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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES**

**ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CONFLICT IN GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE: THE  
QUEST FOR PEACEBUILDING**

**BY**

**LATKUOTH LUAL DIEW**

**JULY, 2019**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

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**APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS**

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## DECLARATION

“This thesis is my original work and it has not been presented for a degree in any other University, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged and properly referenced”.

Declared by Latkuoth Lual Diew

Approved by Fana Gebresenbet (PhD)

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Date

Date

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**JULY, 2019**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Lual Diw Waar. My dad was so kind to me and he was the only person who shapes me to reach at this level. I remember the time that he was critically sick in 2016 and at that time, I decide to stay and take care for him and instead, he pushed me to go back and pursue the study and unfortunately, he gone while I have been here in school pursuing my study. Therefore, this study serve as his memory for his love that he shown to me and I pray God to keeps his precious soul in eternal life and may his wisdom and love shine on me!

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>ACCORDS</b>	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
<b>ANZ</b>	Anywaa Nationality Zone
<b>ARRA</b>	Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs
<b>CEB</b>	Children Ever Born
<b>CSA</b>	Central Statistical Agency
<b>EGBP</b>	Eastern Gambella Bethel Presbytery
<b>EPRDF</b>	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
<b>FDRE</b>	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
<b>FGDs</b>	Focus Group Discussions
<b>GPDC 1</b>	Gambella Peace and Development Council
<b>GPDC 2</b>	Gambella Peoples' Democratic Congress
<b>GPDF</b>	Gambella Peoples' Democratic Front
<b>GPDM</b>	Gambella People' Democratic Movement
<b>GPDU</b>	Gambella People Democratic Union
<b>GPDUP</b>	Gambella People Democratic Unity Party
<b>GPLF</b>	Gambella People Liberation Front
<b>GPLM</b>	Gambella People Liberation Movement
<b>GPLP</b>	Gambella People Liberation Party
<b>GPNRS</b>	Gambella Peoples' National Regional State
<b>GPUDM</b>	Gambella Peoples' Unity Democratic Movement
<b>HEKS</b>	Hilfswerk der Evangelischen Kirchen Schweiz
<b>MNZ</b>	Majang Nationality Zone
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>NNZ</b>	Nuer Nationality Zone
<b>SCBS</b>	Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics
<b>SNNPRS</b>	Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State
<b>SPLM/A</b>	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
<b>TPLF</b>	Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNDESA</b>	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nation Children's Education Fund
<b>WGBP</b>	Western Gambella Bethel Presbytery

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## **ABSTRACT**

*For many years, Gambella Peoples' National Regional State experienced violent ethnic conflicts mainly between Nuer and Anywaa. This ethnic conflict presents critical implications and challenges to the peaceful co-existence among the ethnic groups in the region, however, despite the fact that, Gambella Regional State has been affected by protracted ethnic violent conflicts yet, there has been no much studies conducted on peacebuilding. Hence, the study is motivated by the desire to contribute to the peacebuilding efforts in Gambella Regional State. Building on qualitative approach, data was collected from diverse ethnic groups through purposive and snowball sampling techniques by employing key informants interview, focus group discussions and observation. Besides, the data were analyzed through content analysis as a method. Also, primary and secondary data that were tabulated and figured were described and explained in order to convey meaningful outputs. The study found out that, peacebuilding efforts were attempted in GPNRS by different institutions and civil society organizations which encompasses; NGOs, the communities' elders, religious institution and youths in the region. As a tool of conflict management, federalism was also used to manage ethnic conflicts between the Nuer and Anywaa in form of granting self-rule via the formation of 'ethno-nationality zones'. More importantly, the study has also identified that ethnic conflict in Gambella had affected the current settlement pattern between the Nuer and Anywaa. At present, causes and factors contributed to the ethnic conflict between Nuer and Anywaa include elites' access to political power and urban land issue, the influx of the refugee and memory of the past conflicts. Thus, the study recommends that, regional government and town Municipality need to develop a clear policy on the urban land in order to avoid conflict. Gambella Town Municipality in particular also need to work hard to arrange mixed settlement among ethnic groups, particularly in Gambella town as it may allow different ethnic groups to create social bonds and peaceful relations and to restrain from tendency to mobilize for violence conflict.*

**Key words:** Anywaa, Conflict, Ethnic Identity, Nuer, Peacebuilding, Political elites

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Study

After the end of the Cold War, many countries in Africa have been besieged with violent conflicts (Gberie and Addo, 2004; Hagg and Kagwanja, 2007). These countries include Burundi, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Rwanda, Guinea, Sudan and many others (Ibid).

Utmost, identity has been the main feature in these conflicts, mainly ethnic identity (Karbo, 2008; Maxted and Abeba, 2001). Accordingly, identity related conflicts in Africa, as Sarkin (2001) and Michalopoulos and Papaioannou (2011) conceived, can be traced back to the era of colonialism. According to Sarkin (2001), in 1885 the colonial powers of Europe met in Berlin and divided Africa among themselves. The Berlin Conference has created artificial boundaries that did not take into account the interest of the local communities, consequently sowing the seeds of ethnic-identity based conflicts that still plagued the African continent (Ibid).

As Sciortino (2008) cited in Záhořík (2011:92) unequivocally revealed, the “problem of African states is the problem of identities because identities of many states in Africa...during colonialism or the period of decolonization were then transformed or politically used in internal struggles over resources and power in respective countries”.

In that context, Maxted and Abeba (2001) pinpointed that, the existing problems which characterize many states in the Horn of Africa stemmed (in part) from the arbitrariness of their territorial boundaries, initially brought about by colonial powers, which was then transferred to the local political elites at independence. That circumstance, Maxted and Abeba (2001), argued that the division of ethnic groups by borders, when used in the pursuit of power, often becomes fundamental source of conflicts.

Bringing the concept of ethnic identity and conflict as explained above into the context of Ethiopia, certain scholars had also observed that Ethiopia is one of the ethnically diverse nations in Africa that also shares the same problem of identity or ethnic conflicts (Muhabie, 2015). This multiplicity in language, religion, culture, tradition and the overall identity is actually a beauty for the country considering the fact that the people of Ethiopia have had the

culture of living together (Muhabie, 2015). Nevertheless, due to the various factors, some ethnic conflicts have been witnessed in some parts of the country that negatively affect the long-standing societal cohesion and peaceful relations among the communities (Asnake, 2004; Dereje, 2011; Muhabie, 2015).

According to recent observations and realities, these conflicts have been more violent and widespread particularly, within the multi-ethnic regions such as Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples' Regional State, Benishangul-Gumuz and Gambella Peoples' National Regional States (Asnake, 2004; Siraw, 2015). Consequently, for several years, Gambella region has been besieged with ethnic identity conflicts, which foster vicious and destructive relationship among the community in the region (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Following Karbo (2008), this study argues that in order to avert the existing identity related violent conflict in Ethiopia and Gambella region in particular; peacebuilding is a necessity for the stability and for building development progress.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

For many years, Gambella Peoples' National Regional State (GPNRS) has been subjected to ethnic violent conflicts between the Nuer and Anywaa (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007; Temesgen, 2014). In the past, one of the root causes for this ethnic violent conflict was believed to be competition for resources and territorial expansion, most often, in the rural areas. However, in post 1991, the dominant issues to conflicts have been shifting and linked to the question of 'ownership of the state' and 'political power struggle' in the region (Asnake, 2004; Dereje, 2009).

In this junction, Dereje (2006) pointed out that, after EPRDF introduced an ethnic-based federal arrangement in the country, political debate between the two major ethnic groups in Gambella region has changed into who is and who is not a real citizen. As such, this debate on identity status has in many cases, become a new mode of 'inclusion or exclusion' from the state resources and political power (Dereje, 2011; Dereje and Hoehne, 2008; Medhane, 2007). Consequently, it has so far re-generated the historical hostilities between the ethnic groups and fostered a negative consequence to the peaceful co-existence among various communities in the region (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Despite the fact that there is a protracted conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa, there has been no much study conducted on peacebuilding in GPNRS.

Being concerned with this ethnic identity and conflict that continue to present critical implications and challenges to the peaceful co-existence among the ethnic groups in the region; this study is motivated by the desire to contribute to the peacebuilding efforts in Gambella Regional State. Thus, identifying and exploring peacebuilding efforts as well as examining the nature of unending cycle of conflict, is the crux of this study.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The major research question forwarded by this study is that: What are the peacebuilding efforts undertaken in GPNRS?

This study has also forwarded the following specific research question listed below:

- How do the interactions of ethnic groups in Gambella Regional State look like?
- What are the mechanisms that have been tried in the past to manage or resolve conflicts?
- What are the effects of the ethnic conflicts on settlement patterns in Gambella town?
- What are the structural factors that cause conflicts in the regional state of Gambella?

### **1.4. Objectives of Study**

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The main objective of this study is to identify peacebuilding efforts undertaken in GPNRS

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

- To look at inter-ethnic relations in the regional state of Gambella;
- To identify conflict management and resolution attempts from peacebuilding perspective;
- To observe the effects of the ethnic conflicts on settlement patterns;
- To examine structural factors that causes conflict in Gambella region;

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study has significance to academicians (peacebuilding in situations of intense ethnic conflict) and to policy makers/practitioners in their contributing efforts to peacebuilding in Gambella Regional State and beyond. Hence, it has the potential benefit to the government of

Gambella Peoples' National Regional State, the Ministry of Peace, Academic institutions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders which are working on conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives in Gambella Regional State and other parts of the country.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

The study is delimited to Gambella Regional State. It gave major emphasis on peacebuilding efforts as well as attempts that have been made to manage or prevent ethnic violent conflicts in the region. Although the dominant conflict has been mainly between the Nuer and Anywaa, the study also explored and examined inter-relations and major violent confrontations among the Nuer, Anywaa and Highlanders ethnic groups from the perspective of conflict management and resolution attempts.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

In the fieldwork, numerous challenges have been faced. Most of these challenges, in part, were because the conflict in the region had left an atmosphere of suspicion in the minds of the people and government officials from both sides to the conflict. This created or fostered a mentality of ethnic division and distrust where both the government officials and ordinary citizens were so careful not to expose or share the information of their respective group on the conflict. Thus, some participants were suspicious to discuss sensitive issues on the underlying causes of the conflict with any person who was not their ethnic member whether they knew him/her very well or not. Particularly, on Anywaa side, the reaction to the researcher was not smooth as one might presume that the researcher belongs to the same ethnic group in conflict, the Nuer. Apart from this challenge, the second problem was language gap between the researcher and the Anywaa speaking participants.

Despite these limitations however, the letter written by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies and tactics such as using 'snowball' approach and 'Anywaa speaking translator' had enabled the researcher to get the right participants as well as convincing them to trust him. In addition, the objective of the study was clearly explained to the participants.

### **1.8. Ethical Considerations**

In this study, ethical issues of the research were taken into considerations. Hence, cooperation letter written by the Institute for Peace and Security Studies was shown to the particular body

or institution that requests it. By this way, the researcher was able to get trust and cooperation from many organizations as well as individual participants of the study in the overall process of gathering the necessary information. In addition, all participants of this study were first informed about the nature and the purpose of the study and asked for their consent to participate in the study. They were also informed that their identity would remain confidential and not to be used for other purposes rather than the objectives of the study. They were also made aware of their unconditional right to withdraw from the study at any time. Overall, it was after the participants' consent that the data gathering process took place.

### **1.9. Organization of the Study**

The study is organized into six chapters. Chapter one has been designed as introductory chapter to outline various aspects of research objective, statement of the problem and significance. Then chapter two deals with the theoretical framework the thesis is based on. In that context, operational concepts ranging from notion of identity, ethnic identity and ethnicity, the linkage between ethnicity and conflict, different schools of thoughts in the nature of ethnic conflict as well as peacebuilding issues related to this study are discussed. Also, chapter three deals with research setting which describes the place where the study was conducted and methodology used in this study. Chapter four deal with the inter-ethnic relations. It analyzed and examined the time of peaceful relations and violent confrontations between ethnic groups. While chapter five delves with peacebuilding efforts, effects of conflict on settlement pattern and causes and factors contributed to ethnic conflict. Finally, chapter six presents the summary of the main findings, conclusion and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter outlines and discusses theoretical foundations and approaches for this study and it attempts to link theories which focus on ethnic identity and conflict. It attempts to draw on the linkage between the methodological approaches involved in the study of ethnic identity and conflict by looking at the practical parameters and theoretical debates in the identity literature. The study defined and conceptualized the meanings of identity, ethnicity and conflict. It also presented some empirical evidences of ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. Moreover, in this chapter, the concept of peace, the notion of peacebuilding and other relevant peacebuilding concepts were also discussed.

Although, there are various identity cleavages in Gambella region including: the religious, socio-economic aspect and ethnicity among others, this study, nevertheless, used only ‘ethnic identity’ as an operational concept. So far, ethnic identity remains politically relevant identity in the regional state politics of Gambella. As Dereje (2011) stated, the conflict in the regional state of Gambella is mainly ‘ethnic’ in nature.

#### 2.1. The Notion of Identity

In academic discourses, there are divergent views over what constitutes identity (Bothma et al., 2015; Brubaker and Cooper, 2000; Verkuyken, 2005). According to Verkuyken (2005:2), the notion of identity is used frequently in different circumstances and for different reasons. It has been used “descriptively, explanatory and normatively” (Ibid). Brubaker and Cooper (2000:6) interestingly posited that often “identity bears a multivalent, even a contradictory theoretical burden”. Moreover, for Markakis (1998:130) identity is a multidimensional, fluid, and that, its meaning depends on context. Similarly, Verkuyken (2005) also asserted that the concept of identity is indispensable analytical term that helps to understand social reality, however its meaning remains blurred leading to disagreement in social science scholarship.

The notion of identity, as Brubaker and Cooper (2000) revealed connoted self-understanding rather than self-interest. From objective perspective, Brubaker and Cooper denote identity as fundamental and consensual sameness among the group. While from subjective point of view, they posed that it perceived sameness, feeling and experience and this perceived sameness often manifested itself in solidarity, in shared disposition, consciousness, as well as

in collective action (Ibid). Furthermore, in view of Jenkins (1996) cited in Lamont and Molnár (2002), identity represents aspects in which individuals differentiate themselves from others by drawing certain criteria such as community boundary and sense of belonging.

Likewise, for Markakis (1998) identity signified pattern(s) of social organization, mostly comprising of an intricate network of relationship among groups based on genealogy and territoriality, which may or may not share the conventional attributes of ethnicity. Verkuyken (2005:41) simply put it that, identity means, “who you are”.

## **2.2. Ethnicity and Ethnic Identity**

The notion of ethnicity, as Isajiw (1993) posited depends on the meaning of several other concepts, particularly those of ethnic identity and ethnic group. Accordingly, the concept of ethnic group is the most basic from which others derive their meanings. Referring to the linkages between ethnic identity, ethnicity and ethnic group, Isajiw (1993) narratively accentuated that ethnic identity connotes manner in which persons, on account of their ethnic origin, locate themselves psychologically in relation to one or more social systems, in which they perceive others by locating them in relation to existing systems.

Ethnic identity is understood, mostly defined by ancestral rules of group membership and content typically composed of cultural attributes, such as race, religion or caste, language, customs, and shared historical myths (Chandra, 2005; Fearon and Laitin, 2000; and Plessis, 2007). Yet, according to Oberschall (2007: 4) “ethnic identities, solidarities and boundaries persist because they supply a steady stream of benefits to group members”. Generally, ethnic identity is conceptualized as a component of one’s overall identity, which varies in its salience across individuals (Umaña-Taylor, 2011).

Basically, ethnicity as Horowitz (1985:53) understood, denotes emotion-laded, which emanates from sense of belonging or attachment to a particular group. Even more nuanced, as Horowitz conceived “ethnicity is an umbrella concept that easily embraces groups differentiated by color, language, and religion; it covers tribes, races, nationalities, and castes” (Ibid). Concomitantly, Yetman (1992) cited in Yang (2000) points out, ethnicity connotes individual’s identification or a sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group, in some case, constructed by social forces and power relations, which is, to a large extent, independent of individual’s desire (Ibid).

In this regard, Isajiw (1993) argued that ethnicity, is often chosen by individuals to mobilize resources for the purpose of pressuring political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of members of self-differentiated collectivity. Considering ethnicity as an aspect, which have objective and subjective attributes; Yang (2000:40) argued that ethnicity is the product of "subjective perceptions based on some objective characteristics such as physical attributes, presumed ancestry, culture, or national origin".

### **2.3. Linkage between Ethnicity and Conflict**

For years, scholars tried to identify a causal link between societies' ethnic structure and conflict (Coleman et al., 2011; Wolff, 2006). As Dereje (2011:17) revealed, "understanding the link between ethnicity and conflict is even more problematic than debating the nature of ethnicity". Likewise, Wolff (2006) argued that understanding the causes of ethnic conflicts will help, in some way, to explain who fights in ethnic conflicts and how.

Horowitz (1998:5) thus noted a link between ethnicity and conflict, for ethnic identity as a form of collective identity "necessarily generates awareness of other communities, and this spills over (by mechanisms unspecified) into conflict and violence". Coleman et al. (2011), view ethnicity as a device that seeks larger share of resources and political powers. For them, these are fueled by hatreds and resentments, which are in some cases, historical (Esteban et al., 2012). Esteban et al. (2012) further added that, ethnic polarization is promoted by sense of alienation felt by members of different groups stemming from individual identification to a particular group, mainly when certain ethnic group challenges economic and political arrangement of state. Nonetheless, Wolff (2006) explained that ethnic conflicts are product of deliberate choices of people trying to pursue certain goals using violent means.

In that regard, Fearon (2004) argued that ethnicity has become a basis for claims and is being used as a means of competition for power and resources by the elites and people of ethnic groups. Certainly, as Horowitz (1985: 185) observed, this may stem when "some groups claim that the country (or region or the town) is or ought to be theirs and that the political system should reflect this fact by being constituted along essentially homogeneous lines, while other groups claim the right of inclusion on equal term".

This study is however, defined conflict as the dispute of two or more parties competing over incompatible interests or goals through actions that the parties try to utilise natural or political resources by violent means (Bukari, 2013a; Yonas and Ezra, 2014). In this regard, Wolff

(2006:3) stated that ethnic conflict is a particular form of conflict in which the goals of at least one party to the conflict are defined in ethnic term.

Likewise, Bukari (2013a: 4) indicated that violent conflict occurs when the parties' interests contrast over access to resources, control of political, economic or socio-cultural aspects. The conflict can happen because, "realization of these needs and interests by people can lead to violent conflict" (Ibid: 4).

## **2.4. Competing School of thoughts in Explaining Ethnic Identity and Conflict**

Theoretically, different schools of thought have conceived the nature of ethnic identity and conflicts differently. The main school of thoughts in the study of ethnic identity and conflict include, therefore: the primordialist, constructivist and instrumentalist. Their contrasting views on the nature of ethnic identity and conflict are briefly discussed in the following sections.

### **2.4.1. Primordialism**

Primordialist school of thought believes that ethnic bonds are naturally inherent, as human beings making them to have natural connections that unite themselves and create natural divisions with other ethnic groups (Geertz, 1973: 250). In light of primordialists perspective, Brown (1994) stated that, people are naturally ethnocentric, in which they are showing trust and preference only to their own cultural ethnic group while feeling more suspicious and mistrustful of other ethnic group and therefore, distance themselves from those other groups.

Similarly, proponents of this school of thought, such as Geertz (1963), Isaacs (1975) and Stack (1986) quoted in Isajiw (1993), revealed that, ethnicity is something given, attributed at birth, descending from the family ties, and hence it is permanent and difficult to change. Similarly, Rudolph (2006) stated that primordialist views ethnicity as a natural attribute rooted in the individual's birth into an ancestral gene pool or a shared cultural network.

