conditions for peace and stability. These are set out in this report, and it is our hope that academics, practitioners, and policymakers will view these as practical means of achieving progress in this historically troubled region.

I would like to thank the participants and the many others who have made this symposium a success, and I look forward to seeing you again at next year's event.

Dr. Mohammed Al-Ali
CEO of TRENDS Research and Advisory

Executive Summary

On 22 November 2022, TRENDS Research and Advisory held a symposium titled «Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Assessment of Roles and Interests."

The event brought together a diverse group of academics, researchers, experts, and practitioners from the United States, the United Kingdom, Finland, India, Italy, and Portugal to share their perspectives on the causes of and potential solutions to conflict in the Horn of Africa. Participants recognized at the outset how historical legacies and present-day challenges combine to create deep-seated antagonism, distrust, and conflict among States in the region. Despite multi-decade efforts, these conflicts are seldom concretely resolved, with the vital and strategic region continuing to suffer from instability and conflicts of various intensities. Organized into a program of four thematic areas, participants sought to explore drivers of instability within each area before proceeding to iteratively develop and propose potential solutions.

With regard to the first theme, "Stability in the Horn of Africa: Determinants, Causes and Motives," establishing durable, long-term stability in the Horn of Africa necessarily involves preventive approaches addressing the range of potential instability drivers, including armed conflict, political turmoil, fragile governance, poverty, food insecurity, and water insecurity. It has generally also been the case that third countries involved in the Horn of Africa have eventually become regional rivals, with negative and destabilizing effects. Third parties should therefore focus on increasing coordinated joint multilateral action as well as on building the institutional and technical capabilities of national governments.

In the second theme, "Maritime Security and Piracy in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and Mitigation," it was noted that maritime security in the Horn of Africa – based on the shared belief that a secure maritime environment is a 'public good' – is best achieved through developing mutual understanding and cooperation among States. Capacity building in the broadest sense of the word, i.e., technical, institutional, legal, and human capabilities, will be of critical importance. Ultimately, however, maintaining maritime security in the long run will depend on solving the root causes on land which drive piracy, namely armed conflict, weak institutions, fragile governance, and poverty.

The third theme, "Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Rationales and Interests," discussed the involvement of external actors in securing peace and stability in the region and the worrying trend it revealed. The risk of conflict between major powers in the Horn of Africa is increasing because of their growing strategic competition. In addition to a general ramping down of strategic rivalries, it would be beneficial for third countries to increase positive and constructive mediation based on established and stable relations. The important role of intergovernmental organizations for conflict resolution and for the discrete handling of security and economic development challenges was also emphasized.

The fourth and final session, "Future Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa," recognized the key importance of internal dialogue and trust-building measures to lay the foundations for conflict de-escalation and eventual peace and stability. Participants again emphasized that major powers must reduce bilateral strategic competition in favour of multilaterally agreed solutions. Finally, initiatives including integrated electric power grids and interconnected transport networks were proposed as an enduring means of strengthening regional integration and economic cooperation among Horn of Africa countries.

Main Findings and Recommendations

The Horn of Africa region is a region of enormous geographical scope and political complexity. Traditionally understood to include Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia, the Greater Horn of Africa region comprises Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, Sudan, South Sudan, and Tanzania. From north to south, the region is bordered by the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean.

From the perspective of external actors, the strategic importance of this region is underlined by being the entrance to both the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden, a trade route that accounts for approximately 20% of global trade. In addition, the area attracts international attention due to its proximity to the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula, which makes it of vital importance to the Arab Gulf states. The region is also a vital connection point between the economically and technologically rising East and the developed West. Moreover, colonial legacies, fragile governance systems, widespread economic privation, and a decades-long history of conflict complicate efforts to develop strategies favoring peace and stability that are applicable to the region as a whole.

Against this challenging background, the symposium sought to explore the complex regional drivers of conflict and instability and elaborate actionable recommendations based on a thorough understanding of the context, regional nuances, and influential role played by external actors. The main findings and recommendations derived from discussions among participants can be characterized as being under the scope of the following four themes: (1) addressing the root causes of instability; (2) establishing collective approaches to maritime security; (3) decreasing and repurposing third party rivalries; and (4) building sustainable capabilities.

