

Linking Military Expenditure and Development: Perspectives from the Horn Region

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The production, trafficking and accumulation of arms are, for the most part, direct causes of poverty, inequality, oppression and environmental degradation that burden us.

Oscar Arias Sanchez (State of the World Forum, 1995)

The Greater Horn of Africa sub-region comprises Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Kenya and Uganda. This classification subsumes what is conventionally regarded as the Horn of Africa (the term "Horn" is used here to refer to the Greater Horn sub-region).¹ Most of these countries, except for Eritrea and Djibouti, have been independent for at least three decades. The latter gained independence in 1977, while Eritrea became a state in 1993, becoming the most successful secessionist case in Africa. Of the countries in the sub-region, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Uganda have suffered protracted civil wars (see sidebar on "A region in conflict"). Tanzania was militarily engaged with Uganda in 1979 when she sought the ouster of the infamous General Idi Amin. At the national level, however, Tanzania has been relatively calm. Kenya and Djibouti may thus be the only countries not to have gone to war. That is not, however, to overlook the looming tension in both countries, heightened by differences in or the management of the democratization process.² Indeed, the region promises to remain mired in conflict for some time.

Commenting on the large presence of arms, and the ecological frailty of the region, Atieno Adhiambo states:

¹Strictly speaking, the Horn comprises Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Eritrea and Ethiopia. For geo-political reasons, Kenya and Uganda are included. In our analysis Tanzania is included to capture the East African Community area.

²Djibouti has been embroiled in tension which has pitted the government against the opposition FRUD. An agreement to settle differences was reached but this has not entirely dissipated the tension. Kenya suffered an abortive coup d'état in 1982. In the period 1991-92, at the ushering in of multi-party democracy, ethnic clashes, particularly in the Rift Valley and Western Provinces, were the most serious threats to internal peace and security. The impact of the clashes is felt even today.