Primordialists conceive ethnic conflict as natural and inevitable, which accordingly stems from ancient hatreds between ethnic groups due to the unchanging essential characteristics of these groups (Fearon and Laitin, 2000; Weir, 2012). Fearon and Laitin (2000) further pinpointed that, ethnic violence results from antipathies and antagonisms that are enduring properties of ethnic groups. Brown (1994) maintains that in diverse societies where there are distinctly different multicultural communities, would have problems in managing their

intergroup relations; and therefore, ethnic conflict is designated or considered as a norm. Moreover, primordialist school of thought maintains that the contextual to ethnic conflicts “often stems from a history of invasion and reprisal over many decades or even centuries” (Spencer, 2006: 77).

#### **2.4.2. Constructivism**

Ideally, constructivist school of thought perceives ethnic identity as socially constructed and fluid, mostly created through different means (Wimmer, 2008). According to the constructivists’ perspective, “ethnic groups are recognized to be social constructions with identifiable origins and histories of expansion and contraction, amalgamation and division” (Posner, 2005: 1). Chandra (2001: 7) noted that ethnic identities are “fluid and endogenous to a set of social, economic and political processes”.

Identity, according to constructivists’ perspective, is socially constructed, in which their membership rules, content, and valuation are the products of human action and speech that can change over time (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). These particular social categories, constructivists believe, are not social convention and practice but are fixed by human nature (Fearon and Laitin, 2000). Accordingly, constructivist understood ethnicity in terms of its malleability of ethnic identity and as a means of explaining the durability of ethnic identity (Rudolph, 2006). Constructivists treat ethnicity as an “evolving concept in which, over time and space, economic and political structures emerge with specific configurations that may be labeled ethnic” (Rudolph, 2006: 5).

Consequently, for constructivists, language, history memories of the past conflict, symbols and culture, often play a considerable role in igniting ethnic conflict (Kaufman, 2001). Initially, Jemma (2006) argued that ethnicity could not be a cause of conflict, but members of ethnic group deliberately use it to strengthen and perpetuate social difference in order to achieve their precise goals. As such, Weir (2012) argues that, ethnic conflict is the product of existing historical processes of the past influences and hatred memories that result to spoil ethnic relations, causing hostility between them and therefore, lead to the politicization of ethnic identities.

### **2.4.3. Instrumentalism**

Basically, instrumentalist scholars contended that ethnicity is not an inherent human character (Varshney, 2009). Instead, they perceive ethnicity as a strategic device [or tool] used for building coalitions in order to gain or seek a larger share of scarce economic resource(s) and political power (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000).

For this, Collier and Hoeffler (2000) argued that, greed for power, which could be much stronger than grievance, is often perceived as a fundamental cause of ethnic conflict. Essentially, instrumentalists assume that, ethnic conflict occurs when political elites construct antagonistic ethnic identities in order to strengthen their hold on power (Fearon and Laitin, 2000).

According to Spencer (2006), ethnicity shows that there are certain deliberate or conscious strategies behind identity formation that is; a sort of political resource for competing different groups. Hence, ethnic groups and bonds are intentionally employed for attaining individual or collective goals (Ibid). In this regard, violent conflict is explained as both a means and a by-product of political elites' efforts to hold or acquire power (Fearon and Laitin, 2000; Spencer, 2006). Fearon and Laitin (2000) explicitly argued that, to achieve that power, political elites or entrepreneurs incite ethnic violence to build and gain political support by creating antagonistic identity, which prefer violence.

Conversely, for primordialists, the primordial attachments inherent in ethnicity “cause and explain action; but for instrumentalists, actions have other (often material) causes, and ethnicity can be either a by-product, or resource in the achievement of these other events and factors, but does not cause them” (Vaughan, 2003: 45). In this regard, critique of primordialism challenge that primordialist school of thought is not considering the social structure, economic and political courses within which ethnic conflicts occurred (McKay, 2011). Instead, they (primordialists) maintained that in ethnically diverse nations, violent ethnic conflict is natural and unavoidable (Ibid).

In this regard, critiques of primordialist school of thought, yet believe that diversity may not be a cause of the violence conflict citing Botswana as an example of ethnically diverse country, in which the relationship between its various ethnic groups have, so far, been relatively peaceful, Holm and Molutsi (1992) cited in Williams (2015).

Orthodox view of the scholars conceived and understood conflict in Gambella region through primordialist and constructivist perspectives. For instance, Dereje (2011) understood conflicts in the regional state of Gambella between the Nuer and Anywaa as ethnic conflict, mostly through primordialist and constructivist lenses. Undeniably, the Nuer and Anywaa conflicts in the regional state of Gambella have cultural and social attribute that reflect primordialist and constructivist views (Dereje, 2011). However, the existing conflicts between the Nuer and Anywaa in the regional state of Gambella cannot be delinked from instrumentalist perspective. Actually, political or ethnic elites have played a role in instigating conflicts using ethnicity as a tool to achieve their political or economic interests. Therefore, the three schools of thoughts have roles in Nuer-Anywaa ethnic conflict in Gambella region.

## **2.5. Some Empirical Evidences of Ethnic Conflicts in post 1991**

Ethiopia witnessed new trend of inter and intra-regional ethnic conflicts since 1990s (Asnake, 2004; Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). In view of scholars trend of the new conflicts in the country are linked to restructuring of the Ethiopian state into ethnic based federal arrangement in 1991 (Asnake, 2004; Dereje, 2011; Muhabie, 2015). In post 1990s, Ethiopia's political order was re-instituted following the EPRDF's ascending to power in 1991 and legally recognized political representation on ethnic basis (Andreas, 2013; Assefa, 2013). The new political arrangement as (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007; Muhabie, 2015), concomitantly argued encouraged ethnic groups to claim ethnic rights at the expense of others. Muhabie (2015) asserted the new state structure gives right to ethnic communities control over regional state, zone, *wereda* or *kebele*, which enabled them to access economic resources.

According to Muhabie (2015:103), the new state structure that brings about new way of resource allocation in the country encouraged "local politicians and party officials from all ethnic groups and from both government and opposition – have at times incited followers to engage in conflict with competing groups". On other hand, Asnake (2004) notably attributed these conflicts as conflicts over identity and governance; and competition over the control of administrative structure and ethnic territories.

At inter-regional level, there have been cases conflicts between the ethnic groups across the region over the question of territorial annexation and control (Asnake, 2004). For instance, the conflict between the Gedeo of Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples' Regional State (SNNPRS) and Guji clan of Oromo, as (Girum, 2010) reported, was over the competition over the territorial control. Concurring with Asebe (2007), Girum (2010) stated that conflict

was sparked by Gedeo's attempt to annex part of Guji land into their sphere control around the area of Hagere Mariam.

Similarly, the conflict between Afar and Issa of the Afar and Somali regions respectively was on the issue of the territorial encroachment (Asnake, 2004). According to Asnake (2004), Afar complained that their territory was encroached by Issa ethnic group from neighboring Somali People's Regional State and that led to the conflict between the two groups.

At the intra-regional level, the conflict between the Berta and Gumuz in the regional state of Benishangul-Gumuz was over the nature of political representation in the regional government and the division of zonal administrations in the region (Asnake, 2004). Accordingly, Berta complained that Gumuz who are comparatively minority in term of population as well as territorial size in the region have politically dominated the region in term of political representation as well as number of *weredas*. Owing to these grievances, tension developed and consequently led into violent conflict between the Berta and regional government-dominated by Gumuz (Asnake, 2004).

Similarly, conflict over the status of Hawassa town in SNNPR between Sidama people and the regional government was ignited by the issue of making Hawassa town as regional capital, which was fiercely opposed by Sidama ethnic group. Hawassa was important to Sidama for several reasons. Firstly, Sidama feared they might lose control over what they believe to be their ethnic territory which became an emerging urban center. Secondly, Sidama political elites believed that the interest of Sidama people might not be achieved once the town became regional capital (Asnake, 2004).

Moreover, identity and governance issue, as Asnake (2004) cited conflict between Silte and Gurage as an example, was evidence of the ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. Historically, Silte and Gurage were initially believed to be one ethnic group however, following the introduction of the federal governance system in Ethiopia; tension began to emerge between the two groups. Silte demanded recognition as a separate ethnic group and according to Asnake (2004) Silte activists felt that their incorporation within Gurage Zone undermined their identity and prospect for development. As a result, tension was resolved amicably without bloodshed by recognizing the Silte as separate identity group and granting them a separate zonal administration (Ibid).

As elsewhere in the country, also there have been ethnic conflicts in Gambella region (Seyoum, 2015; Dereje, 2011). Although the region was historically besieged with violent conflicts in the past, the new instituted state structure which is based on ethnic federal arrangement appears to bring about change of inter-ethnic relations and the changing dimension of the conflicts (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007; Yonas, 2014). These conflicts have been partly due to territorial control, resources competition and competition over political power (Asnake, 2004). Mostly, the recurrent ethnic conflicts have been between Nuer and Anywaa, Anywaa and Highlanders as well as Majang and Highlanders (Biel, 2017; Dereje, 2011; Seyoum, 2015).

## **2.6. The Concept of Peace**

Peace is an umbrella and multidimensional concept, a universal expression of human desires, which is ultimately to be, pursued (Galtung, 1967). However, defining 'peace' is not easy task, because, it's meaning is strongly attached to individual implications, in which, the concept need to be explored further. In this connection, Murithi (2009) argued that, the notion of peace therefore needs to be unpacked. Thus, to understand peace, there is a need to clearly define and distinguish positive peace from negative peace (Murithi, 2009).

Peace is often defined negatively as freedom from violent conflict (Schilling and Nzang, 2012). Actually, peace, development and democracy share an interactive triangle, which are reciprocally reinforcing. Hence, absence of democracy, fair allocation of economic development and resources, peace is unlikely to prevail. In the same way, when there is lack of sustainable development, the disparities become obvious and can be a source for instability, and without peace, developmental benefits are swiftly destroyed (Schilling and Nzang, 2012).

Yet, peace is generally defined as the well being or safety from fear and want and the absence of war or violence. Sometime, it is configured into first, second and third stages. The first phase is durable peace or positive peace, which is manifested by a strong collaboration and understanding amongst parties based on common values and purposes; the second phase is stable peace which is higher in its level of tension and marked by weak cooperation and trust among the groups regardless of the relative national stability; the last stage is the unstable peace which occurs due to unresolved disagreements, leading to rise up tensions (Schilling and Nzang, 2012).

Nevertheless, within this conceptual definition, there is a need to differentiate negative and positive peace. Accordingly, the most commonly definition on negative and positive peace has been forwarded by Johan Galtung. Thus, Galtung (2010) cited in Schilling and Nzang (2012: 22) defined and distinguished negative and positive peace in the following ways:

Negative peace implies the absence of war, fear, direct violence and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels. For the period of negative peace, the emphasis is not to deal with the basic causes of violence or conflict. Rather, it is contained to deal with the indication of factors that lead to violence. Thus, in order to avoid acts of direct physical violence committed by individuals or groups, there is a need to reforms or restructuring the institutions.

On the other hand, positive peace implies to the absence of indirect and structural violence, the absence of unjust structures and uneven relationships; it also implies to peace on different levels like behavioral, attitudes or structures. Hence, positive peace is occupied with positive substances such as the restoration of relationships, the positive resolution of conflict and the establishment of social schemes that provide the needs for the entire people. Accordingly, positive peace expresses a circumstance where justice and fairness exist and seeking to uphold and improve the quality of living as well.

## **2.7. The Notion of Peacebuilding**

Hitherto, the concept of peacebuilding is elastic that defined in different ways and for various purposes by policymakers and in academics literature (Fombad, 2004; Mason and Meernik, 2006). Accordingly, it is not surprising that there are numerous and sometimes confusing definitions of peacebuilding (Fombad, 2004). However, the concept must be understood in the specific context in which it is used (Ibid).

Internationally, the concept and origin of peacebuilding dates back to the 1992, An Agenda for Peace, a landmark document about the role of United Nations in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping put forward by the then-UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. Boutros-Ghali (1992:823) defined peacebuilding as “action to identify and support structures which would tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict”. Equally, Albert (2001:130) sees peacebuilding as an art of repairing relationships, institutions and social fabric by putting in place schemes that enable disputing communities to improve their relationships and reunited.

Lederach (1997:71) therefore, hailed that peacebuilding per se is a process, basically composed of multiple activities with interdependent roles and functions, often geared towards creating, as well as sustaining transformation which promote movement and restructured relationships. Similarly, Karbo (2008:116) states that this may encompass a number of activities, which inter alia including “conflict prevention, conflict management, negotiation, mediation, peacemaking, advocacy, humanitarian assistance, emergency management, development work and post-conflict reconstruction”.

Peacebuilding therefore involves activities designed to identify the “causes of direct, structural and cultural violence throughout society, not necessarily to resolve all of them . . . , but to recognize them as a fundamental steps in the process of conflict transformation” (Fombad, 2004:192).

Moreover, peacebuilding, for Boutros-Ghali (1992) usually takes several forms of actions such as demilitarization, restructuring, police and judicial reform, economic development, elections, and many more. Likewise, considering it as post-conflict agenda, Orjuela (2008) asserted, it is used broadly, to encompass prevention, management, transformation, as well as the reconstruction and reconciliation processes after a war. Kasali (2006) further pinpoints that it represents an action, which consists of a wide range of activities ranging from capacity building, reconciliation, and societal transformation, always a long-term process, which happen after violent conflict ended.

Essentially, peacebuilding as Karbo (2008) noted must be geared toward enhancement, promotion of human security, democratic governance, human rights, and rule of law, sustainable development and equitable access to resources. Karbo (2008) therefore, accentuated, the central task of peacebuilding must be to create positive peace- a stable social equilibrium which prevent relapse to the conflict and addressing the structural and cultural forces of violence.

Fombad (2004) further argued that peacebuilding is not at all times designed to eliminate conflicts, it aims should be to develop effective mechanisms by which a state can manage the inevitable rival claims, grievances and competition over scarce resources that occur. Fombad (2004) conceived that, peacebuilding should take into account the fact that conflicts usually leave their mark on the post-settlement process in form of damaged relationship and ruined lives, engrained distrust and hatred in the societies, thus the task of peacebuilding is to construct a self-sustaining peace.

For Murithi (2009), peacebuilding comprise various social, political and economic activities. The reality on the ground is that peacebuilding need to take on specific approach to address a particular circumstance. This means that, peacebuilding is context specific and should only be commenced in considering the political, social and economic aspects. Similarly, Porter (2007) also noted that, the essences and practices of peacebuilding are culturally specific. In this regard, Porter (2007: 33) stated that, to build peace necessitates culturally significant discussion and consideration on “what constitutes peace and security within different cultures, nationalities, ethnicities and for different groups of people, including men and women”.

More importantly, Murithi (2009: 4) acknowledged that, it is impossible to build peace without including the “local populations in the design, planning and implementation of its initiatives”. This means, peacebuilding activities should be conducted at grassroots level in which local populations must take initiative and leading roles.

Nevertheless, Murithi (2009) also revealed that, peacebuilding is comprehensive and collaborative process that should take place concurrently at different levels. The levels of peacebuilding are macro level, meso level and micro level. Accordingly, Murithi (2009: 7-8) defined these levels of peacebuilding in the following ways:

“...macro level refers to peacebuilding at the international level that proceeds through the activities of the United Nations and its agencies, as well as continental and sub-regional mechanisms. And the meso level of peacebuilding refers to the national and sub-national processes to promote and sustain peace. Governments of war-affected countries generally tend to adopt policy frameworks to enhance their efforts to consolidate peace. Finally, micro level of peacebuilding refers to activities at local communities. Grassroots and indigenous leadership structures have an important role to play in securing and sustaining peace. In addition, non-governmental and ecumenical groups can also implement and take part in micro-level peacebuilding initiatives”. Hence, the macro, meso and micro structural levels can exist independently; however, effective peacebuilding can be implemented when each level complements the other and also, there should be a need for a large cooperation amongst these levels (Ibid).

### **2.7.1. Peacebuilding Principles**

As pointed by Van der Leest et al., (2010: 4) there are many different principles that reinforce peacebuilding in theory and practice. However, initiative for peacebuilding focuses on five foundational principles, from which a series of other principles can be derived. These are:

- **Local ownership**

Peacebuilding like development is a people-oriented process; it is centered on those most affected by conflict in local contexts. It gives emphasis to the need for strategies, approaches and interventions that are based on local needs, resources and capacities and that empower local populations to implement these strategies.

- **Inclusiveness**

Peacebuilding focuses on the most vulnerable and the marginalized, recognizing that violent conflict is most often rooted in discrimination, exclusion and marginalization, particularly of minorities and women. Inclusion refers not only to identifying vulnerable groups, but also to enabling their participation in peacebuilding and other political, social, economic and development processes through capacity-building and empowerment initiatives.

- **Long-term process**

Peacebuilding is a long-term process, even if interventions themselves can be in the form of crisis-response measures. There is no 'quick fix' or set blueprint for peacebuilding processes. Long-term commitment, however, provides the space for peacebuilding to empower individuals to build locally relevant sustainable institutions and practices that address root causes of conflict.

- **Human rights and justice-centered**

The roots of conflict can be found in the violation of basic political, civic, economic, social and cultural rights. Without addressing human right-based violations, peace will not be sustained, and development achievements will be precarious at best.

- **Comprehensive**

Peacebuilding involvements are multidimensional in essence and attempt towards coherency with other sectorial and disciplinary approaches. It involves a wide range of activities throughout the entire period of a conflict, which is, from preventive and early warning actions to post conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction.

### **2.7.2. Peacebuilding Dimensions**

According to Schilling and Nzang (2012: 33-34) “peacebuilding measures involve all levels of society, target all aspects of the state structure and require a wide variety of agents for their implementation. While external agents can facilitate and support peacebuilding, it must be driven by internal forces; it cannot be imposed from outside. Peacebuilding aims at creating an environment conducive to self-sustaining and durable peace, and to prevent conflict from re-emerging”. The dimensions of peacebuilding according to Schilling and Nzang (2012) included structural, relational and personal dimensions.

- **Structural dimension**

The structural dimension of peacebuilding focuses on the social, economic, political and cultural aspects that raise violent conflicts. The root causes are typically complex and can include unequal land distribution, environmental degradation or unfair political representation. If these social, economic, political and cultural foundations that should serve to satisfy the needs of the population are not addressed, there can be no durable peace (Schilling and Nzang, 2012).

- **Relational dimension**

According to Schilling and Nzang (2012) the relational dimension centers on reconciliation, forgiveness, trust building and future vision. Its focus lies in reducing the negative effects of violent conflicts through repairing and transforming damaged relationships. Importantly, effective communication is significant, required for transforming the groups’ relationship (Ibid).

- **Personal dimension**

Personal dimension centered on changes at the individual level. Accordingly, if individuals are not able to endure a healing process, there may be social, political, and economic impacts.

The social fabric that has been destroyed by conflict must be repaired and trauma must be dealt with. Consideration must be paid to the ‘psychological and emotional’ levels of the conflict. Hence, if the psychological aspects of experienced violence and its consequence are ignored, victims are at risk for becoming perpetrators of future violence (Schilling and Nzang, 2012).

## **2.8. Sustainable Peacebuilding**

As pointed out by Niklas et al. (2005) cited in Ruth (2017), sustainable peacebuilding is a process of achieving peace by maintaining stability through rules of authority. It is a long-term process of addressing the fundamental causes of the violent conflicts that embrace recognition, capacity building, transformations of confrontations and violence toward peaceful relationship. The lessening of apprehension among groups and increase of association and cooperation between parties enable the situation for stable peace that would make it possible for sustainable peace (Ibid).

In this regard, Kasali (2006) noted that, effective sustainable peacebuilding can be achieved through bottom-up approach. Accordingly, that goal should be achieved through the strong emphasis of cooperation amongst political actors and civil society, development cooperation institutions, NGOs, churches, and state institutions to work faithfully for non-violent solution in keeping with the interest of the conflicting parties (Ibid).

### **2.8.1. Components or Mainstreams of Sustainable Peacebuilding**

According to Paffenholz (2013) cited in Ruth (2017), the mainstreams of sustainable peacebuilding are related to conflict management, resolution, prevention and transformation of violent conflict.