1. Addressing root causes of instability:

While ending conflicts and settling disputes is key, long-term stability depends on solving the root causes of instability and conflict, namely poverty, weak institutions, fragile governance, conflict, and political turmoil. The following recommendations were put forward:

- Encourage internal dialogue and trust-building measures among Horn of Africa governments in order to lay foundations for political stability, regional integration and economic cooperation.

- Develop a mechanism for dispute settlement between the countries of the Horn of Africa and provide the necessary support to ensure the effectiveness of this mechanism.

- Develop media strategies to strengthen the common cultural and historical relations among the peoples of the Horn of Africa to stabilize the social fabric, combat extremism, and promote regional integration.

- Urgently address environmental threats including drought, food insecurity, and desertification by increasing humanitarian aid, strengthening cooperation with the East Africa Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and proposing frameworks for sustainable energy production.

- Establish a regional economic development fund financed by the Arab League, the United Nations, the African Union, and the GCC to promote economic growth and stability in the Horn of Africa. The fund would focus investment on employment-generating sectors (e.g., agriculture, industry) and support public–private sector partnerships to implement regionally integrated electric power grids and transport networks.

2. Establishing collective approaches to maritime security:

Maritime insecurity around the Horn of Africa threatens international shipping trade flows essential for global economic growth. Timely coordinated action is necessary to adopt collective mechanisms combating piracy and strengthening maritime security. The following recommendations were put forward:

- Address the root causes on land which drive piracy, including weak institutions, fragile governance, conflict, political turmoil, and poverty, as well as tackle illegal fishing and promote the development of the blue economy.

- Maintain the maritime High-Risk Area (HRA) and utilize the same as a platform through which regional and international efforts can be coordinated to achieve maritime security, while also nurturing and supporting existing maritime security architecture and formats.

- Encourage transparency regarding data for maritime security incidents to decrease the tendency of utilizing data for different purposes.

- Coordinate regional and international efforts aimed at combating piracy and achieving maritime security in the Horn of Africa, and adopt agreed collective joint mechanisms to achieve this goal.

3. Decreasing and repurposing third party rivalries:

Third parties should avoid strategic competition, which only leads to deepening rivalries and further instability. Their focus should shift to increasing coordination and developing common positions and approaches with other third parties. The following recommendations were put forward:

- Reduce the destabilizing third country rivalries in the Horn of Africa by increasing multilateralism and coordinating common positions among external actors.

- Focus third parties on whole-of-region stabilization of the Horn of Africa by increasing international coordination and encouraging major powers to reduce bilateral strategic competition.

- Encourage internal dialogue among competing factions and sources of power under the auspices of regional forums or trusted third country partners.

- Politically support the role of the African Union (AU) in resolving the existing conflicts in the Horn of Africa.

4. Building sustainable capabilities:

Third parties should also focus on building sustainable capacity in the Horn of Africa by strengthening technical, organizational, training & education, legal, and institutional capabilities. The following recommendations were put forward:

- Promote sustainable capacity-building by strengthening technical, organizational, training & education, legal, and institutional capabilities in maritime security. Third-party technical support and public-private sector cooperation are key for port security enhancements, law enforcement training, and capacity building.

- Assist in building local institutional and technical capabilities to strengthen the legitimate capacity of national governments and increase their resilience and ability to deal with external and internal challenges.

- Hold the TRENDS symposium on «Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa" on an annual basis in order to follow up on recommendations, research developments and challenges, and engage progressively larger groups of stakeholders.

Stability in the Horn of Africa: Determinants, Causes and Motives

Aleksi Ylonen
(Researcher, Center for International Studies, University Institute Lisbon, Portugal)

"Competition between and among powers has in the past generated political instability due to local state and non-state actors seeking to exploit foreign rivalries to further their own ends." –Aleksi Ylonen, Researcher at the Center for International Studies, University Institute Lisbon, Portugal

Aleksi Ylonen, a researcher at the Center for International Studies at the University Institute Lisbon, Portugal, observed that in spite of 60 years of independence, the legacy of colonialism still impacts the political and economic conditions of the contemporary Horn of Africa. The most tragic legacies of colonialism include the arbitrary borders thrown up by colonial treaties, which separated local population groups (Somalis, for example) and forced them to live in territories of distinct political entities. He suggested that the legacy of colonialism also contributed to the structure, governance and politics of the post-colonial state, with various European administrative cultures, together with authoritarianism, marginalisation, exclusion and violence, continuing after independence. In some cases, even countries that were not formally colonised – for example, Ethiopia – continued with the tradition of autocratic governance.

He went on to observe that external actors have often engaged in the Horn of Africa in an adventurous and self-serving manner, without much concern for the repercussions of their rivalries. Although external powers' involvement in the Horn of Africa has to some degree contributed to economic development, competition between and among powers has in the past generated political instability due to local state and non-state actors seeking to exploit foreign rivalries to further their own ends.

In concluding, he argued that the consequences of external competition should alert foreign players to tone down their rivalries and engage the Horn of Africa more responsibly, in a mutually beneficial manner. Given the deep-seated political, economic and social problems in the region, external involvement will continue to be a mixed blessing at best.

Kaleb Demerew
(Doctoral Candidate, University of
South Florida, USA)

Kaleb Demerew, a doctoral candidate at the University of South Florida, USA, shared the perspective that political stability has been so difficult to achieve in the Horn of Africa because state-building in this region has been compounded by a wide gap between the intentions of external stakeholders and prevailing institutional determinants of political order. External stakeholders have relied on mechanisms prioritizing top-down intervention, formal institution-building, pluralism, electoral democracy, and human rights.

He pointed out that institutional change in the Horn of Africa was often elite-driven, incremental, unpredictable, and time-consuming. Consequently, the personalization of rents-based patronage mechanisms (i.e., high level of corruption), low levels of specialization of elite roles, and less credible rents-based agreements propagated the cycle of instability. Political competition in the Horn of Africa has become a zero-sum game and states of the subregion are suffering from development dilemma and violence trap. Development is neither linear nor guaranteed, and state-building in the region is messy.

In terms of prospective solutions, he stated that credible standardization of a 'rule of law for elites' is an important component for transition toward more stable political orders in the Horn of Africa. The countries of the subregion should work within existing institutional constraints instead of copying or importing Western formulas for reform.

Maritime Security and Piracy in the Horn of Africa

Olli Pekka Suorsa
(Assistant Professor, Homeland Security Program, Rabdan Academy, UAE)

"Success of any maritime security and safety initiative is predicated on cooperative agendas and willingness of States to undertake capacity building of others. This commitment lies at the heart of 'Maritime Multilateralism'. – Vijay Sakhuja, Co-founder and Trustee, The Peninsula Foundation, India

"Address root causes of piracy" was the general policy prescription put forward by panellists explaining how weak institutions, fragile governance, civil conflict, political turmoil, corruption, and poverty continue to drive piracy in the region.

Olli Pekka Suorsa, an assistant professor at Rabdan Academy, UAE, observed that while there has been a dramatic decline in piracy incidents in the Horn of Africa since 2018, the region's importance to international trade and transportation makes preserving maritime security an indispensable future aim. The general reduction in piracy incidents is generally attributable to third parties' involvement in combatting piracy in the subregion. Third parties have included the international navies of the US, the UK, France, China, Japan, South Korea and Indonesia.

Looking ahead, he questioned the wisdom of plans to altogether remove the High Risk Area (HRA) in the Horn of Africa in January 2023, which will come into effect after several reductions in the size of high-risk areas in the region. He argued that the removal of the HRA is premature because of the rise of different types of asymmetric threats in the region, the significant development of the means used by pirates, and the fact that pirate groups have not gone away. Pirate attacks have also taken place using a variety of techniques, including sea mines, limpet mines, anti-shipping missiles, and drones. In closing, he noted that certain groups involved in pirate incidents are now engaged in other illicit activities and most significantly perhaps is the smuggling of arms and contraband to the war in Yemen.

Vijay Sakhuja

(Co-founder and Trustee, The Peninsula Foundation, India)

In opening his remarks, Vijay Sakhuja, Co-founder and Trustee of The Peninsula Foundation, India, noted that States are authorized by a United Nations resolution to deploy navies and law enforcement agencies in the Gulf of Aden to combat piracy in waters around Somalia. These forces have pursued cooperative agendas and have challenged pirates, prevented attacks, intercepted pirate boats/ships, and escorted merchant ships. However, an array of commercial organizations associated with the shipping industry and Private Maritime Security Companies have also come forward to support international efforts to fight piracy. It has become increasingly acknowledged that common security concerns are best addressed through 'maritime multilateralism'. Maritime multilateralism builds on the belief that a secure maritime environment is a 'public good' that can be delivered by developing mutual understanding and cooperation among States.