#### **2.8.1.1. Conflict Prevention**

Scholars understood conflict prevention in different ways, meaning that, no common single definition agreed upon. Thus, understanding of conflict prevention, often depend on the context and specific conflict situation (Carment and Schnabel, 2003; Swanström and Weissmann, 2005).

Accordingly, Swanström and Weissmann (2005) defined conflict prevention as any measures that prevent violent conflicts and build up the capacity of concerned actors to act structurally

to reduce the possibility of violent conflict. Carment and Schnabel (2003) also understood conflict prevention as process of a medium and long-term positive operational or structural strategy which should be undertaken by a variety of actors with an intention to identify and create enable conditions for a stable and more likely situation.

Even so, Swanström and Weissmann (2005) pointed out that, conflict prevention was never revealed as a concept but in reality, there was a practical concern to thwart conflicts and prevent the re-emergence of the conflict. Practically, conflict prevention is categorized into direct and structural conflict prevention. Hence, direct conflict prevention implies to the measures designed at preventing instant conflict, often imminent and the escalation of a latent conflict. Whereas, in the structural prevention, the center of attention is on more durable measures that deal with the fundamental causes of a potential conflict in conjunction with likely escalating and triggering sources (Ibid).

#### **2.8.1.2. Conflict Transformation**

According to Lederach's definition, "conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships" (Lederach, 2014: 16).

In this regards, Buckley-Zistel (2008) understood conflict transformation as processes that seek to inspire broader social change and transform the hostile relationship between the conflicting parties. Conflict transformation is "a long term outcome, process and structure oriented effort with a strong emphasis on justices and social change" (Buckley-Zistel, 2008: 22). Similarly, Witt and Balfe (2016) stated that, conflict transformation is a long-term and a gradual process which must involve wide-ranging and comprehensive actions and actors across different sectors of society as they work together to develop strategic goals for change.

Also, Schilling and Nzang (2012: 148) illustrated it that, "transforming a conflict is a long term process that engages the people involved in the conflict to develop the knowledge, understanding and skills that empower them to coexist peacefully". It is a comprehensive term that refers to both the process and the completion of the process (the initiatives and activities) which seek to alter various characteristics and manifestations of violent conflicts (Schilling and Nzang, 2012: 148).

### **2.8.1.3. Conflict Management**

Wang (2015) understands conflict management as the process of choosing effective approaches to manage a conflict with aims of limiting destructive impact and enhancing positive impact. In essence, according to Schilling and Nzang (2012: 150) conflict management seeks to merely manage and contain the conflict. This is true because, the word ‘management’ implies the “ability to control the intensity of a conflict and its effects through different methods such as individual negotiating skills, intervention, institutional mechanisms and other traditional diplomatic methods” (Schilling and Nzang, 2012: 150). Similarly, for Thakore (2013:12) conflict management signifies a strategy to contain conflict and an approach to resolve it as well. Hence, the aim of conflict management is to contain the destructive factors in the conflict process and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict.

### **2.8.1.4. Conflict Resolution**

The idea of conflict resolution according to Wallenstein (2002) signified a situation in which conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent actions against each other. This means, of course, that conflict resolution is something that necessary comes after conflict (Ibid). Thakore (2013) also noted that, it is a situation of dealing with conflict or removing the cause of the conflict. Primarily, the fundamental tenet of conflict resolution has been to identify the main cause of the conflict so as to put an end to the conflict and ensure sustainable peace (Bukari, 2013a). Similarly, United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA, 2001) cited in Bukari (2013a), maintains that, a conflict is resolved when the root causes of that particular conflict are identified and addressed.

## **2.9. African Concept of Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms**

Before colonialism, Africans had their own ways of dispute settling or traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and also they relatively lived peacefully with one another (Bukari, 2013b). However, after the colonial powers came and colonized Africa, they abolished the African systems and setup their own and modern conflict resolution mechanisms in order to successfully establish their administrations (Awedoba, 2009) cited in Bukari (2013b).

Accordingly, Murithi (2008) illustrated the concept and noted that, there are ‘indigenous’ and ‘endogenous’ concepts of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, which are in fact, helpful in rebuilding the social trust through reconciliation. The “term indigenous refers to that which is inherent to a given society but also that which is innate and instinctive, whereas, the term endogenous refers to that which emerges from a society” (Murithi, 2008: 17). Accordingly, these concepts, together, are valuable because they signify the approaches to peace and conflict resolutions (Ibid).

As distinguished by Bukari (2013b) traditional conflict resolution mechanisms encompass social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual aspects in conformity with the entirety of traditions, customs and world views of a particular society. Notably, the process of conflict resolution in Africa society is led by leaders of the community, including traditional chiefs, kings, priests, healers, elders and other tribal leaders and in forms of rituals activities in which the entire community involved. Besides, as dispute settlement and conflict resolution mechanism, wealth exchanges, prayers and sacrifices to the gods or ancestors are performed in which, joyful and mercy gathering is often witnessed (Bukari, 2013b).

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH SETTING AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Description of Gambella Region

The Gambella region, officially known as the “Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State” (GPNRS<sup>1</sup>) is one of the existing nine (9) regional states in Ethiopia established after the Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) seized power from the Derg<sup>2</sup> regime in 1991 (Asnake, 2004; Regassa, 2010; Seyoum, 2015).

It covers a total land mass of about 25, 803 square kilometres and it is located in western part of the country, at a distance of 766 kilometres from Addis Ababa, the national capital of the FDRE (See Figures 1 and 2). The administrative and the capital city of Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State is ‘Gambella’. The city has a latitude and longitude of 8°15’N 34°35’E on the edge of an elevation of 526 meters above sea level. The city is found on the bank of the ‘Baro’ River; the widest and only navigable river in Ethiopia.

Internally, within the regional states (its borders with other regional states of Ethiopia) boundaries, GPNRS bordered in the East with Oromiya Region; in the North with Benishangul-Gumuz<sup>3</sup> and in the South and South-East with the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Regional State (Article 2 of the Revised Constitution of the GPNRS, 2002).

At international boundaries, Gambella regional state shares one of the country’s international borders with South Sudan in the South, in the West and in the North-West. It also shares cross border societies with South Sudan. As such, the Ethiopian people’s Nuer, Anywaa and Opo<sup>4</sup> (Burun) in Gambella region are also found at the other side of the international border in South Sudan. As such, Temesgen (2013) explicitly pointed out that the Nuer and the Anywaa are found both in Ethiopia and the South Sudan. Temesgen (2013: 98) stated that, the two ethnic groups “live along the 1, 600-mile Ethiopian-South Sudanese border, which

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<sup>1</sup> Article 1 of the Revised Constitution of GPNRS, 2002

<sup>2</sup> Derg is the Military Junta that ruled Ethiopia from 1974 until its downfall in 1991

<sup>3</sup> Currently, the long existing border of the Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State and Benishangul- Gumuz is being contested. The same article, which is article 2 of GPNRS and that of Benishangul-Gumuz constitutions, stipulated that they share borders. However, Oromia regional state is now being claimed to share international border with South Sudan, in which, if it is true, GPNRS and Benishangul-Gumuz should have not shared the border and there should be a need to revise those articles. See political map of Ethiopia from Figure 3.1

<sup>4</sup> The Opo people of Ethiopia are also living in South Sudan as ethnic group but they are called Burun instead of Opo.

was demarcated in 1902 as part of the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty”. According to the 5<sup>th</sup> Sudan Population and Housing Census of 2008, the Nuer population is estimated to be over 2 million while Anywaa are estimated to be over 70, 000 people whereas the population of Burun/Opo is estimated to be over 45,000 in South Sudan (SCBS, 2008).

Figure 3.1: Political map of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia



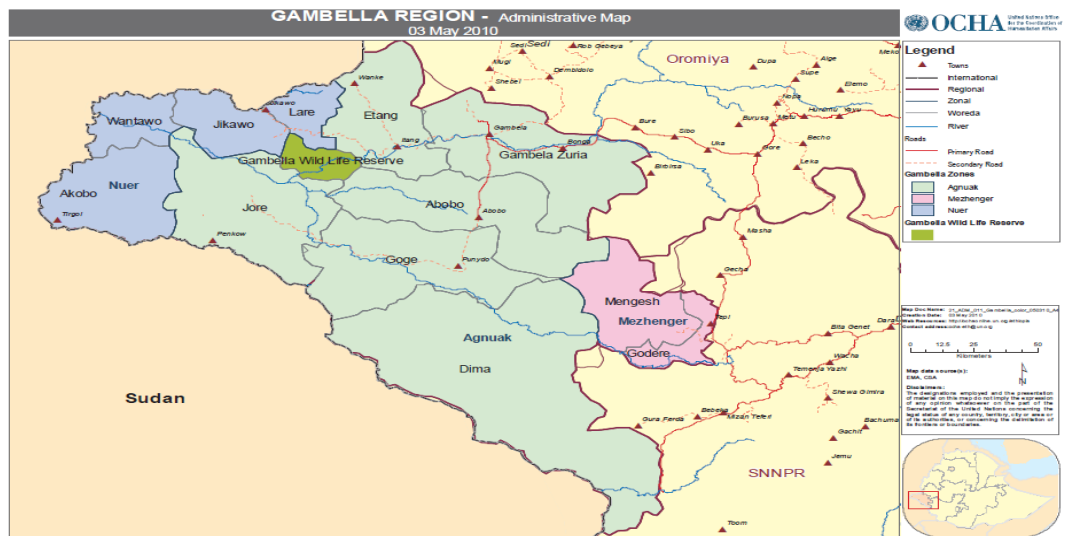
**Source:** Maps of World 2012 cited in Wondimu Ketsela (2014)

Administratively, as stipulated in Articles 46 (1), 87 and 100 of the Revised Constitution of Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State 2002, the GPNRS is structured into three (3) ethno-nationality zones, which are subdivided into *weredas* (districts) and *kebeles*. Generally, in Ethiopia local governance system, *kebele* is the lowest administrative unit (Zemelak, 2008; Art 100 (1) of the Revised Constitution of GPNRS, 2002).

These nationality zones are therefore, the Nuer, Anywaa<sup>5</sup> and Majang zone as stipulated in Article 77(1) of the Revised Constitution of Gambella Peoples’ National Regional State, 2002. In addition, a special *wereda* - Itang Special District (*Liyu Wereda*), which is shared among the Nuer, Anywaa and Opo, has been established in the region. According to the Proclamation No. 131/2006 Itang District (*Wereda*) was formed as ‘Special *Wereda*’ under the supervision of GPNRS’s Regional Council. Apart from Itang special *Wereda*, the GPNRS is comprised of twelve (12) districts or *weredas*.

<sup>5</sup> The Anywaa Nationality Zone is shared between Anywaa and Komo ethnic groups, particularly Komo are exclusively living in Abol *Wereda* however, their representation in the regional government is through Anywaa Nationality Zone.

**Figure.3.2.** Administrative map of Gambella People’s National Regional State



**Sources:** UNOCHA website 2012 cited in Yonas (2014)

In their settlement patterns, the Nuer live in the five (5) districts namely Jekow, Makuey<sup>6</sup>, Wonthoa, Akobo and Lare *weredas* in Nuer Zone. Whilst Majang inhabit two districts, namely Godere and Mengeshi- some of them are dispersed and living in Anywaa zone, particularly in Abobo and Abol districts, also in SNNPRS. In addition, Opo live exclusively in Itang district, whereas Komo live in Abol district. And outside GPNRS, Komo are also living in Beneshangul-Gumuz. Likewise, Highlanders live predominantly in three nationality zones and Itang Special *wereda*. Also, they constitute the majority in Gambella town and Majang Zone (Seyoum, 2015; Dereje, 2011). Anywaa, on other hand, live in eight of the thirteen districts (*weredas*), with the exception of Jekow, Makuey, Wanthoa, Mengeshi and Godere. The Anywaa also live in pockets of settlements in<sup>7</sup>Lare and Akobo *weredas*. Also, they occupy the largest part in mixed-settlement district of Itang Special *Wereda*, which they share with Nuer and Opo.

<sup>6</sup> Makuey *wereda* is not included in the administrative map of Gambella because it has been established in late 2012 before this map.

<sup>7</sup> It was revealed during the interview with government officials that, in Lare *wereda*, Anywaa have four (4) *kebeles* and also in Akobo *wereda* they have another four (4) *kebeles* which make them to have eight (8) *Kebeles* in Nuer Nationality Zone. However, though they owned these *Kebeles* in Nuer Nationality Zone, they are represented in the regional government through Anywaa Nationality Zone because representation in the regional government depends solely on Nationality Zones (interviews with Duop Gach and James Bol, conducted in Gambella town, 2018).

**Table 3.1:** Settlement patterns in *Wereda* among the ethnic groups in Gambella Region

S/No	Name	Zone	Inhabitants <sup>8</sup>	Dominants <sup>9</sup>
1.	Abobo	Anywaa	Anywaa, Highlanders & Majang	Anywaa
2.	Abol	Anywaa	Anywaa, Komo & Majang	Anywaa
3.	Akobo	Nuer	Nuer & Anywaa	Nuer
4.	Dimma	Anywaa	Anywaa	Anywaa
5.	Gambella Town	Anywaa	All ethnic groups in the region	Anywaa & Nuer
6.	Godere	Majang	Majang & Highlanders	Majang
7.	Gog	Anywaa	Anywaa	Anywaa
8.	Itang	Special <i>Wereda</i>	Nuer, Anywaa & Opo	Nuer & Anywaa
9.	Jekow	Nuer	Nuer	Nuer
10.	Jor	Anywaa	Anywaa	Anywaa
11.	Lare	Nuer	Nuer & Anywaa	Nuer
12.	Makuey	Nuer	Nuer	Nuer
13.	Mengeshi	Majang	Majang & Highlander	Majang
14.	Wanthoa	Nuer	Nuer	Nuer

**Source:** Tabulated by the author © 2018

### 3.2. The People of Gambella

GPNRS is home to five (5) native ethnic groups namely the Nuer, Anywaa, Majang, Opo and Komo. As stipulated in Article 47 (1) of the Revised Constitution of Gambella Peoples' National Regional State of 2002, "the found[ing] members of Gambella Peoples' National Regional State are the Nuer Nationality, Anywaa Nationality, Majang Nationality, Opo Nationality and Komo Nationality". These ethnic communities are designated as the "indigenous" people of the region (Dereje, 2011; Seyoum, 2015). According to Bender et al. (1976) cited in Dereje (2011), the Nuer and Anywaa who are the major ethnic groups of the region speak the language belonging to the Nilotic language family while Majang, Opo and Komo belong to the Koman language group.

Besides, ethnic compositions of the Gambella regional state have been supplemented with the internal migrants from the Ethiopian highland (Seyoum, 2015; Yonas, 2014), and with the refugees from the Sudan now South Sudan (Abraham, 2002; UNHCR, 2018). According to Dereje (2011: 6), "the majority of the Highlanders came to the Gambella region in the mid-1980s as part of the government's policy of resettling famine-affected people from the northern and southern highlands to the western lowlands". Collectively, the internal migrants from Ethiopia's highland as Dereje (2011:2) noted, "identified themselves with the generic

<sup>8</sup> In this settlement patterns, inhabitants refer to ethnic group (s) who own *kebele* (s) and live in that particular *Wereda*.

<sup>9</sup> In this case, dominant refers to ethnic groups who are politically represented in that particular *Wereda*.

term as *'Degegna'* (Highlanders), indicating their places of origin.” At that time, around 60,000 internal migrants were brought and resettled in Gambella Region from the Northern part of the country by the *Derg* regime (Dereje, 2011; Yonas, 2014).

Apart from places (region) of origin, the distinction between indigenous and highlanders can also be constructed in terms of their skin colors. As Dereje (2011:6) expounded, “most commonly, the boundary between these two categories is constructed in terms of both regional origins and skin colour: the ‘black’ Anywaa, Nuer, Majangir [sic], Opo and Komo are contrasted with the ‘red’ Highlanders”. For Dereje (2011: 6), even though the ‘Highlanders’ originally ‘belong’ to various other ethno-regional states and ethnicity in Ethiopia including Amhara, Oromo, Tigreans and variety of ethnic groups from Southern part of Ethiopia. Nonetheless, “the category of Highlander is socially elastic insofar as all non-Nilotic and non-Koman people with brown skin pigmentation (‘red’ in local parlance) no matter where they come from, are classified as Highlanders” (Ibid).

Similarly, as noted earlier, Gambella regional state is also inhabited by refugee from South Sudan. According to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee (UNHCR, 2018) and Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affair (ARRA, 2018), ethnic compositions of the refugee communities in Gambella region comprises of the Nuer, the Anywaa and others. Table 3.4 shows statistical information about the refugees’ communities in Gambella region, specifically as of the years 2002 as well as their ethnic composition in Gambella following the eruption of civil war of South Sudan in December 2013.

With regard to the livelihoods, various ethnic groups in Gambella pursue different modes of livelihood strategies. On one hand, the Nuer practice agro-pastoral form of livelihood strategy, Anywaa, Opo and Komo are predominantly cultivators, whilst Majang combine hunting and gathering with shifting cultivation (Dereje, 2011; Seyoum, 2015; Temesgen, 2013). The Highlanders, on other hand practice different mode of livelihoods ranging from cultivation form of economy in rural areas and trade economy in urban areas (Dereje, 2011).

### **3.3. Demographic Characteristics of Ethnic Groups in Gambella Region**

According to CSA (2007), in Gambella regional state, the Nuer are the largest ethnic group. They constitute forty-six (46%) percent of the total regional population followed by Highlanders numbering twenty-six (26%) percent, while Anywaa represents twenty-one (21) percent of the total regional population. The Majang represent 3%, and the Opo and Komo

together constitute to 0.37% of the total regional population. Table 3.2 shows demographic characteristics of the indigenous ethnic groups, Highlanders and other ethnic groups in the region.

**Table 3.2:** Breakdown of ethnic population of Gambella region

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Nuer	64,473	61,459	3,014	40.0	143,286	25,947	117,339	46
Anywaa	44,581	34,750	9,831	27.0	64,986	20, 129	44, 857	21
Majang	9,350	9,286	64	6.0	12, 280	835	11, 445	3
Opo & Komo	4,802	3,735	1,067	3.0	1,214	139	1,075	0.37
Highlanders	39,191	25,987	13,204	24.0	82,895	30,634	52,261	26
Others	-	-	-	-	2435	241	2, 194	0.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>162,397</b>	<b>135,217</b>	<b>27,181</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>307,096</b>	<b>77,925</b>	<b>229, 171</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Compiled by the author based on 1994 and 2007 censuses

As shown in Table 3.2, the population of Gambella region shown remarkable increase which is from 162,397 in 1994 to 307,096 in 2007. As of 1994 census, the Nuer emerge as the largest ethnic group constituting 46% (143,286) of the total population of 2007 population and housing census. However, the Highlanders became the second largest ethnic group making 26% of the total regional population in 2007, overtaking the position from Anywaa, who were the second largest ethnic group in 1994 (27%). And as such, the Anywaa became the third largest ethnic group in the region comprising of 21% (64,986) of the regional total population. While the rest of indigenous ethnic groups, namely Majang, Opo and Komo constitutes 3.037 % (13,494) total population. Urban populations had also shown remarkable increase in 2007 population and housing census. As a result, the population of the Nuer in urban areas, which was initially constituted to 3,014 in 1994, increased to 25,947 in 2007 Population and Housing Census. Similarly, the Anywaa population in urban areas which was 9,831 in 1994 became 20, 129 in 2007. Likewise, the population of Highlanders in urban areas that constituted to 13,204 in 1994, increased to 30,634 inhabitants in 2007 census.