Timothy Peter Edmunds
(Professor of International Security at University of Bristol)

Emphasizing that maritime security is of critical importance to the Horn of Africa and wider Western Indian Ocean, Timothy Peter Edmunds, a professor at the University of Bristol, UK, observed that maintaining safe seas also unpins the prospects for blue economic growth in regional states. The marine environment therefore needs to be understood as part of an interlinked security complex, which also incorporates strong connections between land and sea. Echoing the view of Vijay Sakhuja, he pointed out that international and public-private sector cooperation was key to the success of counterpiracy operations.

Coming to the present, he stated that while it is true that piracy off the coast of Somalia has been largely contained, multiple maritime threats and insecurities still remain. The durability of maritime criminal networks and the rise of other forms of blue crime, including illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing and smuggling of various types, spillover effects from conflicts, and geopolitical frictions, present new challenges for the region. These issues require new efforts from international and regional stakeholders, including capacity-building and addressing the root causes of maritime insecurity on land. Capacity-building provided by third parties aims to institutionalize externally derived notions of best practice in security governance, and to encourage local actors to share responsibility for the maritime insecurities in their own regions.

Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa

Federico Donelli

(Researcher, University of Trieste, Italy)

The Horn of Africa is immense, complex and heterogeneous. No external actor can have an unchallenged hegemonic position. The time has come for a new era of variable geometry multilateralism." – Marco di Liddo, Analyst in charge of the Africa Desk, Center for International Studies (CeSI), Italy

In an engaging session, panellists discussed the efforts made by various parties and institutions to secure peace and stability in the region, including by African institutions (the African Union, Intergovernmental Authority on Development, and others) as well as initiatives carried out by the United Nations and by individual countries including Turkey, the United States, China, and the United Arab Emirates. The session explored the extent to which these efforts and initiatives have been effective, factors behind their success or failure, and third parties' interests and motives towards interfering in the region.

Commenting on the latest trends of third-party involvement in the region, Federico Donelli, a researcher at the University of Genoa, Italy, pointed out that the Horn of Africa is one of the main regions in which Turkey has increased its presence. Turkey›s involvement is often not discussed, despite the fact that its strategic involvement with several sub-Saharan African states has been deepening since its active engagement in the Somali crisis of 2011. He characterized the Turkish approach to the Horn of Africa as dealing with countries singularly while also exploiting its mediator role on multiple issues including infrastructure, industrial clusters, and weapons. While Turkey's approach is inherently limited insofar as it does not involve other regional actors or coordinate with other extra-regional actors, on the other hand, the country benefits from its expertise on water politics, relationship with the African Union, and bargaining power toward Ethiopia.

By contrast, he stated that the UAE's approach is more sophisticated in that it relies on diplomacy based on trade and infrastructures – also known as the 'geopolitics of ports' – and on the adoption of an interventionist maritime policy. Crucially, the country's approach also depends on gaining Ethiopian trust – which has caused some discontent in Egypt – and is focused on Ethiopia-Sudan relations (mediating to resolve the GERD and al-Fashaga disputes) while linking negotiation to promotion of development projects.

Marco di Liddo

(Head of the Analysis Unit and Analyst in charge of the Africa Desk, Center for International Studies, Italy)

In presenting his analysis, Marco di Liddo, an analyst in charge of the Africa Desk at the Center for International Studies, Italy, pointed out that the risk of conflict between major powers in the Horn of Africa is increasing due to growing strategic competition among third parties. Current Chinese policy toward the Horn of Africa is based upon partnerships for development, increased focus on bilateral trade, improvement in multi-level governance (local, regional, global), cooperation in security and military assistance, and increased political and social engagement. While China has taken the lead in the Horn of Africa, there are nevertheless unexploited opportunities for other states to pursue.

Turning his attention to Russia, he observed that Russian involvement in the Horn of Africa has grown significantly since 2015. In general, Russia is extending its model of hybrid warfare, used in Syria and Ukraine, to African theatres. The hybrid warfare strategy includes the use of Russian private military companies (PMCs), information warfare, political interference, and diplomatic assertiveness. Russia places considerable reliance on Russian PMCs to carry out what has been termed the "Wagner" diplomacy approach. Indeed, the most well-known Russian PMC – the Wagner Group – has played a prominent role in facilitating the expansion of Moscow's geopolitical influence in Africa. Governments in Horn of Africa countries appear to be interested in cooperation with Russia because it is considered able to deliver financial resources, arms and (private) military assistance, as well as diplomatic support, in exchange for raw materials, such as gold from Sudan and Eritrea.

Coming to the United States, di Liddo remarked that the Biden administration has adopted a new African strategy in an attempt to renew the image of the US in Africa. The new US strategy focuses on countering State and non-State threats (Terrorism, China, Russia), and working on common agendas such as climate change, peace and security, and industrialization. However, the US strategy still lacks an integrated approach towards the Horn of Africa. Meanwhile, the top priorities of the European Union in the region are illegal migration, humanitarian crises, terrorism and instability, and piracy (Operation Atalanta).

In bringing his remarks to a close, he described the traditionally high importance occupied by the sub-Saharan region in Italy's foreign policy agenda for both historical and strategic reasons. In the Italian strategic vision, sub-Saharan Africa falls within the so-called space of the «Wider Mediterranean». In the last 10 years, however, Italian interest has shifted more toward the Sahel region, with the Horn of Africa losing the priority position it previously held. Nevertheless, with the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the need to recalibrate resources and interests from Russia to Africa, Italy could turn to the Horn of Africa with renewed interest, in an attempt to build new partnerships with regional actors and explore new typologies of collaboration. In concluding, he argued that the Horn of Africa is immense, complex and heterogeneous. No external actor can have an unchallenged hegemonic position. The time has come for a new era of variable geometry multilateralism.

Brendon Cannon

(Assistant Professor, Khalifa University, United Arab Emirates)

In describing the context for his presentation, Brendon Cannon, an assistant professor at Khalifa University, UAE, recalled the long and unstable history of the Horn of Africa; through many conflicts, the region as a whole has found limited success with solutions promoted internally or by external actors. Mediation efforts however have occasionally been successful. For example, the United Arab Emirates played a positive and constructive role as a mediator in the Tigray conflict due to the quality of its relationships with all parties to the conflict. The UAE also played a positive role in mediating some of the tensions surrounding the Ethiopian Grand Renaissance Dam issue among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. The UAE's positive relations with all parties to the conflict again played a key role in ensuring the effectiveness of mediation efforts.

He went on to say that institutions can occasionally contribute to mediation efforts, as demonstrated by the involvement of the African Union to successfully mediate negotiations between the Ethiopian government and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF). Furthermore, mediation efforts carried out by the former presidents of Kenya and Nigeria and former vice president of South Africa were also of key importance. Beyond mediation, inter-governmental organizations can also assist in conflict resolution and facilitate the discrete handling of security and economic development challenges; however, in sub-Saharan Africa, although intergovernmental organizations are gaining importance, they remain very much at a nascent stage. He closed his remarks by observing that while the peace process in Ethiopia has just started, it is hoped that the momentum will continue and lead to enduring peace.

Suggested Roadmap to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa

Kaleb Demerew
(Doctoral Candidate, University of
South Florida, USA)

The final session of the symposium adopted the format of a round table discussion, focused on identifying and prioritizing future efforts to promote peace and stability. Discussions among panellists gave rise to a number of actionable recommendations, which together constitute a 'roadmap' for the achievement of peace and security in the region.

In continuation of his focus on the importance of institutions and governance, Kaleb Demerew argued that the strategy of institutionalization is a key consideration in resolving the problems in the Horn of Africa and achieving political stability. The current fragile institutions, characterized by agreements based on personal factors, need to develop more specialized economic, political, and military functions. Strengthened institutions will provide a solid foundation for political and economic stability, as demonstrated by institutional development in Kenya and Rwanda. He concluded his contribution by commenting on the role of external powers and making the point that under all possible scenarios, the intervention of external powers in the Horn of Africa should be based on the needs of the local people.

Olli Pekka Suorsa

(Assistant Professor, Homeland Security Program, Rabdan Academy, UAE)

Olli Pekka Suorsa reinforced his point that in order to ensure stability and security in the region, especially with regard to combating piracy, fundamental challenges related to technology, communication, capabilities, and rivalries between countries, need to be addressed. It is essential to enhance multinational cooperation, and this requires the provision and flow of reliable and accurate information. In concluding his remarks, he cautioned against analysing existing threats from a single point of view.