**Table 3.3:** Breakdown of the indigenous ethnic population of Gambella Region

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Nuer	64,473	61,459	3,014	52	143,286	25,947	117,339	64.5
Anywaa	44,581	34,750	9,831	36	64,986	20, 129	44, 857	29
Majang	9,350	9,286	64	8	12, 280	835	11, 445	5.5
Opo & Komo	4,802	3,735	1,067	4	1,214	139	1,075	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>123,206</b>	<b>109, 230</b>	<b>13, 974</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>221,766</b>	<b>47,043</b>	<b>168, 716</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Compiled by the author based on 1994 and 2007 censuses

Table 3.3 shows population statistic of the five indigenous ethnic groups of Gambella region. It's significance for power sharing arrangement in the regional government. In fact, power sharing arrangement especially at executive organ of the government in Gambella Regional Government recognize only the five indigenous ethnic groups in which the Highlanders are not included in the regional government's political representation. This is because, ethnic federal arrangement system and Gambella Regional State's constitution only recognize the above mentioned indigenous ethnic groups as owners of the GPNRS. As shown in Table 3.3, based on CSA (2007), within the indigenous population the Nuer constitute 64 % (143,286) followed by Anywaa who constitutes 29 % (44,857), whereas the Majang makes 6 (11,445) percent. Together, both Opo and Komo constitute 1% (1,214).

**Table 3.4:** Refugee population in Gambella region as of 2002 and 2018 in term of ethnicity

<b>Ethnicity</b>	<b>Population in 2002</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Population as of 2018</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Nuer	22,167	43	352,301	92
Anywaa	7,516	14	24,000	6
Uduk	13,832	26	-	-
Other	6,744	13	7,865	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>51,261</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>384,166</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Abraham (2002) and UNHCR (2018)

Since 1960s, Gambella Regional State has been hosting a large number of refugees from the then Sudan now South Sudan (Abraham, 2002; Dereje, 2011; Regassa, 2010). Since 2002, among the then Sudanese refugees hosted in Gambella, Ethiopia include the Nuer, Anywaa, Uduk and other ethnic groups (Abraham, 2002).

Most recently, following the eruption of the civil war in South Sudan, Gambella has also been hosting South Sudanese refugee from different ethnic groups and they include the Nuer, Anywaa and others. The South Sudanese Nuer refugees are the majority constituting 92% of the total refugee population in Gambella followed by the Anywaa with 6%. Other ethnic groups are mainly people of the diverse ethnic background mostly from 'Greater Equatorial Region' in South Sudan and other ethnic groups like Murle, Dinka as well as minority ethnic groups from different regions who are scattered and lived in different refugees Camps in Gambella region (ARRA, 2018; UNHCR, 2018).

Accordingly, these refugees settled in Seven (7) Refugees Camps in GPNRS. Among those camps, Ngueny-yiel Refugee Camp which hosted 97, 103 is the largest camp in Gambella region following by Tierkidi Refugee Camp, which host 73, 763. Kule Refugee Camp was

also established, which host 53, 899 South Sudanese refugees. All the above mentioned three camps are established and located in Itang Special *Wereda*. Other camps are located in Abol, Gog, and Dima Weredas of Anywaa Nationality Zone. In Gog *wereda*, Pugnido Refugee Camps (Pugnido I & II) hosted 84,446 South Sudanese refugees. Jewi refugee camp in Abol *wereda* also hosted 61, 190 and the last camp is Okugu refugee camp in Dima *wereda* which host only 13, 665 South Sudanese refugees, mainly Anywaa, Murle, Dinka and others (ARRA, 2018; UNHCR, 2018).

### **3.4. Socio-economic Condition in Gambella Region**

Among the nine regional states in Ethiopia, Somalia, Afar, Benishangul- Gumuz and GPNRS are classified as less developed regions in the country (Dereje, 2011; Seyoum, 2015). Due to their historical marginalization and low levels of development in comparison to more developed regions, these four regions are referred to as the emerging or developing regions in the country (Dereje, 2011; UNICEF, 2015; Yonas, 2014).

According to UNICEF (2015), with exceptional of Benishangul-Gumuz, poverty rates in these regions are higher than the national average. Apart from these regions, GPNRS in particular has been affected by protracted conflicts shaped by a number of factors including its peripheral locations, inequalities in levels of development between and within regions, the instability and influx of refugees from neighbour country, the existence of multi-ethnic groups, lack of good governance and limited social services among others (UNICEF, 2015; Yonas, 2014).

### **3.5. Research Methodology and Methods of Data Analysis**

#### **3.5.1. Research Methodology**

This study used qualitative method to generate and analyze data regarding the nature of the conflict and peacebuilding efforts undertaken in Gambella regional state. Creswell (2009) emphasized that the participatory and self-reflexive stance of qualitative analysis is extremely valuable in social science researches. Thus, the study employed qualitative method to gain a better understanding of the conflict and its impacts on peacebuilding from the participants' perspective.

### **3.5.2. Sampling Techniques**

In order to collect the necessary and adequate data to answer the research questions, this study employed non-probability sampling techniques through purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The rationale is that, to collect accurate and adequate data for this study, it is crucial to consult informants with knowledge on ethnic conflict in Gambella region. Hence, informants were selected on the basis of their knowledge about the issues concerned, their social status as local elders, as members of religious institutions, as youth and as political elites or government officials. Accordingly, Creswell (2009) accent these techniques for their usefulness in generating an in-depth analysis and producing a sample that reflects a population in terms of the relative proportion based on their knowledge.

### **3.5.3. Study Site and Target Groups**

The study site of this research was centered in Gambella town administration. Gambella town was selected because of its relative 'diverse' ethnic compositions living in the town. According to 2017 population projection, more than 74, 102, people living in the town. Thus, ethnic groups mostly from dominant conflicts, the Nuer and the Anywaa as well as the Highlanders in the region have participated. As such, local elders and community leaders, religious groups, youth, women and government officials were selected and participated in the study.

### **3.5.4. Sources and Methods of Data Collection**

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary sources mainly included interviews, focus group discussions and non-participatory observation. Other firsthand documents including, constitutions and statistical reports were also used. To supplement the primary data with secondary sources, the researcher consulted various documentary materials such as publications, books and academic journals. Thus, the study used combinations of data collection instruments through key informant interviews and focus group discussions to obtain and cross-check the accuracy of the information.

#### **Key Informant Interviews**

The study used semi-structured (open ended) interview questions. As such, face to face interview approach was used and forty-six (46) key informants were interviewed. Among

these informants, 22 were Nuer, 16 were Anywaa and 8 were Highlanders. Informants were also categorized based on their sex, political status, and their social status as youth, elders, and members of religious institution and their socio-economic role as well. Nevertheless, there is a point where the informants may share the same role or status.

Within Nuer informants, 7 were political elites, 5 were youth, 3 were members of religious institution, 3 were community elders and 4 informants were women. Also within 16 Anywaa informants, 5 were political elites, 4 were youth, 3 were members of religious institution, 2 were community elders and 2 were women. In addition, 8 informants were also identified from Highlanders. Among these informants, 2 were government workers, 2 were youth and 4 informants were businessmen. Thus, primary data collected from the informants who gave their informed consent were recorded. Hand writing notes were also used mainly with informants who have decided to refrain their voices to be recorded.

### **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

Informants that participated in FGDs were purposively selected mainly from Nuer and Anywaa ethnic groups. Three FGDs with six members each have been conducted. The first focus group discussion was conducted with Anywaa Community Elders and the second with Nuer Community Elders. The third focus group discussion was conducted in Jewi Refugee Camp with South Sudanese Refugees.

## **3.6. Methods of Data Analysis**

### **3.6.1. Content Analysis**

Content analysis has been used in this study as a method of data analysis. Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal or visual communication data to their context (Cole, 1988) cited in Elo and Kyngas (2007). The aim is to attain a condensed and broad description of the phenomenon. Thus, through inductive content analysis process data were categorized into different categories in which the same data were put into same category or content and then interpreted and analyzed.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS IN GAMBELLA

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter is the first section of the data presentation and analysis based on the field study that was conducted in Gambella Town Administration and it also reviews the findings of the previous authors. This section delves into the analysis on the character and the nature of inter-ethnic relations in Gambella. Inter-ethnic relations in Gambella are characterized by conflict and peaceful co-existence. Although, these ethnic conflicts have historical roots, however their natures have changed significantly, particularly post 1991.

#### 4.2. Nature and the Characteristic of Inter-Ethnic Relations

Inter-ethnic relations in Gambella region are characterized by peace and conflict. Even, particularly, as Temesgen (2013: 6) vividly asserted, the relationship between “the Anuak [the Anywaa] and the Nuer of the Sobat, Baro and Pibor (along the Ethio-Sudanese border) lived in varying degrees of cooperation and confrontations”. Similarly, Meckelburg (2006: 8) also added “throughout history the relations between the two groups varied from peaceful co-existence and intermarriage to trade and ethnic conflicts”.

##### 4.2.1. Cooperation and Peaceful Co-existence

Virtually, different ethnic groups in Gambella region have been living in cooperation and in peace. Peaceful co-existence among the different communities, mainly between the Nuer and Anywaa was made possible by their shared traditions and values as well as resistance against common external enemy (Jal, 2013). This, as Jal (2013: 213) specifically emphasized a “...peaceful co-existence between the Nuer and the Anuak on the frontier was attained partly as a result of common threats of hostility invariably on all of them from the Abyssinian forces...”. Similarly, Meckelburg (2006: 8) succinctly illustrated that “the Nuer gave shelter to the Anywaa when they came into conflict with invading Oromo and the Anywaa apparently introduced the Nuer to ivory trade with the Oromo and this implies that they have not always been in conflict”.

In addition, there have been traditionally frequent intermarriage, exchange of cattle and mingling of settlements (Abraham, 2002; Jal, 2013; Medhane, 2007). In this regard,

Temesgen (2013: 105) acknowledged that, “cooperation and co-existence have also been further strengthened and consolidated by intermarriage and mixed settlement activities”. Even more importantly, the Nuer and Anywaa do not only have common origin (being members of the Nilotic language family), but also, they have commonality in the languages or words that they speak. That is true, as indicated in Table 4.1, which shows commonly spoken words used by the two communities however there is no evidence that shown the epistemology (origin) of the words or who borrow from who in which, further study is required.

**Table 4.1:** Commonly spoken words shared by Nuer and Anywaa

Category	Word in English	Word in Nuer	Word in Anywaa
<b>Food and Drinks</b>	Water	Piw	Pi
	Food	Kuan	Kwan
	Milk	Cak	Cak
<b>Name of Animals</b>	Crocodile	Nyang	Nyang
	Fish	Rec	Rec
	Leopard	Kuac	Kwac
	Sheep	Roam	Roamo
	Snake	Thol	Thwol
<b>Human Organs</b>	Eye	Wang	Wang
	Nose	Wum	Wum
	Ear	Jith	Ith
	Head	Wic	Wic
<b>Others</b>	Tree	Jiath	Jiath
	Women	Maan	Maan
	Fire	Mac	Mac
	Sun	Cang	Cang
	Leader	Kuaar	Kwaaro

**Source:** Author’s field note and experience © 2018

#### 4.2.1.1. Cross-Cutting Cleavages

The relationship among ethnic groups in Gambella has also been promoted by shared cleavages and by having common history. The cross-cutting cleavages shared by the Nuer and Anywaa ethnic groups include therefore, their common religious and having practiced traditional conflict resolutions mechanisms, which have been useful in managing inter-ethnic strife. Besides, as Dereje (2011) pinpointed, the Nuer and Anywaa who are ethnically originated from Nilotic descent, also shared the same language family, which is Nilotic language family and at the same time, they are believers of the Christianity, or followers of

the traditional beliefs. Even more so, they are predominantly followers of Protestant Christian denominations (Dereje, 2011).

In addition, Anywaa and Nuer also shared various traditional practices and societal values such as marriage system. Marriage in both ethnic groups can be concluded after the payment of some form of dowry (Dereje, 2011). Among the Nuer, dowry can be paid in the form of cattle whilst among the Anywaa community, dowry is paid in the form of traditional beads popularly known as ‘*dimui*’ (or *dimuy*) and other forms of dowries (Dereje, 2011). According to key informant, other form of dowries among the Anywaa included the traditional fighting spear known as ‘*dim*’, goats and some cows.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, the two ethnic groups practice the same culture of married more than one wife or being polygamies. Similarly, they also practice traditional norms of removal lower teeth. However, practice of removing of the lower teeth is abandoned in the recent past, being regarded as harmful traditional practices.<sup>11</sup>

Traditionally, both Nuer and Anywaa pay ‘blood compensation’ for their dead (deceased) as dispute settlement. This dispute settlement, most of time, is concluded through the payment of blood price, usually in the form of cattle, mostly in the Nuer community and sometime Anywaa community of Adongo in Pochalla in South Sudan also do the same practice but in most cases, Anywaa of Openo in Gambella, Ethiopia used other materials for compensation such as *Dimuy*, because they do not possess cattle as compared to Anywaa of Adongo.<sup>12</sup> Generally, indigenous communities in Gambella region have been affected by socio-economic backwardness as well as the marginalization policies of the previous regimes of Ethiopia (Yonas, 2014).

#### **4.2.2. Conflicts in Gambella Region**

Despite the existence of peaceful co-existence among communities in the region, at certain occasions, inter-ethnic relations have been conflictual. As such, there have been conflicts between Nuer and the Anywaa. Similarly, there have been conflicts between the Anywaa and Highlanders and Majang versus Highlanders as well (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007; Seyoum, 2015). Yet, the most dominant and protracted conflicts have been between the Nuer and the Anywaa. Primarily, this study seeks to explore the Nuer-Anywaa conflicts in the region.

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<sup>10</sup> Interview with an Anywaa elder, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 04, April 22, 2018

<sup>11</sup> *Supra* note

<sup>12</sup> Interview with an Anywaa elder, conducted in Gambella town, April 12, 2018

Nevertheless, considering its linkage with the Nuer and Anywaa conflict, the Highlanders-Anywaa conflict has also been discussed in this study.

#### **4.2.2.1. Trends of Conflicts in Gambella Region**

The genesis of the Nuer-Anywaa conflict traces back to the eastward expansion of the Nuer, particularly, Eastern Jikany Nuer groups comprising of Gaatjak, Gaatjiok and Gaatguang (Evans-Pritchard, 1940; Jal, 2013). As Temesgen (2013) added that, the dominant historic conflicts and events in the area [between the Nuer and Anywaa] before the formation of the Sudanese and the Ethiopian states was the eastward territorial expansion of the Nuer.

Historically, the Nuer and Anywaa who are living in their present homeland of Gambella region are believed to come from the Nile Valley during the Nilotic expansion (Jal, 2013; Evans-Prichard, 1940). Dereje (2011) also pointed out that Anywaa in particular were originally living in what is today Malakal in South Sudan. Accordingly, the conflict between the two ethnic groups continued after the fall of the *Derg* regime in 1991 (Asnake, 2004; Temesgen, 2013).

Moreover, the Anywaa-Highlanders conflict also seems historical in the sense; it was started during westward expansion of Oromo (Jal, 2013). According to Temesgen (2013), the Anywaa first met Highlanders during the westward expansion of Oromo. The conflict between the two groups became even more complicated in the post 1990s following the introduction of ethnic based federal political order in the country (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007; Seyoum, 2015).

This study nevertheless, analyzed the major violent confrontations from 1998 onward. The 1998 violent conflict is taken as the ‘benchmark’ because it was during this time that federal government attempted to involve in resolving the protracted conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa. Secondly, conflict issues in 1998 seem to be on the definition of Gambella region and its ownership question in which ethnic elites have played destructive roles in the conflict. Moreover, analyzed these conflicts enabled the researcher to identify conflict resolution and management attempts undertaken from peacebuilding perspective.

#### **4.3. Post 1991 Cases Conflicts in Gambella Region**

As noted above, the study explored and examined different violent ethnic conflicts in Gambella, most particularly after 1991. These conflicts in GPNRS have so far undermined

peaceful co-existence among the communities and the development activities in the region. According to this study, post 1991 conflicts refer to the conflicts which seem to be politically motivated. In this case, the role of the ethnic political elites and their involvement in the conflicts is essential. Secondly, the meaning and dimension of these conflicts have also changed from the tradition territorial expansion in rural and cattle theft to the question of the state ownership and its resources as well as political power struggle (Temesgen, 2013). Thus, priority of the local political elites has shifted to the need of the control of political power, where lucrative resources are mostly available (Medhane, 2007; Temesgen, 2013).

#### **4.3.1. The Nuer-Anywaa Conflict in 1998**

Beginning from the early 1998, a series of clashes occurred between Anywaa and Nuer in Itang district (Dereje, 2011). The crisis escalated into an all-out ethnic confrontation at the regional level. The conflict ended in June 1998 after a state of emergency was declared by the federal government and the ‘ringleaders’ from both sides were imprisoned (Dereje, 2011).

Although that conflict was ignited by the divorce of cross-ethnic marriage<sup>13</sup> case between the Nuer man who married to an Anywaa girl, the underlying causes of that conflict was the accumulated Nuer grievance against the Anywaa narrative of Gambella region and its ownership. As Dereje (2011:157-158) encapsulated, due to the existence of the tension between the Nuer and Anywaa, “the political confrontation only needed minor stimulation to cause it to escalate into the bloodiest conflict...” According to Dereje (2011) what was initially started as local or rural conflict escalated very quickly and involved the politicians at the regional level - at the wider level of the communities.

##### **4.3.1.1. Control over Gambella Region versus Question of Political Representation**

The fundamental cause of the conflict between Nuer and Anywaa in 1998 was the accumulated Nuer grievances, especially after 1991. These grievances were, mainly related to the re-definition of the Gambella region and its ownership claim by Anywaa. In fact, at the time when the Derg regime was overthrown in 1991, the Anywaa led revolutionary party, which is Gambella People Liberation Movement (GPLM) took power in Gambella Region and the Nuer were agitated by the number of issues. According to one informant, issues or

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<sup>13</sup> According to Dereje (2011), a Nuer man who was married to an Anywaa asked for the return of the bride wealth after their divorce. For reason that is not clear the Anywaa family were unable or refused to pay it back. In response, the agitated Nuer man killed his ex-father-in-law, igniting the conflict between the two communities in Itang district

grievances that agitated the Nuer political elites were the question of equal political representations in the regional government; Anywaa domination of the state institutions; issues of the recognition of the Nuer language and its inclusion into regional curriculum.<sup>14</sup>

With regard to the political representation in the regional administration and institutions, majority of Nuer were not happy because, since the formation of the transitional government in 1991 up to 1996 Anywaa occupied both positions of the regional president and the vice president in the regional government.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, Nuer political elites were also discontented at their level of representation in the regional government and its institutions.

Discrepancy in the political representation in the regional government was evidenced in the allocation of the Cabinet positions in 1992 and 1995. According to Dereje (2011) in the 1992, in the twenty- members or cabinet positions in the regional government, Nuer were given only 3 (15%), while Anywaa took 15 (75%). Similarly, in 1995, in the nineteen – members’ cabinet, Nuer were allocated 4 (21%) ministerial positions, whereas Anywaa were given 14(74%) of the ministerial position. Obviously, in both terms Anywaa took the ‘lion’s share’ in the regional government cabinets’ allocation (see Table 5.1 in Chapter five).

In addition, Nuer were also discontented over question of the recognition of the indigenous languages in the region. According to informants, at that time Anywaa had already designed their language in the region, in which they were not happy for the Nuer language to be recognized equally with the Anywaa language. They were even forcing the Nuer students to learn the Anywaa language in primary school, especially in Itang district where there was only one primary school. Also in Gambella town, Anywaa strongly resisted the Nuer language to be taught as subject in high school and college level.<sup>16</sup> That time Nuer language was given as the subject in schools from grade one to fourth grades (that is at first cycle of the primary level (1- 4), however in contrast Anywaa language was offered as the subject from Grades 1 up to 10 grades as well as at Gambella Teachers’ Education and Health Science College.

Contrary to Nuer grievances, Anywaa considered Gambella region as a whole as belonging to them. With the regard to definition and the ownership of the Gambella region, that time, the Anywaa defined and associated the Nuer as South Sudanese and therefore, claimed that they

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<sup>14</sup> Key informant interview with Deputy Head of Regional Health Bureau (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, February 22, 2018

<sup>15</sup> Interview with a Nuer youth, conducted in Gambella town, February 09, 2018

<sup>16</sup> Interview with former Head of the Regional’s Educational Bureau in 1998 (Nuer), March 19, 2018

are the sole owner of Gambella region (Dereje 2011; Medhane, 2007). For instance, in the 1997 in what Nuer largely regards as the Anywaa mobilization and campaign against Nuer citizenship status, many Nuer residents, living in Gambella town were forcefully transported to the refugees camp in Pugnido as refugees. Sadly, informant reported that, “wife of the then regional vice president was among these individual citizens, transported to the camp”.<sup>17</sup>

In this regard, Anywaa elites claimed that Derg regime had favoured Nuer and as a result, they were bitter at the Nuer presence in Gambella region and not to be recognized as equal owners of the region with the Nuer (Dereje, 2011). Anywaa also claimed that they had participated in the struggle, which had forced out the *Derg* alongside EPRDF (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). As a result, they resisted to include Nuer in the state administration (Ibid). Consequently, informant noted that, Anywaa ownership narrative and exclusionary definition of Ethiopia Nuer to involve in regional state administration contributed to the violent ethnic confrontation in 1998.<sup>18</sup>

#### **4.3.1.2. Attempted Conflict Resolution**

This conflict came to a halt following the intervention of the federal government. According to Dereje (2011) and Medhane (2007), the federal government through the ruling party EPRDF took a number of measures to resolve conflict between the two communities.

Accordingly, EPRDF imposed the merger of the Anywaa based political party namely the Gambella People Liberation Party (GPLP) and the Nuer based political party, the Gambella People Democratic Union Party (GPDUP) into a new ruling political party, the Gambella People’s Democratic Front (GPDF) in 1998. According to Dereje (2011), the merger signalled a certain degree of political parity between the Anywaa and the Nuer in regional power politics. In addition, ringleaders of the conflict mainly from Anywaa were arrested and dismissed from their jobs (Ibid).

Also, key informant mentioned that, the contested Nuer language was resolved, particularly in Gambella town, and as such, Nuer language was recognized and designed in the regional’s education curriculum and it was taught as one subject in schools (even at college level).<sup>19</sup> However, these resolutions or measures taken by the federal government were contested by members of the educated segment of Anywaa society, whose discontent immediately led to

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<sup>17</sup> Interview with Senior ARRA Staff, conducted in Gambella town, April 19, 2018

<sup>18</sup> Interview with former member of GPDUP, conducted in Gambella town, March 19, 2018

<sup>19</sup> Interview with former Head of the Regional’s Educational Bureau in 1998 (Nuer), March 19, 2018

the formation of the Anywaa ethnic base opposition party, the Gambella People's Democratic Congress in 1998 (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007).

#### **4.3.1.3. Unaddressed Conflicts Issues**

Yet, despite the intervention of the federal government, a number of conflicts issues remain unaddressed. For the Nuer, question of political representation or power sharing arrangement in the regional government was not well addressed by the 1998 resolution.<sup>20</sup> Still, Anywaa maintained their dominant position in the regional government. Notably, in 2000, the 19 cabinet ministers' allocation in the regional government, Nuer took 5 (26%), whilst Anywaa had 13 (69%) ministers and Komo took 1 cabinet minister (Dereje, 2011). Discrepancy in the political representation in which, Anywaa were dominant was because of the Anywaa narrative that they had more *weredas* compounded with their comparatively largest land size.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, their participation in the struggle, which forced the Derg out of power in 1991, was crucial factor for their political dominant in the region.

That, the Nuer make a numerical majority was affirmed by the 1994 Population and Housing Census of Ethiopia (CSA, 1994). As a result, Nuer contested the nature of political representation in the regional government. At that time, the Anywaa owned five *weredas* while the Nuer had only two *weredas*, which they also shared with Anywaa. Thus, the Nuer demanded the nature of political representation in the regional government to be changed into population size instead of *weredas*; demanding number of their *weredas* to be increased.<sup>22</sup>

Issue pertaining to the increase of the number of Nuer *weredas* was become more complicated because, apart from political representation question, resources or budget allocation mostly based on the number of *weredas*. The more districts a particular ethnic group has, the more resources or budget they tend to gain/receive from regional resources allocation. Consequently, this issue built the ground for the Nuer - Anywaa violent conflict in 2002, which fostered great impacts on peace, development and lives of innocent people in Gambella.

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<sup>20</sup> Interview with former member of GPDUP, conducted in Gambella town, March 19, 2018

<sup>21</sup> Interview with legal expert in Regional State Council (Anywaa) conducted in Gambella town, February 21, 2018

<sup>22</sup> Interview with former Head of the Regional Educational Bureau in 1998 (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, March 19, 2018

### 4.3.2. The Nuer-Anywaa Conflict in 2002

As noted above, the 1998 conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa ended following the intervention of the federal government which took a number of measures to resolve the conflict. However, lack of amicable conflict resolution of 1998 between the Nuer and Anywaa coupled with Anywaa resistance to the measures taken by federal government contributed to the eruption of conflict between Nuer and Anywaa in 2002.

The Nuer-Anywaa conflict in 2002 is popularly known as '*Sene Selasa* Conflict'. The name of this conflict was coined after the day at which it erupted; that was on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of the Tenth-Month in the Ethiopian Calendar (that coincide with July 7, 2002 G.C). In Gambella region, even now, the conflict is known so, because of destruction and many lives that were lost in that particular day between the two ethnic groups.<sup>23</sup>

Virtually, the causes of 2002 violent conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa ethnic groups were not far from the issues of 1998 violent conflict. For one thing, the basic cause of the 2002 violent conflict; remains an issue of the political representation, equal recognition of the Nuer and Anywaa language in the region, political control over the region (ethnic superiority) and other factors. The 2002 conflict was also related to 1998 conflict in the sense that, as Asnake (2004:59) encapsulated, "the conflict was induced by the accumulated discontents, rivalry between the two groups, issue of political representation, sharing of the resources of the region and other factors".

On the question of the political representation, the Nuer were not happy with the level of representation in the regional politics. In fact, in 2002, still there was disparity in the level of political representation in the regional government (Dereje, 2011). Accordingly, in the year 2002, cabinet members were reduced to 18 and within these cabinet members, Nuer were given 6 (33%), meanwhile Anywaa retained 11 (61%) and Komo took 1 member.<sup>24</sup> As a result, tension flared following the disagreement between the two ethnic groups over who could succeed the late Vice President of the region, who earlier passed away in May 2001 (Asnake, 2004; Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). At that time, the Nuer occupied the position of the then regional Vice President and the successor was supposed to be from the Nuer. As

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<sup>23</sup> Interview with Deputy Head of Water and Energy Bureau (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April, 25, 2017

<sup>24</sup> See Table 5.1 in Chapter five

such, the Nuer based party, the Gambella People Democratic Union Party (GPDUP) nominated its own candidate believing to fulfill party interest.<sup>25</sup>

However, the largely Anywaa based political party, the Gambella People Liberation Party (GPLP) was against the interest of GPDUP and more specifically, the candidate nominated by GPDUP. This had resulted for the formation of Gambella Peoples' Democratic Union (GPDU) as political party on behalf of Nuer with the influence from GPLP, purposely to oppose GPDUP in 2002, informants emphasised.<sup>26</sup> Through the influence from GPLP, a newly established Gambella Peoples' Democratic Union (GPDU) nominated its own candidate to compete for the position of the vice presidency, which was against the interest of majority Nuer of GPDUP.<sup>27</sup>

The Nuer political elites negatively observed formation of new political party as plan designed by Anywaa to create division and conflict among/within the Nuer community. As informant unequivocally encapsulated "to the surprise of many people in the region, the GPLP established GPDU against GPDUP, even though GPDUP was the coalition partner to the GPLP in the regional government under the umbrella of ruling political party called Gambella People Liberation Front (GPLF)."<sup>28</sup>

In addition, despite the fact that, Nuer language was given recognition, particularly in Gambella town, yet it was another point of contention between the two communities in Itang district where the Anywaa were politically dominant. The majority of Anywaa elites in Itang fiercely resisted Nuer language as a medium of instruction and subject in schools.<sup>29</sup>

Strongly, the Nuer political elites in Itang district took this issue of language seriously as denial of their identity and future development.<sup>30</sup> That disagreement over the introduction of Nuer language in schools had prompted the then deputy Itang district Administrator (an ethnic Nuer) to take personal decision to establish or open a Primary School, which is Itang Primary School No. 2, where Nuer language was officially introduced in school for the first time in Itang district.<sup>31</sup> Due to these contentions and disagreements among the leaders,

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<sup>25</sup> Bol Lual was nominated as candidate to compete for the position of vice president by GPDUP

<sup>26</sup> Interview with former member of GPDUP, conducted in Gambella town, March 19, 2018

<sup>27</sup> Koang Reat was nominated as candidate to compete for the position of the same vice president

<sup>28</sup> Interview with former member of GPDUP, conducted in Gambella town, March 19, 2018

<sup>29</sup> Interview with former Head of the Regional's Educational Bureau in 1998 (Nuer), March 19, 2018

<sup>30</sup> Supra note

<sup>31</sup> Interview with a member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Nuer), conducted in Kebele 01, February 09, 2018

tension flared leading to the conflict between the two groups in the region. According to an eye witness, violent conflict in July 2002, was ignited or triggered by issue of ‘bathing soap’ at the river bank in Itang between the two individual members of the Nuer and Anywaa, which was later escalated very quickly into wider violent conflict between the two communities in the region.

### **Triggering factor of the 2002 Nuer – Anywaa conflict: An Eye witness Testimony**

*“It was on Sunday morning at 8 AM local time. I, Koang Law and other person that I forgot his name went to river to take bath. Koang has soap and he was asked by an Anywaa man to share soap with him. Koang rejected to share the soap with the Anywaa. The man was not happy and started throwing negative words or insult towards Koang. At that time, Koang was serving as a government official in Itang district. Koang went together with us to the nearby police station to put that man in jail. When we came to police station we found Bi Okello (an Anywaa police man) serving as a commander in Itang police station. Bi Okello defended his kin man not to be jailed and there, Koang himself and Bi quarrelled and fought. Their fighting escalated into large ethnic violent conflict on July 7<sup>th</sup> 2002- narrated by Stephen Nuer, interviewed in Gambella town, March 20, 2018”.*

#### **4.3.2.1. Attempted Conflict Resolution**

At the outset, the regional government was unable to manage the situation or violent conflict between the two ethnic groups. That was because as Dereje (2011:158) explained, certain political elites who were identified as “high-ranking leaders” in the regional government contributed to the violent conflict in 2002. The inability of the regional government to resolve the situation compelled federal government to intervene in the conflict. Thus, as Dereje (2011) asserted, haunted by the deterioration of the situation, federal government intervened and took a number of measures.

First, the federal government declared the ‘state of emergency’ in Gambella region where federal police and the EPRDF’s army took control of the regional government. This measure was followed by the dissolution of the ruling GPLF in the regional government and its leaders who were believed to have instigated and involved in the conflict (including the president of the region who was at that time an ethnic Anywaa) were imprisoned (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Similarly, members of the regional police who were accused of inciting and participating in the violence were jailed or dismissed from their jobs (Ibid). In addition, the administration of the contentious multi-ethnic district of Itang was abolished and

its administration was given to the regional police with close supervision of the federal government, informant has mentioned.<sup>32</sup>

Federal government identified the ‘root cause’ of the conflict situation in Gambella as the existence of ‘too many political parties’ (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Because of that, “all existing [political] parties were abolished in early 2003 and replaced with the newly ethnic based parties modelled on the EPRDF’s style of governing regional states through subordinate ethnic Peoples’ Democratic Organizations” (Dereje, 2011:158-159). As a result, all ethnic based parties were organized by the EPRDF into a single political organization known as Gambella Peoples’ Democratic Movement (GPDM), which then became the ruling political party in Gambella.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, like in 1998, measures taken by the federal government for resolving the Nuer-Anywaa violent conflict in 2002 also disappointed large section within the Anywaa society (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Accordingly, former Anywaa polices who were dismissed from their jobs organized an armed rebellion that began to target both the government and civilian Highlanders, and particularly they resorted to the killing of the Highlanders, including high profile government officials that result into the violent clash between the Anywaa and Highlanders or government in the region (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007).

#### **4.3.3. The Anywaa-Highlanders Conflict in 2003**

Scholars conceived this conflict as the conflict between the Anywaa and government (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). That is, in the sense that, as Dereje (2011) argued, basically, Anywaa equated Highlanders with the federal government as they regarded the Highlanders as the extension of the Ethiopian State. That association of the Highlanders with the government was because, as Dereje (2011) put it, in Gambella region, the terms Highlanders signify the ‘Ethiopian state’. Dereje (2011) and Medhane (2007) further added that, the reason was that the first representatives of the Ethiopian state who arrived in Gambella were represented and identified by Highlanders, thus the local people or community in the region initially

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<sup>32</sup> Interview with Deputy Head of Water and Energy Bureau (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April, 25, 2017

<sup>33</sup> The newly established political parties were Nuer People Democratic Organization, Anywaa People Democratic Organization and Majang People Democratic Organization all of which were under the umbrella political party called Gambella Peoples’ Democratic Movement (GPDM). According to the Secretary of the ruling party, interviewed on April 26, 2018 narrated that, GPDM was changed into Gambella Peoples’ Unity Democratic Movement (GPUDEM) in 2007, which is the current ruling political party in the region.

recognized and considered these individual Highlanders as Ethiopian state by themselves (Medhane, 2007).

#### **4.3.3.1. The Nexus between Anywaa-Highlanders Conflict with Anywaa and Nuer**

Certainly, there was a link between the Highlanders and Anywaa conflict with that of Nuer-Anywaa conflicts. As Dereje (2011) expounded, the conflict between the Highlanders/government and the Anywaa was, in a way the extension of the Anywaa-Nuer conflict. Both conflicts are related in the sense that they were based on the Anywaa definition and narrative of the Gambella regional state ownership, which was exclusionary (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). The Anywaa defined Gambella region to belong to them, almost considering the Nuer and Highlanders as outsiders (Dereje, 2011).

Similarly, the conflict between the Highlanders and the Anywaa was ignited by the Anywaa resentment to the roles or measures taken by the federal government in solving the Nuer-Anywaa conflicts in 1998 and 2002 (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Anywaa were angered by the mediating role of federal government in which Nuer and Anywaa were regarded as equal owners of the Gambella region (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). Seemingly, as Medhane (2007:15) argued “some Anywaa political actors considered the federal government’s balancing act, evident in the equal political representation of the Anywaa and the Nuer in the regional council, as usurpation of their ‘legitimate’ dominant political status over Gambella”. Thus, Anywaa accused federal government of siding with the Nuer. As a result, they (Anywaa) turned their conflict with the Nuer to Highlanders (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007).

More importantly, the Anywaa largely perceived the continued presence of the Highlanders in Gambella region as a threat to them (Medhane, 2007). In addition, they feared that they are being ‘squeezed’ or contained from different directions by the two forces namely the Nuer and the Highlanders (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). According to Medhane (2007), the widespread perception among the Anywaa is that whereas the Nuer are bent on evicting them from their lands, the Highlanders are forcing them from economic and political power. This has created resentment among the Anywaa, who believed that these two forces are working to bring the existence of the Anywaa to an end (Medhane, 2007).

Thus, violent confrontation between the two groups broke out on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2003 (Dereje, 2015; Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). That violent conflict was ignited after the

Anywaa armed men launched a deadly ambush on government highland aid-workers, working with Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA).<sup>34</sup> These officials were travelling from Gambella town to visit the United Nations (UN) proposed Refugee Camp (the then Udier) around Lare district as part of relocation plan of the Sudanese refugees living in Pugnido Camp. Unfortunately, the Anywaa armed men, around Abol town ambushed the convoys of senior government officials before they reached in the proposed refugee camp.<sup>35</sup>

As a result, a large-scale retaliatory attack on/against Anywaa by the members of Highlanders community in Gambella town and other mixed settlement centres /towns had claimed hundreds of lives from the Anywaa side. This deadly violent clash was followed by a series of revenge killings by groups of Anywaa armed men through bus attacks and other different type of killings such as assassination and murdered of the members of the Highlander community in the region (Medhane, 2007).

Since then, sporadic confrontations and tension continued between the two communities in the region. In fact, it is important to note that since, 2003 there was no official peace, reached by the government (Highlanders) and the Anywaa, until the recently signed peace declaration by some members of the Gambella people Liberation Front (GPLF) who decided to denounce rebellion in 2017.<sup>36</sup>

#### **4.3.4. The Nuer-Anywaa Conflict in 2016**

For over a decade, since 2003 to 2016, a relatively peaceful co-existence has been witnessed in Gambella region between the Nuer and Anywaa. However, that does not mean the conflict between the two groups has permanently resolved or there was a sustainable peace in the region. Instead, a relative peace that was observed in the period between 2003-2015 in the region (between the Nuer and Anywaa) came by de fault, and it was not a real peace (Dereje, 2015).

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Senior ARRA staff (Nuer) conducted in Gambella town, April 19, 2018

<sup>35</sup> Supra note

<sup>36</sup> Interview with the Deputy Head of Regional Security revealed that, “in 2017, 148 members of the GPLF decided to give up rebellion returned to the country and have been reintegrated in to the community after undergoing lengthy civic engagement induction training program jointly conducted by the Federal and the regional governments. The Government also released some of their members who were detained by the federal government including the former President of the Gambella region Mr. Okello Akway”.

Obviously, the existence of a relative peace since 2003 up to late 2015 in Gambella region between the Nuer and Anywaa was not because the root causes of the conflict were addressed. Rather, as an informant disclosed, for the Anywaa the priority was to deal with the new enemy, namely the Highlanders or the federal government.<sup>37</sup>

Steadily, before the outbreak of violent conflict in 2016 between the Nuer and Anywaa, there were different cases of incidents between the two groups. In November 2015, two incidents occurred in the Ler village of Itang Special District, a largely mixed settlement area inhabited by the Nuer and Anywaa. According to Focus Group Discussion (FGD) conducted in Gambella town with Anywaa elders, narrated that, in village of Ler, a drunkard Nuer man came and ordered an Anywaa woman for the drink (alcohol) to buy and the woman responded that there was no alcohol; from there the perpetrator perceived that the woman was reserving or preventing him the drink. Surprisingly, the drunkard man picked up his gun and shot the woman to death.<sup>38</sup> Immediately, after the killing of that woman, Itang Special District Administration calls and organized elders from two the communities to resolve the incident by compensating the deceased Anywaa woman. Within a few days, the victim was compensated by the perpetrator through the payment of ninety thousand Ethiopian birr (90,000 Birr).<sup>39</sup>

Accordingly, FGD with Nuer elders stated that, after the victim was immediately compensated; nevertheless the husband of the victim revenged his wife and killed a Nuer man in the same village. In the same manner, the deceased was also compensated by the Anywaa with the order from the Itang Special District administration in collaborating with elders from the two communities with same 90,000 Birr.<sup>40</sup> Consequently, these incidents of killing and revenge killing have fuelled the tensions that have resulted as open violent conflict between the two groups in 2016.

Inevitably, in 2016 deadly violent conflict erupted in Gambella town of Gambella region that pitted Nuer against Anywaa. The conflict, which was sparked by a land dispute between the two persons in Gambella town quickly flared into large inter-ethnic violent conflict, and spread into different towns of Gambella region especially, Itang Special District where a

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<sup>37</sup> Interviews with one of the Nuer youth conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele 01*, March, 20, 2018

<sup>38</sup> FGD with Anywaa elders, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele 05*, April 23, 2018

<sup>39</sup> *Supra* note

<sup>40</sup> FGD with Nuer elders, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele 01* April 24, 2018

number of deaths were reported. Unexpectedly, Gambella regional police and special police forces became involved and divided along ethnic lines.

Fighting also emerged inside the main prison of Gambella regional state that resulted into the death of a dozen prisoners from two groups. This conflict was however, attributed to a number of factors. Informants relate the causes of this conflict to the ‘shift of political power’, mostly office of regional president from Anywaa to the Nuer in 2013.<sup>41</sup> Shift in the position of the presidency to the Nuer is critically important to Anywaa as narrated by Dereje (2011), “...it signified their long held notion of defining themselves as the true owner of the region”.