Marco di Liddo

(Head of the Analysis Unit and Analyst in charge of the Africa Desk, Center for International Studies, Italy)

Marco di Liddo pointed to the agreement between the Ethiopian government and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), concluded in November 2022, as an example of a successful peace agreement in the region. He noted that the agreement directly addresses material issues underlying the conflict and brings positive benefits to the people of Tigray. If the agreement endures, other movements and ethnic groups will perceive the benefits of a peace agreement and engage in negotiations instead of war. In his opinion, if the example of achieving peace and stability in Ethiopia endures, this will be a very positive model for the entire Horn of Africa region.
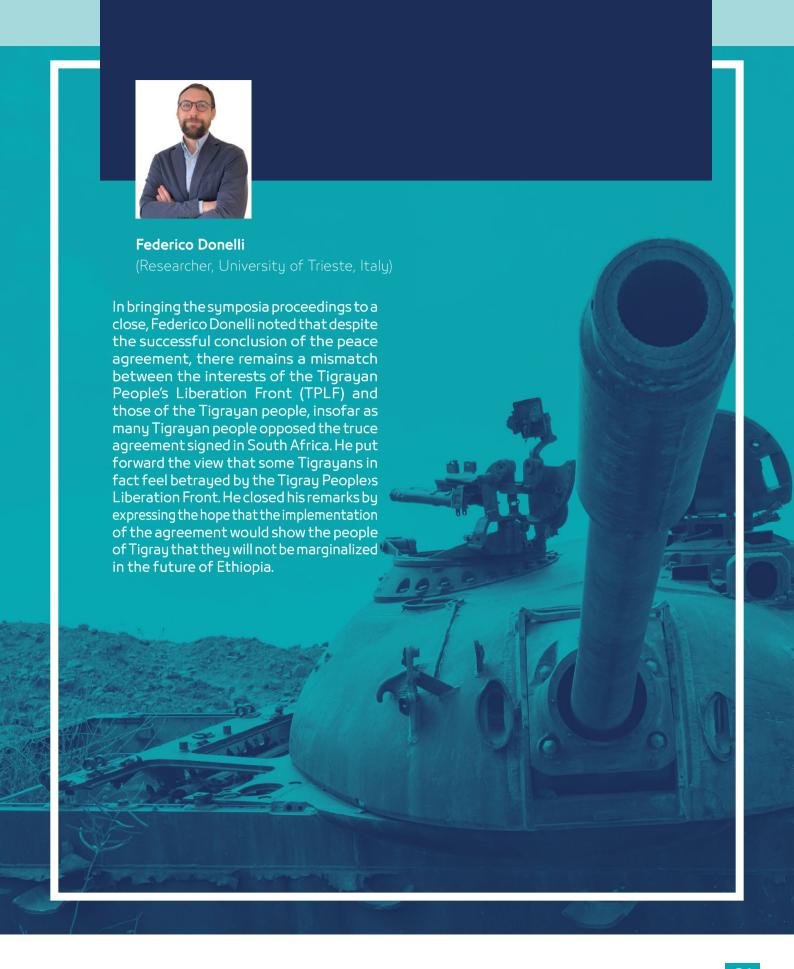
Timothy Peter Edmunds
(Professor of International Security at University of Bristol)

Focusing on means of solving piracy and maritime insecurity, Timothy Peter Edmunds offered the view that many initiatives have developed in a non-institutional manner, but have achieved good progress nonetheless. Noting past successes in combating piracy, he stated that non-profit companies and governments should coordinate with each other on how to address piracy problems. Addressing legal considerations, he emphasized that the trial of pirates is necessary in order to return the convicts to their countries of origin; however, most governments have refused to do so, with the exception of the Seychelles and Kenya where convicts were exiled to Somalia or Ethiopia. Bringing his intervention to a close, he remarked that it is important to learn from failure, especially with regard to conflicts related to security in the sea, and to build capacities and capabilities through local governments.