#### **4.3.4.1. Attempted Conflict Resolution**

This conflict was resolved following the involvement of the federal government. The division within the regional security sector namely the regional police and regional special force prompted the intervention of the federal government to maintain stability.<sup>42</sup> That was based on the request from the regional government for the federal government to quell the situation. According to informants, federal government took a number of measures, by arresting individual leaders who were suspected to have instigated or contributed in the conflict, including members of the police officers; some were even dismissed from their jobs.<sup>43</sup> In addition, after the regional government conducted the political evaluation on the cause of the conflict, the vice president of the region, an Anywaa, was relieved from his position and got another assignment at federal government. Other politicians who were believed to have involved in the conflict were also removed from their position in the government.<sup>44</sup>

#### **4.3.5. Dynamic of Multi-layers Inter-Ethnic Relations in Gambella Region**

Since 1998, 2002 and 2003 throughout the ethnic conflicts in the region between the Nuer and Anywaa, and Anywaa and Highlanders; the Nuer and Highlanders seem to have a good relationship in term of economic trade.

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<sup>41</sup> Interview with a Nuer woman, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 01, March 08, 2018

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Deputy Head of Water and Energy Bureau (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April 25, 2017

<sup>43</sup> Interview with a member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April 27, 2017

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Secretary of the ruling party (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April 26, 2018

However, in the 2016, the long standing social relationship between the Nuer of Ethiopia and Highlanders living in Gambella were negatively affected by a ‘single incident’ in Jewi camp between the refugee and Highlanders. April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, there was a car accident that crashed two South Sudanese Nuer children inside the Jewi Refugee Camp. In that particular incident, the South Sudanese Nuer refugee responded and revenged by killing a dozen of Highlanders aid workers, working in the camp. In Gambella regional state, informant noted that, killing revenge by the South Sudanese Nuer refugees on the Highlanders aids workers was strongly condemned by Ethiopian Nuer in the region and in abroad as well by the regional government.<sup>45</sup> Surprisingly, in response to the action taken by refugees, a group of Highlanders came out with a big number, protesting and moving against Ethiopia Nuer living in Gambella town.

In this regards, key informant argued that, “action taken by the Highlanders group, portrayed the Ethiopian Nuer as South Sudanese because, the Highlanders failed to treat and identify refugee as South Sudanese and Ethiopia Nuer as citizens, which was irrational”.<sup>46</sup> Accordingly, the move of these Highlanders against their fellow Nuer citizens should imposed a negative relation and affected the long standing social bonds between the two communities.<sup>47</sup>

Accordingly, views of majority of Nuer informants in different interviews revealed and narrated that; motive of this particular group of Highlanders was simply to fuel the already existing conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa as well as to be considered by the Anywaa community as they were supporting them. While the point is, Highlanders living in the region have an intention to divide and preach hatred amongst the indigenous ethnic groups, especially, the Nuer and Anywaa.<sup>48</sup> Accordingly, the motive is that, protracted conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa benefited the Highlanders and they want to continue benefiting by keeping the Nuer and Anywaa busy for conflict, which in turn give them the opportunity to buy or illegally occupy the border land (buffer zone), that were/may be evacuated by two groups due to conflict, an informant narrated.<sup>49</sup> Accordingly, that narration is also similar with the narration of Dereje (2011) which stated that, conflict between the

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<sup>45</sup> Interview with President of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Nuer), conducted in *Kebele* 01, April 26, 2018

<sup>46</sup> Interview with a member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Nuer), conducted in *Kebele* 02, March 20, 2018

<sup>47</sup> Supra note

<sup>48</sup> Key informants interviews with Nuer Woman and Nuer Elder, conducted in *Kebele* 02 and kebele 01, March 06 and 17, 2018 respectively

<sup>49</sup> Interview with community elder (Nuer), conducted in *Kebele* 01, Gambella town, February 21, 2018

Nuer and Anywaa seem like benefiting the Highlanders in the region and that might be the reason why federal government is reluctant to solve the conflicts.

Nevertheless, different informants of Highlanders refuted the narration and they expressed or wished a peaceful social relations and existence among the people in the region. In particular, informants also strongly expressed their long-standing relationship with the Nuer in business aspects.<sup>50</sup> For instance, in banking services, a Highlander informant mentioned that, many banks are now operating in Newland area compared to any other area in Gambella town, and if there is no peaceful relationship, it might be very difficult for us (Highlanders) to operate those businesses, informant further emphasized.<sup>51</sup> Thus, Highlanders informants through the interviews argued that, individual Highlanders who took part in that particular move against Ethiopian Nuer were not representing the positions of all Highlanders living in Gambella region.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Interviews with Highlander (Businessman) conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 01, March 30, 2018

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Highlander business man in Gambella town, conducted in *Kebele* 01, April 23, 2018

<sup>52</sup> Key informant interviews with Highlander informants conducted in Gambella Town, February 20 and April 27, 2018 at *Kebele* 03 and 04 respectively

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5. PEACEBUILDING EFFORTS IN GAMBELLA REGION

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter, which is the second part of data presentation and analysis, identifies peacebuilding efforts or initiatives that were undertaken by different institutions. It also observed the effects of the conflict on the settlement pattern in the region. Moreover, factors or issues for the cause of ethnic conflict in Gambella region were identified and analysed. In Gambella region, different institutions at different levels have undertaken several peacebuilding initiatives and conflict management. The institutions that involved in initiating peacebuilding in Gambella region are mainly civil society organizations.

#### 5.2. Federalism as the Mechanism of Conflict Management

Federalism has often been used as a tool for managing ethnic conflict in many societies (Anderson, 2008; Watts, 2008). Andrea Iff (2012) hailed federalism as a suitable institutional form for accommodating different ethnic groups. Steytler and Mettler (2001) therefore, illustrated that the South African experience of peace - making through federal arrangements shown the notion of federalism being mechanism of bringing people together.

##### 5.2.1. Formation of Ethno-Nationality Zones

Like other parts of the country, federalism was primarily introduced to manage ethnic conflict in the region (Temesgen, 2013). In that case, the initially heterogeneous zonal administrations were changed into 'Ethno-Nationality Zones'. As a result, the two Zonal Administrations, which were multiethnic zones, were designated as 'Ethno- Nationality Zones'. Therefore, the formerly zones 1 and 2 were reconstituted and renamed as Nuer Nationality Zone (NNZ) and Anywaa Nationality Zone (ANN) respectively. In addition, Majang Nationality Zone (MNZ) was carved out of zone two.<sup>53</sup>

Hence, the Nuer were given exclusive ownership and control over the newly formed Nuer Nationality Zone. While Anywaa have exclusive ownership and control over newly established Anywaa Nationality Zone (ANZ). Equally, Majang people were carved out of

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<sup>53</sup> Interview with Secretary of the ruling party (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April, 26, 2017

former zone 2 and so Majang Nationality Zone was established for Majang ethnic group. Also, Itang Special *Wereda* was established for Anywaa, Nuer and Opo ethnic groups.

### **5.2.2. Increase of the Number of *Weredas***

After the formation of Nationality Zones, numbers of *wereda* were also increased, particularly in Nuer and Majang zones. The Nuer Nationality Zone re-divided into four *weredas*. As a result, the former Jekow *wereda* was re-divided into Jekow and Lare *weredas*, Akobo *wereda* became Akobo and Wanthoa *weredas*. The Anywaa Nationality Zone has remained with its five *weredas* namely Abobo, Abol, Dimma, Gog and Jor. In addition to Godere *wereda*, Mengeshi *wereda* was established in Majang Nationality Zone. Yet due to administrative convenience and other reasons,<sup>54</sup> Nuer pressed for the increases in the number of their *weredas* and hence, in 2011, Makuey *wereda* was carved from Jekow *wereda*. Thus, the number of *weredas* under the NNZ became five, informant noted.

### **5.2.3. Power Sharing Arrangement**

Power sharing refers to an idea that two or more ethno-national groups jointly rule over one polity (Linder, 2002; Ulrich, 2002). This implies no single group that has authority to unilaterally decide on important matters without the consent of the others (Ulrich, 2002). According to O'Flynn and Russell (2005), power sharing is seen as the most viable democratic form of managing conflict in divided societies.

However, since 1992-2005, Gambella region did not have effective power sharing arrangement in place. The Anywaa dominated the both legislative and executive organ of the government. In the defunct zones 1 and 2 arrangements, Anywaa had more representation in the regional government because they have more *weredas* and exclusive dominance over the then zone 2; and they were also represented through the former zone 1 which they shared with Nuer and Opo (see Table 5.1 in the next page).

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<sup>54</sup> That time political representation in the regional government as well as budget allocation was based on *wereda* and it was the reason why Nuer demanded their number of *Weredas* to be increased (interview with the Secretary of the ruling party).

**Table 5.1** Allocation of the Regional Ministerial Post from 1992 -2002 GC

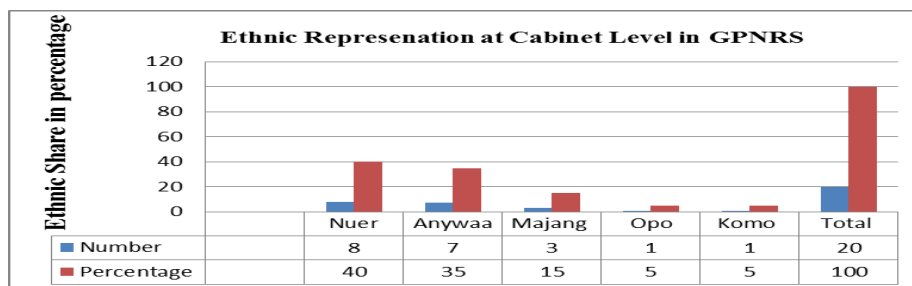
Groups	1992	Percent	1995	Percent	2000	Percent	2002	Percent
Anywaa	15	75	14	74	13	69	11	61
Nuer	3	15	4	21	5	26	6	33
Majang	1	5	-	-	-	-	-	-
Opo	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Komo	1	5	1	5	1	5	1	6
Highlanders	-			-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** Dereje Feyissa (2011: 148)

Disparity in political representation at the regional level was relatively addressed after 2005 election. At that time after the formation of ‘Ethno-Nationality Zones’ and the ‘increase of the number of *wereda*’, Nuer claimed that power sharing at the regional government should be on population not the number of *Weredas* and they were given more representation at regional government but it was not entirely on population.

At present, power sharing is based on the combination of the number of *weredas* and the population size. Key informant interview noted that, in the allocation of the ministerial portfolio or cabinets at regional government, all *weredas* should be represented first and the remaining cabinet positions will be divided according to the population size.<sup>55</sup> This is evident in the 2018 political representation at the cabinet level in the regional government, which is shown in the Figure 5.1. In the 20 - Cabinet Ministers allocated in the regional government in the 2018, the Nuer are given 8(40%) cabinet ministers, while Anywaa are given 7(35%) cabinet members followed by Majang 3(15%). Opo and Komo are also represented by 1 cabinet member per each ethnic group.

**Fig. 5.1** Political representations at cabinets level in the regional government in 2018



**Source:** The Author’s field note ©2018

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Regional Council Office Head (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, April, 23, 2018

Nevertheless, the Nuer and Anywaa also contest the current power sharing arrangement in the regional government. The Nuer claimed that their representation at cabinet level is not proportional to their population.<sup>56</sup> Anywaa are also contested the current power sharing arrangement in the region and they insisted that power sharing arrangement should be based entirely on *weredas* not population.<sup>57</sup>

### **5.3. Role of Civil Societies in Peacebuilding**

On their parts, civil society organizations attempt to play crucial roles in peacebuilding efforts and initiatives in Gambella region. They contributed in a number of ways. These include conducting peace praying, supporting youth through fund and train them to refrain from violence activities.

#### **5.3.1. Religious Institutions in Peacebuilding**

Sampson (2007: 273) recognizes the role of religious groups and stated that, religion and spirituality proffer crucial, vibrant, and resourceful practice for peacebuilding. At present, religious contributions in the work of peace, which was in the past occurred once in a while and sometimes apparently by chance, is now giving way to commitments by many religious communities to institutionalize their efforts and prepare themselves for more positive peacebuilding (Ibid). Little and Appleby (2004) also mentioned that, religion such as Christianity, played a great role in conflict prevention that may combine herald and advocate and even to the more extent of the conflict management. Also, Bartoli (2004) identified that, religious groups are also part of the communities, and are equally victims in any conflict, and so they share similar roles such as defending human rights, educating children and adults, and protecting the space of civil society from the cruelty of violence (Bartoli, 2004). As a result, religious believers are now found at every stage of the peacebuilding process, from top level peace negotiations to grassroots level initiatives such as mediation, trauma healing, reconciliation, reconstruction and peace education, which are crucially significance in building peace (Sampson, 2007).

Enthused by that empirical influence, in Gambella regional state, religious community particularly, Protestant Christians of Western Gambella Bethel Presbytery (WGBP) and Eastern Gambella Bethel Presbytery (EGBP) of Mekene Yesus contributed to peacebuilding

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Regional Council Office Head (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, April, 23, 2018

<sup>57</sup> Interview with legal expert at the Regional Council (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, February, 21, 2018

programs through joint prayers since violent ethnic conflict in 2002 and even more recently. According to informant, after the violent conflict in 2016, prayers programs have been organized together by Nuer and Anywaa churches under the Gambella Peace and Development Council (GPDC1),<sup>58</sup> which was established with a mandate of joint planning and implementation of peacebuilding projects. The Joint Development Office was commended with initiating inter-ethnic development programs aimed at strengthen Anywaa-Nuer relations.<sup>59</sup> The GPDC1 was effective in staging a joint Nuer and Anywaa Peace gospel choirs that draw attention from the two ethnic groups.

The Western and Eastern Synods of Mekene Yesus together, conducted join prayer where gospel choirs were selected by each Synod. These choirs were trained to sing divine songs in different language.<sup>60</sup> In Anywaa area, Nuer sung in Anywaa language and vice versa. Priests also preached religious sermons in different congregation. In Eastern Synod Nuer priests preached in Anywaa church, similarly Anywaa priests also preached in Nuer's Western Synod. In addition, Jenina Congregation Church dominated by Highlanders, together with Eastern and Western Synods jointly conducted religious prayers for peaceful co-existence amongst communities.<sup>61</sup>

### **5.3.2. Role of Communities Elders**

As Albert (2008: 38) put it, “peacebuilding is often built into role expectations in many African societies”. Thus, youth, women and elders in the society played and contributed in peacebuilding through different roles and ways. In this case, elders and chiefs, in particular, play powerful roles in traditional conflict management systems in Africa because they are very much respected in the societies as they possessed knowledge of the traditions, cautions and commitment to the truth (Albert, 2008).

To build peace and manage conflict between the two ethnic groups, regional government organized and established institution of ‘council of elders’ locally knew by different names as, ‘*Dit Wec*’ in Nuer and ‘*Jo Dongo*’ in Anywaa.<sup>62</sup> The institutions have function to oversee

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<sup>58</sup> Interview with evangelist of Eastern Mekane Yesus Synod (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, February, 17, 2018

<sup>59</sup> Interview with President of Western Synod Mekane Yesus Synod (Nuer), conducted Gambella town, February, 18, 2018

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Church Pastor of Eastern Mekane Yesus Synod (Anywaa), conducted the church, February, 17, 2018

<sup>61</sup> Interview with former President of Western Mekane Yesus Synod (Nuer), conducted in *Kebele* 01, February 15, 2018

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Head of the Council of Elders (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April, 20, 2018

and manage inter-ethnic cases conflict through peaceful dispute settlement mechanism. The council of elders are responsible to consult and mobilize community to embrace peace and after their consultation with the conflicting community, they presented their reports to the higher officials of ‘regional administrative council’ in order to find a possible solution as well as recommending which form of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms should be put in place. These traditional leaders and elders, at the same time, can also play crucial roles by disseminating peace message to their respective communities.

In the year 2016 of violent conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa, the institution contributed in dispute settlement, ranging from performing ritual activities in form of ‘slaughtering a bull’. Moreover, they also contributed by arranging and facilitating compensation of the victims in form of the payment of blood money. In 2016, it was through this institution that decided the compensation of members of the Anywaa teachers killed in Itang and Nuer killed in the bus attack. Together with the regional government and the council of elders decided and agreed that, the form of payment or compensation per a victim should be 150 cattle. The reason for the payment of more cattle is to punish the killer and as lesson, in which everyone must refrain from the violent act of killing. In this regard, “the perpetrator and his/her family or relatives are accountable to compensate the deceased and at the same time the perpetrator must be imprisoned”,<sup>63</sup> informant said.

That was what happened when the two of Anywaa teachers were killed in Itang by members of Chieng-reng, a sub-section from Gaatjak clan. All were compensated by the relative through the payment of 300 cattle, informant further noted. In the same manner, victims of Nuer, killed in bus by Anywaa armed group were also compensated with the same amount of cattle but it was the government of Anywaa nationality zone that paid cattle. The reason was that, perpetrators were not personally identified and for this, the Anywaa nationality zone took responsibility because the bus was killed in one of the Anywaa village, key informant noted.<sup>64</sup>

In this case, the role of the traditional leaders and of elders is to officially collect the cattle from the family of perpetrators and resolve the dispute in a peaceful manner. They can also perform ritual activities by slaughtering a bull in order to reconcile the family of victim and perpetrator and to avoid the revenge as well.<sup>65</sup> Despite the imposition of this compensation as

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<sup>63</sup> Interview with Deputy Head of the council of Elders (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, April, 20, 2018

<sup>64</sup> Interview with Head of the council of Elders (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April, 20, 2018

<sup>65</sup> Interview with an elder (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 01, March 24, 2018

a punishment, however, the two ethnic groups did not stop killing each other, one of the Anywaa elder narrated.<sup>66</sup>

### **5.3.3. Youth in Peacebuilding Efforts through the support of NGOs**

In Gambella regional state, NGOs contributed to peacebuilding efforts through various activities ranging to organizing peace concerts and mobilizing youth to refrain from violence. NGOs also contributed by funding local initiated peacebuilding programs. Most of the prominent NGOs in peacebuilding efforts in Gambella were Pact Ethiopia, ACCORDS, and HEKS among others.

In summer of 2006 a peacebuilding concert was organized by Pact Ethiopia which brought together prominent artists from highland parts of the country. Among the artists that participated were Shewandagn Hailu, Johnny Raga, Michael Belayneh, Henok Abebe, and Abeba Desalegn among others.<sup>67</sup> Famous local artists in Gambella region such as Pal Simon, Elsa Omot, Johnny Orea, and Mark Nen amongst others joined these prominent artists from center. These artists performed various peace lyrics. Notably, Pal Simon performed a lyric entitled 'Unity, Peace and Love' calling for people of Gambella region to embrace truce.<sup>68</sup>

On their part, youth through the support of NGOs conducted various peacebuilding activities and initiatives in GPNRS. For instance, in the year 2007, facilitated and funded by HEKS, youths were organized and trained under the conference theme 'Youth for Peace against Gun' with the objective to build peace and trust among youth in the region. According to informant and participant at that time, mentioned that NGOs organized and facilitated various peace mitigation programs for Gambella youth, particularly, among Nuer and Anywaa youth. For instance, together, HEKS and ACCORDS<sup>69</sup> facilitated and gave peacebuilding training for Nuer and Anywaa youth alike to promote peace and unity in the region.<sup>70</sup> Accordingly, informants mentioned that some peace programs were initiated in the region facilitated by HEKS. The programs were conducted not only in Gambella town but also in different towns of Nuer and Anywaa zones. In Anywaa and Nuer Nationality Zones, the program was

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<sup>66</sup> Interview with an elder (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 03, March, 19, 2018

<sup>67</sup> Interview with Secretary of formerly Gambella Youth for Peace Against Gun (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, March 17, 2018

<sup>68</sup> Interview with a member in Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, March 20, 2018

<sup>69</sup> ACCORDS was serving as an advocacy and peacebuilding support for local institutions in Gambella Region

<sup>70</sup> Interview with Secretary of formerly Gambella Youth for Peace Against Gun (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, March 17, 2018

initially conducted in Abobo district and then later on in Jekow district of Nuer Zone. At that time, informant pointed out that, at that time, relatively, there was unity among the youth in Gambella.<sup>71</sup> However, after the program ended, there were no institutions committed to work for peace that could bring different youth into one umbrella or unity.

Recently, after the violent conflict in 2016, youth of Gambella organized themselves under multi-ethnic institution, the ‘Gambella Youth Peace Forum’ which was later changed into the ‘Gambella Youth League’. The mission of Gambella Youth Peace Forum is to promote peaceful co-existence and to provide awareness among different youth in Gambella region about conflict and the future of the youth. After the violent conflict in 2016, youth in Gambella town conducted peacebuilding match or rally calling on all youths to desist from violence and stay united.<sup>72</sup> They tour all *kebeles* in Gambella town as part of conflict management, which in fact, contributed to tranquil ethnic violent conflict in the area.

Nevertheless, at present, Gambella youths particularly Nuer and Anywaa youths are divided by their ethnic interests in which they are actively engaged in ethnic politics. In this regard, Anywaa youth organized and call themselves ‘*Dhaldim*’- a local term in Anywaa language, which connoted to resistant force against marginalization within the region, supporting the particular elites within Anywaa.<sup>73</sup> In response to *dhaldim*, the Nuer youths also organized and call themselves ‘*Goa ni Mal*’- a combination of two different words in Nuer, ‘*goa* and *mal*’ which literally mean ‘peace is better over war’. The two organizations are now being used by the ethnic political elites as tools to pursued political power. Moreover, as many youths in Gambella are living without job, it forced them to follow the ethnic elites, believing that they will be employed as a result of becoming close to these ethnic elites.<sup>74</sup>

In consequence of this conflicts where youths are pushed to follow and support their ethnic elites, government of Gambella Regional State needs to develop economics policy in order to narrow the unemployment gap and create jobs opportunities for the youth. Creating jobs opportunities for youth may reduce the involvement of youth into conflicts.

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<sup>71</sup> Interview with a former member of Gambella Youth for Peace against Gun (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, February 17, 2018

<sup>72</sup> Interview with a member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, March 17, 2017

<sup>73</sup> Interview with an Anywaa youth, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 04, January, 5, 2019

<sup>74</sup> Interview with a Nuer youth conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 01, January 07, 2019

#### **5.4. Effects of the Ethnic conflicts on Peace and Development in GPNRS**

Often, ethnic conflict fosters unprecedented challenges in the society. According to Horowitz (1985), it usually affects cohesion of the state and sometime peaceful relations between communities. Basically, ethnic conflict strains the bond that sustains civility and it is often at the root of violence that results in death, looting, homelessness and flight of large number of people (Horowitz, 1985).

Likewise, the effects or implications of ethnic conflict in Gambella region are enormous. It led to the destruction of properties, loss of lives, and displacement of people from their homes; it also affects social harmony among the communities as well as halting of economics and development activities (Dereje, 2011; Medhane, 2007). For instance, the 2002 violent conflict resulted in death of many people and damage of properties. As Dereje (2011:158) reported, “in the days that followed, at least twenty-one villages were burned, hundreds were killed and tens of thousands of people were displaced. Similarly, schools were closed for months, and the two communities were virtually locked in their respective neighbourhoods. In addition, peace and stability in the region was affected by violent ethnic conflict (Dereje, 2011).

Conflicts in Gambella have so far fostered unprecedented consequences on peace and development to the people of Gambella regional state in particular, and Ethiopia in general. It kills, mostly youth, who are the development engine of the region. It also breaks the traditional social bond between the communities.

Also, it led to the halting of ‘Inter-*Weredas* Sport Festival’ (whose aim was to promote peace and development among the communities in the region, particularly among the youth), for the two consecutive years.<sup>75</sup> “It is a one of the important event in the region where all ethnic groups come together and share their happiness and unity in diversity”, informant further noted. Initially, ‘Inter-*Weredas* Sports Festival’ was planned to be conducted in Makuey District of Nuer zone in 2016, however because of the member of Anywaa teams fear for their security in Nuer areas, the festival was postponed and the venue was eventually changed to the mostly neutral area, which is Gambella town in 2018.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Interview with Highlander official working in Youth and Sport Bureau, conducted in Gambella town, Feb, 20, 2018

<sup>76</sup> Supra note

#### **5.4.1. Impact of Ethnic Conflicts on Settlement Pattern in Gambella Town**

The protracted violent conflict affected the settlement pattern among the conflicting ethnic groups, the Nuer and Anywaa. Consequently, settlement pattern in Gambella town where the Nuer and Anywaa live separately is the result of inter-ethnic violent conflict. According to informants, separate settlement pattern emanates from the fact that ethnic group distrust one another. Thus, perception and entrenched ethnic distrust, mainly between Nuer and the Anywaa have influenced their settlement pattern in the town. One of the reasons, as narrated by different sources, for the two ethnic groups to settle separately in Gambella town is because of the perception that those groups who live among the other group where they are minority will make them target if conflict occurs. Specifically, an Anywaa woman argued that separate settlement is necessary for security reason. In this situation, informant reacted that, “if the two ethnic groups live side by side, the majority one should easily attack the other, when conflict erupts.”<sup>77</sup>

Nevertheless, different informant argued that, separate settlement pattern, particularly in Gambella town is a factor for the continuation of the conflict. Informant further reacted that, separate settlement provided the opportunity to the enemies (spoilers) of peace to easily mobilize their ethnic members against other ethnic groups (who are their opponents). Because, “if communities, for instance, Nuer and Anywaa live side by side as neighbours, the enemy of peace will not be able to penetrate and cause havoc in the society”, informants emphasized.<sup>78</sup>

In reference to the contradiction views of informants on the settlement pattern in Gambella town, my stand is in favour of ‘mixed settlement pattern’ which seem to be more crucial for the existence of peace among rival ethnic communities. This is because, if the Nuer and Anywaa communities live side-by-side in a mixed settlement arrangement, particularly in Gambella town, it can create social bonds and togetherness among ethnic groups that could also avoid tendency to mobilize for violence conflict.

#### **5.5. Causes and Factors Contributed to the violent Ethnic conflict in Gambella**

Presently, causes and factors to the ethnic conflicts in Gambella region include elites’ access to political power, resources control and matter of leadership. Also, existence of the rebel

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<sup>77</sup> Interview with an Anywaa woman, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 05, April 07, 2018

<sup>78</sup> Interview with former Head of Gambella town municipality (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, March 16, 2018

group and the influx of South Sudanese refugees contributed to the conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa. However, these issues have been aggravated by the memory of the past conflicts between the communities, mainly between the Nuer and the Anywaa.

### **5.5.1. Elites' Access to Political power and Leadership Struggle**

Rudolph (2006: 5) posited that, "...the utility of ethnic identity as a tool of politics, used in a similar fashion by both individuals and groups in order to achieve their personal agendas". According to Oberschall (2007), ethnic elites often compete for power by manipulating ethnic divisions and blowing them out of proportion with fear and hate propaganda and with aggressive crisis mobilization and politics. Spencer (2006:78) also noted, "ethnicity indicates that there are some intentional or conscious strategies behind identity formation, which mean a tool for political resource for competing interest groups". As such, ethnic groups and ties are tactically employed for attaining individual or collective goals (Ibid). Explaining ethnic conflict through economic perspective Oberschall (2007) also holds that, the root causes of such conflicts are poverty, economic stagnation, unemployment and corruption. Bringing it into the Ethiopia context, Záhořík (2011: 97) argued that the "rise of ethnic consciousness and ethnic mobilization, have not been due to inherent primordial sentiments, but rather due to social, political, and economic reasons"

With regard to elites' access to the political positions (appointments) and competition for political power in Gambella region, as most of the informants revealed, ethnic elites outside the existing political system have been using ethnic identity card to instigate violent in order to gain access to or hold power. The justification is that, when violent conflict has occurred, these ethnic elites will often criticize and claim that the existing administration/ leadership have failed to govern and to maintain peace and security, and therefore it needs to be changed.<sup>79</sup>

According to informant, instigation of the violent and tension seems to be an easy way to bring about the change in the leadership. Changing leadership due to the inter-communal violent conflict encouraged ethnic entrepreneurs to mobilize their ethnic group for violence. This is because if leadership is changed, certainly they (ethnic entrepreneurs) or a person from their ethnic group might have a chance to occupy the position.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Interview with Deputy Head of Water and Energy Bureau (Anywaa), conducted in the town, April 25, 2017

<sup>80</sup> Interview with legal expert at Regional State Council (Anywaa), conducted in the town, February 21, 2018

Experiences so far have been that, certain leaders were dismissed because of the inter-communal violent conflicts. For, instance, the Chief Administrator and Deputy Chief Administrator of Itang Special District were recently dismissed in 2018 following the killing of three Nuer members, and one Anywaa by unknown men. The reason behind the dismissal for these leaders was that they have failed to identify the perpetrators. However, sources from key informants believed that there were certain individuals from Anywaa (political elites) supporting these unknown gunmen to initiate the killing.<sup>81</sup>

The practice of dismissing leaders after conflict is not a new phenomenon in Gambella region. For this reason, ethnic elites often instigate violence between communities to justify their rhetorical claim for existence of bad governance. As such, elites' competition for access to political power largely contributed to the prevailing ethnic conflict in the region. As one key informant narrated, "the Nuer and Anywaa are the same people; but politicians are the one who divide them, mostly politicians who are outside the system use to instigate conflict between the communities in order to divide them and later on those who are in the system will be dismissed and take their positions."<sup>82</sup> Informant further elaborated that, ethnic political elites believe that if the two (mainly the Nuer and the Anywaa) communities fight, those who are in power will be accountable and be evaluated through '*gemgema*' and they will be blamed that they failed to peacefully manage the communities.<sup>83</sup>

Most often, the discontented ethnic elites outside or within the government have been taking advantage of the memory of the past conflict to instigate ethnic violence between communities. What is true in Gambella is that dispute between individuals is framed as ethnic conflict because political elites use to 'politicize ethnic identity'. As one informant wondered, "if Gatwech (Nuer) and Ojulu (Anywaa) fight for their own personal differences as individuals why would it escalate into larger inter communal violence clashes"? Informant further mentioned that, the reason for the involvement of other people into conflict is because; people were already divided by the ethnic elites and psychologically, it make other certain group to develop hatred and distrust towards others.

In this regards, informant identified that, political elites are using ethnicity to create violence and division in order to hold into power for their own benefit. Access to political power is significance as it determines access to 'lucrative economic resources'. Gambella region is a

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<sup>81</sup> Interview with former member of GPDUP (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, March 19, 2018

<sup>82</sup> Interview with Regional State Council Office Head (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, April 23, 2018

<sup>83</sup> Supra note

very poor region and the most viable means to ensure access to resources by political elites is through political power.<sup>84</sup>

Another explanation of the conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa related to power struggle dynamic in the regional government of Gambella, which is the shift in the position of regional presidency that had been held by Anywaa for over twenty years. The change of the political development in the region that shifted the position of the Regional Presidency to Nuer in 2013 with Anywaa taking the position of the vice president might have agitated the Anywaa (Yonas, 2014). In fact, control over the position of the regional president is significant to Anywaa. As Dereje (2011:148) points out, “Anywaa political dominance found expression in their hold on the office of the presidency and their presence in upper echelons of power in the regional council”. It is also significant over the identity matter as it makes that particular group who are in control to gains more recognition and also to determine who you are outside the region, mostly at federal level.<sup>85</sup> More importantly, position of the regional presidency also enables the dominant group to exert influence over other ethnic groups in the region.

When asked about the cause of the violent conflict in 2016, sources from different Anywaa informants reacted that, one of the issue in the conflict was the “political difference between the group of former vice president and the president”. Other linked the conflict to the ‘poor leadership of the government’. For this reason, one of the key informants questioned that “if the issue was a personals difference, why federal government removed only the former vice president (Engineer Olero Opiew) and left Mr. Gatluak Tut (now became a former president) on power?”<sup>86</sup> Informant further argued that, if the vice president was the part of the problem even the president himself should also be the part of the conflict, in which both leaders could have been removed together, they claimed.<sup>87</sup>

### **5.5.2. Resources Control: Urban Land Resource**

As in the past, resources remain fundamental issue of the conflict in Gambella region, but its nature has changed dramatically. This is true, as Medhane (2007) noted that, resource and territory continue to drive conflict; however, their meanings, dimensions and relevance have

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<sup>84</sup> Interview with legal expert at Regional State Council (Anywaa), conducted in the town, February 21, 2018

<sup>85</sup> Interview with former Head of Gambella town municipality (Nuer), conducted in the town, March 16, 2018

<sup>86</sup> Interview with a member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, March 17, 2018

<sup>87</sup> Interview with a member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, March 17, 2018

shown marked changes. Presently, land, mainly urban land became a key issue of the conflict in the region between the Nuer and Anywaa.

Evidently, from 2008-2015, there has been no major confrontation over the rural land between Nuer and Anywaa. That means there has been no conflict related to the past notion of Nuer expansion into Anywaa territory. This was because, beginning from 2008, the Nuer communities who had been settled in a predominantly Anywaa territories namely in Akade, Pinykiew, Ochom and other villages around Itang Special District and Abol *wereda* were relocated back to the place of their origins through villagisation program.<sup>88</sup>

At that time, the regional state government of Gambella was introducing the villagisation program popularly known as '*mender mesebaseb*' in Amharic or villagisation. The objective of villagisation was to transform a scattered way of life into a settled, more modernised way of life, where the quality of life of the community will improve (Yonas and Ezra, 2014). The program also seeks to ensure food security, and effective and efficient service delivery, including good governance, schools, health posts, and other social services (Ibid).

Basically, urban land in Gambella town has become important for several reasons. It represents ideal economic resource (source of income) to the communities in the region, which is relatively poor. It is also, important for the construction of residential houses, especially in Gambella region, where urbanization has shown a steadily increase. According to CSA (2007) urban population in Gambella region has increased from 6% (27,181) in 1994 to 17 % (77,925) in 2007 population and housing census. In recent time, there is a remarkable change of Nuer population in urban compared to Anywaa. In 1994 census, Anywaa population in urban was 9,831 and in 2007, it increased to 20, 129. While, Nuer population in urban in 1994 census was only 3, 014 and in 2007 census, it increased to 25, 947. As a result, urban centers brought together different ethnic groups that were in conflict in the past. Given the current unprecedented demand for land in urban centers; for building house and other purposes, conflict is inevitable.

As the demand for urban land resources increased, Anywaa are denying and exclude other ethnic groups particularly, Nuer to access urban land, especially in Gambella town. The Anywaa political elites strongly defend the urban land in Gambella town. Informant claimed that, many areas surrounding or within the town belong to Abol *wereda* and so, only Anywaa

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<sup>88</sup> FGDs with Nuer elders, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 01, April, 24, 2017

(under the jurisdiction of Abol *Wereda*) can administer those areas and others ethnic groups have no legal right to access land in these areas.<sup>89</sup> Key informant interview with former town municipality noted that, lands located away to five kilometres from the center of the main town belong to Abol *Wereda*. Whereas, the rest of lands located within five kilometres in Gambella town belong to the town, in which town municipality have a legal right to access free lands and give it to anyone by its permission. Thus, “individuals that claim to own the lands within this boundary are illegally violating the law of municipality and they are the cause of ethnic conflict”.<sup>90</sup>

Furthermore, the Anywaa’s denial to other communities’ access to land in Gambella town might be also attributed to several explanations. In the region, which is comparatively poor such as Gambella region, land is crucial source of income and therefore, its possession in a bulk could ensure economic potential for an individual. It also emanates from Anywaa traditional notion of land as cultural asset. According to Dereje (2011), Anywaa observed and linked land as cultural value and symbol of identity.

However, apart from Anywaa traditional conception of land, being a symbol of identity, presently, urban land resource became very important lucrative economic resource. In that case, having owning land in bulk in the urban areas can generate more financial income. An interview conducted with key informant revealed that member of Anywaa individual could accumulate as many pieces of land as possible, which they will sell out, mostly to the Highlanders in order to generate financial income.<sup>91</sup>

Because of the financial significance of the urban land resource, some members from Anywaa are angered at the current population increase of the Nuer residents in Gambella town who struggled to access urban land to build residential houses. In fact, the triggering factor of the 2016 violent conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa was over land dispute between two individuals.<sup>92</sup>

Other possible explanation for land resources or urban land conflict in Gambella region relates to the traditional Anywaa notion of containing Nuer expansion to what they largely believe to be their territories. The fact is that, population increase of the Nuer in urban center,

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with Gambella town Mayor (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April 17, 2018

<sup>90</sup> Interview with former Head of Gambella town municipality (Nuer), conducted in Gambella, March 16, 2018

<sup>91</sup> Supra note

<sup>92</sup> Land dispute was between Mr. Ajalero Obang, a body guard of the former regional Vice President, Engineer Olero Opiew and Mr. Gatluak Buom Pal, former Vice Dean for Administration and Development, Gambella Teachers’ Education and Health Science College.

particularly Gambella town, is being conceived by many Anywaa as Nuer encroachment to their territories.<sup>93</sup>

Contrary, in views of Nuer, as pinpointed by Dereje (2011), land is state property or public asset and therefore, its allocation is the matter of state. Even now, Nuer believing that, all citizens in Gambella region and Gambella town in particular, have the right to acquire land or entitled to access land as it is stipulated in the constitution.<sup>94</sup> Article 40(3) of the FDRE Constitution of 1995, stipulated that, land is a common property of the people of Ethiopia and its ownership shall vest on state. In same manner, Article 41(3) of the Revised Constitution of GPNRS of 2002 also stipulates that land is a common property of the people of Gambella Regional State, and the right to ownership of urban or rural land is exclusively vested in state.

Yet, rural land resources served as important sources of tension between Anywaa and Highlanders. Largest mechanised agriculture that has been allocated to investors, predominantly from the center ignited severe tensions between the indigenous ethnic groups and Highlanders or federal government (Human Right Watch, 2012). According to Human Rights Watch, in Gambella region, land was awarded to foreign investors and Diaspora investors with no meaningful consultation and compensation to the local people (Ibid). Many Anywaa resisted the land transfer, as they believed that, it affected their mode of livelihood (Ibid).

### **5.5.3. Existence of the Rebel Group in Gambella Region**

The prevailing of the Anywaa rebel group called ‘Gambella People Liberation Front II’ (GPLF NO 2) is one of the external attributes that contribute to the ethnic conflicts in Gambella. This group had their support bases in Eritrea and South Sudan (Medhane, 2007). According to the Ministry of Federal Affairs 2004 cited in Medhane (2007: 18) “reports obtained from the regional police indicate that the Anyuak [sic] insurgents were openly given military training by the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Army (SPLA) administration at Pochalla” in [South] Sudan. Its support bases in Eritrea and by South Sudanese government categorizes them as external element to the conflict in the region.

Initially, the objective of this insurgency was that resources in the region are not fairly distributed and that Anywaa are not benefiting (Medhane, 2007). As Medhane (2007:17)

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<sup>93</sup> Interview with Gambella town Mayor (Anywaa), conducted in Gambella town, April 17, 2018

<sup>94</sup> Interview with former Head of Labor and Social Affairs (Nuer Woman), conducted in *Kebele* 01, March 11, 2018

noted, resource redistribution, “be it political power, land or water resources, was central to its antagonistic relations with the other actors in the region, ranging from the EPRDF and the Highlanders’ community to the various Nuer political groups”.

As ethnic based insurgent, GPLF NO 2 fighters have been targeting mostly non-Anywaa ethnic groups, mainly the Nuer and the Highlanders. This was true in various incidents in which they targeted non-Anywaa. For instance, they attacked bus that carried Highlander students in April, 2011 which consequently result to the death of twenty seven (27) students, from Gambella Teachers’ Education and Health Science College on their way back to school after their completion of apprenticeship in Godere *wereda* of the Majang Nationality Zone.<sup>95</sup> Recently, in December 2016 members of GPLF carried out a heinous attack on the passenger bus en route to Nuer Nationality Zone from Gambella town near Ellea *Kebele* of Itang Special *wereda*. In that attack, they had killed five passengers who were ethnically Nuer and wounded many others.