Brendon Cannon
(Assistant Professor, Khalifa University, United Arab Emirates)

Brendon Cannon revisited the importance of effective mediation in resolving disputes and preventing conflicts from escalating. The mediation of Nigeria, Kenya, and South Africa were critically important to the success of the reconciliation process in Ethiopia, and it is essential for those countries to continue their role going forward. It is also necessary and desirable for certain regional parties to play a role in achieving reconciliation in Ethiopia, especially Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in light of their notable achievements in their previous mediation efforts. There is also a potential role for China and the United States to intervene in supporting the follow-up to this reconciliation.

Federico Donelli

(Researcher, University of Trieste, Italy)

In bringing the symposia proceedings to a close, Federico Donelli noted that despite the successful conclusion of the peace agreement, there remains a mismatch between the interests of the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF) and those of the Tigrayan people, insofar as many Tigrayan people opposed the truce agreement signed in South Africa. He put forward the view that some Tigrayans in fact feel betrayed by the Tigray People›s Liberation Front. He closed his remarks by expressing the hope that the implementation of the agreement would show the people of Tigray that they will not be marginalized in the future of Ethiopia.

Conclusion

The immense geographic size, diversity, and political complexity of the Horn of Africa underlie the difficulty in establishing and maintaining stability and peace in the region. Growing geopolitical rivalry among major powers for control over and access to strategic regional resources greatly complicates the picture. However, the region's significance to Africa and the world – especially in relation to the importance of maintaining freedom of navigation through maritime choke points – necessitates committed action both from within the region as well as by external actors.

Accordingly, TRENDS Research and Advisory organized this symposium to bring together the diverse views and perspectives of leading experts and propose means to enhance security and stability in the region. The diversity and contrasts existing in the Horn of Africa were richly described by participants, while also recognizing that these characteristics have also generated deep-seated antagonism, distrust, and conflict. The determinants of political instability and maritime insecurity were examined in forensic detail, with poverty, youth unemployment, fragile governance, and porous borders emerging as primary drivers.

The involvement of regional and global powers competing for control and access to strategic resources was also identified as a major driver of conflict and instability, due to the exploitation of rivalries by domestic actors. However, it is realistic to believe that no external actor will be able to develop an unchallenged hegemonic position. Accordingly, the most promising strategies for achieving and embedding peace in the region are likely to rely heavily on multilateralism. We hope that the valuable insights and creative policy options derived from this symposium will help to guide involved parties towards this promising direction.

$\rightarrow$ | Agenda

TRENDS Research and Advisory Symposium

«Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Assessment of Roles and Interests»

Date:

Tuesday, November 22, 2022

Welcoming Remarks:

Dr. Mohammed Al-Ali, CEO, TRENDS Research and Advisory, UAE

Theme One:

Stability in the Horn of Africa: Determinants, Causes and Motives

Moderator:

Rahaf Al Khazraji, TRENDS Research and Advisory, UAE

Speakers:

- Aleksi Ylonen, Researcher, Center for International Studies, University Institute Lisbon, Portugal
- Kaleb Demerew, Doctoral Candidate, University of South Florida, USA

Theme Two:

Maritime Security and Piracy in the Horn of Africa: Challenges and Mitigation

Moderator:

Leonardo Jacopo Mazzucco, Researcher, Strategic Studies Department, TRENDS Research and Advisory, UAE

Speakers:

- Olli Pekka Suorsa, Assistant Professor, Homeland Security Program, Rabdan Academy, UAE
- Vijay Sakhuja, Co-founder and Trustee, The Peninsula Foundation, India
- Timothy Peter Edmunds, Professor of International Security, University of Bristol, UK

Theme Three:

Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Rationales and Interests

Moderator:

Sultan Al-Ali, Researcher, TRENDS Research and Advisory, UAE

Speakers:

- Federico Donelli, Researcher, University of Genoa, Italy
- Marco di Liddo, Analyst in charge of the Africa Desk, Center for International Studies (CeSI), Italy
- Brendon Cannon, Assistant Professor, Khalifa University, UAE

Theme Four:

Future Efforts and Initiatives to Secure Peace and Stability in the Horn of Africa: Suggested Roadmap

Moderator:

Benjamin Davis, Economist, TRENDS Research and Advisory, UAE

Speakers:

All participants of the previous three sessions

تريندز للبحوث والاستشارات
TRENDS RESEARCH & ADVISORY

TRENDS

CONTACT US

🐦 TRENDS Research & Advisory
🔗 TRENDS Research & Advisory
📘 Trends Research & Advisory
▶️ TRENDS Research & Advisory
📷 trendsresearch