The rebel group was associated with Anywaa community in the region for two reasons. Once, in many occasions, they targeted only non-Anywaa ethnic members. Informant argued that, because their cheap targets were non-Anywaa, whenever they carry out attack, the relatives of the victims often sought of revenge against the innocent Anywaa, perceiving that they are the same people. Also, the moral supports that they received within the community in the region make it possible for the relatives of the victims to treat rebel as Anywaa and not independent armed group.<sup>96</sup>

This rebel group continue to fuel ethnic conflict since its inception in 2003 until 2016 through conducting heinous attacks against non-Anywaa. However, in 2017 some of the rebels decided to denounce rebellion and make peace with government. According to senior regional government in Gambella region about 148 fighters of GPLF NO 2 have switched their allegiance from the GPLF II and joined the government of Gambella regional state through facilitation of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>97</sup> Following their return, the regional government and the Ministry of Defence jointly gave them different trainings to enable their successful re-integration into the community.

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<sup>95</sup> Interview with a Highlander government official, conducted in Gambella town, April 18, 2018

<sup>96</sup> Interview with former member of GPDUP (Nuer), conducted in Gambella, March 19, 2018

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Deputy Head of Regional Security (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, April 20, 2018

**Figure 5.2:** The picture of the passenger bus attacked by the fighters of GPLF NO 2 in 2016



**Source:** The GPNRS Police Commission © 2018

#### **5.5.4. Influx of South Sudanese Refugee and Ethnic Conflicts**

Ethiopia has been hosting vast number of refugees from the then Sudan since 1960s, particularly in Gambella region (Dereje, 2011; Regassa, 2010). Most recently, the region is hosting over 384,166 refugees from South Sudan following the eruption of civil war on the 15<sup>th</sup> December 2013 (UNHCR, 2018). Although there are other refugees in Gambella region from different ethnic groups in South Sudan, majority of the South Sudanese refugees are Nuer (ARRA, 2018; UNHCR, 2018).

Presently, majority of South Sudanese are Nuer refugees constitute to 92% of the total refugee population in Gambella region followed by Anywaa, which represents 6% and other 2% of the South Sudanese refugee are the people from different ethnic groups, including Murle, Dinka and the people from ‘Greater Equatoria region’ in South Sudan (ARRA, 2018; UNHCR, 2018).

Studies conducted on the conflicts between the Nuer and Anywaa posited that issue of South Sudanese refugees also contributed to the ethnic conflict in Gambella region (Dereje, 2015; Fana, 2017; Yonas, 2014). As Yonas (2014:49) specifically reported, one of the “external structural element in the conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa, is related to the Nuer refugee from South Sudan. That is the case, according to Yonas (2014) because refugees’ competition for economic and political resources in Gambella, have affected domestic politics of the region. Besides, Fana (2017) also stressed that, the possibility that South Sudanese Nuer refugees in Gambella to acquire ‘Ethiopian citizenship’ in the near future via the same social and political processes will exacerbate the prevailing tension between the Nuer and Anywaa.

In fact, the influx of the Nuer refugees into Gambella region generated anxiety and negative perception among the Anywaa community of Ethiopia. This emanates from the larger historical narrative among the Anywaa community that the presence of the Nuer refugees in Gambella region led them (Anywaa) to be outnumbered by Ethiopian Nuer (Dereje, 2011; Fana, 2017). As such, the wider perception among Anywaa is that the present and continued influx of the South Sudanese Nuer refugee is a threat to their population in the region.

Largely, FGDs with Anywaa elders believed that, Nuer refugees are the problem to Anywaa, because, once they came in, they would not return to the place of their origin, which is South Sudan.<sup>98</sup> Sadly, Informant reacted that, “Nuer refugees in Gambella also involve in the regional political and they will increase the number of Ethiopian Nuer population as they already did it years ago.”<sup>99</sup> On the other hand, the researcher conducted a FGD with the refugees to make it sure whether the South Sudanese Nuer refugees have an intention to live permanently in Ethiopia. Thus, refugee’s individuals’ view through FGD, conducted in Jewi Refugee Camp, revealed that, they have little desire to stay permanently in Ethiopia. Thus, they reacted that, “our living in Ethiopia is not our choice and we wish to return back to the country of our origin, South Sudan, if conflict ended.”<sup>100</sup>

As issue of South Sudanese Nuer refugee become controversial and threat to Anywaa, key informant argued that why Anywaa of Ethiopia only considered the presence of the Nuer refugee in the region as problem while there were/are Anywaa who were/are also refugee in Gambella region.<sup>101</sup> Of course, there have been some Nuer refugee living in Ethiopia for decades and they have a right to acquire citizenship, in the same way Anywaa can also do that. For this reason, informant argued that “if there is any possibility for South Sudanese Nuer refugee to acquire Ethiopian citizenship, simply because they have their ethnic kin in Ethiopia that could be possible also to the Anywaa to acquire Ethiopian citizenship”.<sup>102</sup>

Reacting on the refugee issue, informant argued that if the presence of South Sudanese Nuer refugees is threat to Anywaa, they (Anywaa) wouldn’t kill the senior government workers in 2003. Informant has narrated that, triggered factor of the Anywaa-Highlanders conflict in 2003 was the killing of high profile government workers. Accordingly, informant mentioned that, one of the motives for the killing of the high profile government workers was to halt the

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<sup>98</sup> FGDs with Anywaa elders, conducted in Gambella town, *kebele* 05, April 23, 2018

<sup>99</sup> Interview with an Anywaa elder, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 03, March 19, 2018

<sup>100</sup> FGDs with South Sudanese Nuer refugees, conducted in Jewi Refugee Camp, April 30, 2018

<sup>101</sup> Interview with Nuer Woman- a former Women’s Unit, conducted in Gambella town, March 28, 2018

<sup>102</sup> Interview with the President of Gambella Youth Peace Forum (Nuer), conducted in Gambella, April 26, 2018

relocation plan of the refugees. At that time, UNHCR with collaboration of the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) planned to relocate refugees from Pugnido Camp to Udier - a predominantly Nuer area located in Lare *Wereda*. The relocation plan was in response to the refugee complaint about the attack on the refugee settlement in Pugnido and the killing of 32 Nuer refugees in Abobo by Anywaa. They were to be relocated from Anywaa Nationality Zone into another safe place. As a result, the ARRA chose Udier as the new camp where the refugees from Pugnido Camp were supposed to be relocated to. In this regard, some Anywaa were not happy for the relocation of the refugee camp because relocation of the camp to another place might have limited their opportunities that they accrued because they hosted refugees.<sup>103</sup>

Key informant admitted that, unlike Anywaa, Nuer have joined the refugee camps and got education in the refugee camps.<sup>104</sup> However, reasons that induced these individual nationals to join refugee camps varied markedly from Nuer to Anywaa. According to sources, individuals from the Nuer went to refugee camps for different reasons. Once, some of these people who went to refugee camps were simply to escape *Derg's* forceful conscription into military during its fight with rebels mainly, Tigray Peoples' Liberation Front (TPLF). Other reason for the Nuer to live in the refugee camps was insecurity issue in Gambella region most particularly, after the downfall of *Derg* individuals Nuer were targeted and being killed in Gambella Regional State by the then, Gambella People Democratic Movement (GPDM) an Anywaa-based revolutionary party.

In fact, the Anywaa were majority over the Nuer in 1984 census with a very narrow gap. By then, the Anywaa population in 1984 census Result of Illubabur Province were 28, 044 people, equivalent to 2.9% whilst, the Nuer population were 27, 078 represented by 2.8% of the total population (Dereje, 2011: 151). However, in 1994 Population and Housing Census, the Nuer outnumbered the Anywaa by 64, 473 and 44, 581 of total populations (CSA, 1994). Besides, in 2007 Population and Housing Census, the Nuer population also increased and outnumbered over the Anywaa by 143, 286 and 64, 986 respectively (CSA, 2007).

Nevertheless, this study argues that, population increment of Nuer over the Anywaa cannot be only associated or linked to the influx of the then Sudanese (now South Sudanese refugee)

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<sup>103</sup> Interview with Senior ARRA Staff (Nuer), conducted in Gambella town, April 19, 2018

<sup>104</sup> Interview with former Head of the Regional's Educational Bureau in 1998 (Nuer), March 19, 2018

into Gambella Regional State, but also different factors for population dynamics between the two ethnic groups need to be taken into account.

#### **5.5.4.1. Factors for Population Dynamics: The Nuer and Anywaa in Context**

In fact, change in population size, composition and distribution over time is the function of or associated to migration, fertility and mortality. Yet, this change of demographic can be a source of conflict; as Oberschall (2007: 14), stated “when a rapid numerical increase of subordinate groups relative to the size of the dominant group occurs, it is framed as a threat to its favored position and way of life”. The perception of threat from changing numbers and the relative size of ethnic groups has been usually and predictable source of ethnic conflict (Ibid).

Citing Kosovo as an example, Mertus (1999) cited in Oberschall (2007: 14) founded out that, within a period of three decades, which is from 1961 to 1991, the population of Albanian increased from 67 percent in 1961 to 82 percent in 1991 while the population of Serb decreased from 24 percent in 1961 to 10 percent in 1991 and the reason for that demographic change was because of the existence of factors for population dynamics and become a potential source of conflict.

With regard to ‘migration’ as a factor for population dynamics in Gambella region, ‘length of resident in current place’ was considered and studied by CSA 2007 to identify the number of migrants. Hence, in Anywaa Nationality Zone, about 46, 970 people from both sexes were reported as migrants while, in Nuer Nationality Zone, about 52, 227 people of both sexes were also reported as migrants (CSA, 2007: 171-172). Nevertheless, in this regard, migration is not considered as a significant factor for population dynamics, because, report of the 2007 Population and Housing Census shown that, migration in GPNRS is only ‘internal migration’ within Gambella Regional State’s *wereda* to *wereda* or within the same Ethno-Nationality Zone.

In reference to ‘fertility’, Children Ever Born per woman was considered as the main element for population change. ‘Children Ever Born’ (CEB) refers to the total number of children born alive or not alive by a woman. According to CSA (2007: 180-183), Average of Children Ever Born per woman in Anywaa Nationality Zone is 3.49 whereas, in Nuer Nationality Zone, Average of Children Ever Born (CEB) is 4.32 per woman. Nonetheless, a woman from Nuer ethnic group reputed the report of the census and claim that “an average of CEB per a

Nuer woman is more than that in which she has estimated the range as to be between 5-6 children born per a woman, informant claimed”.<sup>105</sup>

Concerning ‘mortality’, episodes of deaths in the household during the 12 months prior to the date of census were collected. Within Anywaa Nationality Zone, a sample size of 96, 473 from different household members of both sexes were collected from May 29, 2006 to May 28, 2007 and within this period, 2, 349 deaths at households were reported (CSA, 2007: 197). In the same manner, a sample size of 112, 350 households were also collected in Nuer Nationality Zone (CSA, 2007: 198). However, only 1, 168 deaths at household were reported despite the fact that Nuer Nationality Zone has a large sample size as compared with Anywaa Nationality Zone.

Considering this empirical evidence for population dynamics in Gambella Regional State, particularly ‘fertility rate’ and ‘mortality rate’; the finding shown that Nuer Nationality Zone have a high fertility and low deaths rates whilst in Anywaa Nationality Zone, the opposite is true. And as a result of this empirical evidence, it is certain and therefore to argue that, the Nuer population could outnumber the Anywaa population, depending on the factors for the population dynamics.

#### **5.5.5. Memories of Past Conflicts and Re-emergence of New Conflict**

Memories of the past conflicts between groups have always been important elements in shaping inter-ethnic relations (Oberschall, 2007). According to Oberschall (2007) often ethnic relations are burdened with collective myths, fears, and hostile emotions which are embedded in culture and socialization in which inter communal histories highlight past conflicts and threats from other groups. For that reason, even during periods of peaceful cooperation, incidents can spark hostilities that escalate rapidly to destructive conflict (Ibid).

In that context, memories of the past conflicts greatly contributed to the current or contemporary conflicts between the two groups (Nuer and Anywaa) in Gambella region. As Dereje (2011:18) asserted “it is true that the expansion of the Nuer in the second half of the nineteenth century and their encroachment on Anywaa territory provides a historical reference point for the contemporary Anywaa-Nuer conflict, so that, in this sense, past enmity enters significantly into contemporary actors’ definition of the conflict situation”.

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<sup>105</sup> Interview with Nuer Woman- a former Women’s Unit, conducted in Gambella town, March 28, 2018

For the Anywaa, memory of the historical past conflicts with Nuer contributed and resurfaced into the new conflict. These memories of past conflict are known in Anywaa language as '*Parwic ki lenye (thuunhi) moa no Opoodho*'.<sup>106</sup> In context of protracted ethnic conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa, informant argued that, "the historical expansion of Nuer, which has eventually led them to largely occupy Anywaa land including Gambella town, can contribute to the occurrence of the conflict".<sup>107</sup> In this regard, FGDs with Anywaa elders pointed that, the historical Nuer territorial encroachment on Anywaa land still in the mind and memory of many Anywaa.<sup>108</sup>

Conversely, FGDs with elders identified that memory of the past conflict can contribute to the re-emergence of the new conflict. Accordingly, for the Nuer, unaddressed issues of the past conflicts which are popularly known and called in Nuer as '*nyindiet*', contributed to their conflict with Anywaa. '*Nyindiet*' is a Nuer term which connotes issue (s) that were not addressed in the past and can be remembered and re-emerge into new conflict.<sup>109</sup> In the context of Nuer and Anywaa conflicts, FGD with Nuer elders refers *nyindiet* to the past conflicts issues which were not addressed including murders, assassinations and disappearance of the members of ethnic Nuer in the hands of believed or suspected Anywaa as well as cattle theft.

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<sup>106</sup> FGDs with Anywaa elders, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 05, April 23, 2018

<sup>107</sup> Interview with an Anywaa elder, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 03, March 19, 2018

<sup>108</sup> FGDs with Anywaa elders, conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 05, April 23, 2018

<sup>109</sup> FGDs with Nuer elders conducted in Gambella town, *Kebele* 01, April 24, 2018

## CHAPTER SIX

### 6. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 6.1. Summary

Inter-ethnic relation in Gambella region is characterised by peace and conflicts. Peaceful co-existence among the different communities, mainly between the Nuer and Anywaa was made possible by their shared traditions, values and the cross-cutting cleavages. Yet, despite the relative peaceful co-existence among ethnic groups in Gambella region, at certain occasions the region has been subjected to ethnic violent conflicts which fostered negative challenge on peaceful living condition among the ethnic groups, since 1991. The most common issue to the conflicts in post 1991 was the ‘question of the state ownership’ vis-à-vis grievances by the Nuer elites due to the ‘political disparity’ in the regional government’s political representations.

However, at different circumstances, federal government led by EPRDF and the government of GPNRS involved and attempted to resolve conflicts between the Nuer and Anywaa ethnic groups by using different approaches including merging the different ethno-political parties; through the granting of self-rule via the formation of ‘Ethno-Nationality Zones’ and New Power Sharing arrangement with aim to address the political disparity in the regional government of Gambella.

In addition, civil society organizations have also attempted and played crucial roles in peacebuilding efforts in Gambella Regional State. They include religious institutions, communities’ elders and Gambella Regional State youths. Their peacebuilding attempts and efforts were very crucial for the existence of the relative peace between the Nuer and Anywaa in Gambella Regional State since 2003-2015.

Notably, violent ethnic conflicts affected and broke the traditional social bonds and peaceful relations which resulted in separate settlement patterns in the multi-ethnic town of Gambella. At present, Nuer and Anywaa are living in different areas or *kebeles* within the Gambella town because of the fear and distrust among the ethnic groups that was caused by the conflicts.

Presently, there are several factors and causes to the violent ethnic conflict in Gambella Regional State including ‘ethnic elites’ access to political power’, control of the urban land

resource, existence of the Anywaa based-rebel group, using to target non-Anywaa ethnic groups in the region, issue of South Sudanese refugees, mainly Nuer and memory of the past conflict in the mind of ethnic groups which, in fact, contributed to the re-emergence and escalation of a new conflict between ethnic groups.

## **6.2. Conclusion**

Undeniably, violent ethnic identity-based conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa has fostered several implications and consequences on the development activities and on the lives of innocent people in GPNRS. In the past, territorial expansion by the Eastern Jikany Nuer and cattle theft were the main conflict issues between the two rival ethnic groups. However, in 1991 which mark the introduction of ‘ethnic-based federal arrangement system’ by EPRDF, which established GPNRS as a one among the nine regional states in Ethiopia; the dynamics and the nature of the conflicts between the Nuer and Anywaa has shifted and linked to the ‘question of state ownership’, ‘resources control’ and ‘political power struggle’ among the ethnic elites in the region. Hence, the involvement of ethnic elites in the conflict complicated attempted conflict resolutions and also affects and weakened attempted peacebuilding efforts, because of the political and ethnic dimensions in the conflict.

Despite the existing of this protracted violent conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa, there are no much studies conducted on peacebuilding in Gambella Regional State. Thus, for peace to exist in Gambella Regional State, much attention and further studies need to focus on peacebuilding in the region. Apparently, peacebuilding initiatives and conflict management attempted by different institutions with objectives to build peace and restore societal bonds that have been broken by this protracted ethnic conflict failed to address the root cause of conflict and bring sustainable peace in the region. The reason is that, peacebuilding attempts were not officially planned and organized, and also the programs were short term approach and lack of inclusivity as well.

Due to the existing of protracted violent conflicts in GPNRS, the region is now being exposed to the high poverty, lack of development, corruptions and backwardness, leading the ethnic elites to instigate and use ethnic identity as a tool to mobilize for violent conflict against other with intention to holds political posts to corrupt public funds or resources. Therefore, for peace to sustain in GPNRS it requires resolving the root cause of the conflict and identifying and addressing the present conflict issues between the ethnic groups the region. Past conflicts resolution attempts undertaken to resolve the Nuer and Anywaa violent conflicts failed to

address the root causes of the conflicts. Also, in the past conflicts resolution attempts, local communities in the conflicts were not consulted and not included in the conflicts resolution and management process in which, it has been a top-down approach in its nature. Hence, peacebuilding initiatives in Gambella Regional State requires a joint efforts and co-operations between federal government at national level, GPNRS government at sub-national level and at grassroots level by local communities affected by violent ethnic conflicts.

### **6.3. Recommendations**

Based on the findings and conclusion reached by this study, the study recommended the following recommendations in order to amicably resolve and manage conflict as well as to contribute for future sustainable peacebuilding efforts in Gambella Regional State.

- In fact, initiatives and programs undertaken by civil society organizations in peacebuilding were very significant in the restoration of peaceful ethnic relations in Gambella. However, they were short term approach and lack of inclusiveness. As a result, the study recommends that, for sustainable peace to exist in the region, peacebuilding initiatives or activities in the region should be continuous processes or long term approach. Moreover, women group as independent institution were not involved in the previous peacebuilding initiative or attempts in Gambella, while they were supposed to play a major role in peacebuilding. Therefore, their roles as independent group is very crucial in which, they need to deeply participate in peacebuilding activities because, most of the time, women were the victims, whenever there is a violent conflict.

- Presently, ethnic groups live in separate settlements patterns. Nuer and Anywaa live in different settlements areas in multiethnic towns. This settlement patterns served as an obstacle to peacebuilding in the region. Separates settlement patterns makes it easy for certain ethnic group to mobilize their members against opposing group. It also widens peacebuilding gap. Even now, there is weak interaction as well as free movement among people to the areas or parts of the town, which are dominated by their perceived opposing ethnic group. Therefore, the study recommended that, government of Gambella region need to strongly come up with new policy to randomly intermingle different ethnic groups in different areas when it plan to survey the town. In particular, town municipality need to play big role on this settlement pattern as it will allow different ethnic groups to create social bonds and harmony and restrain tendency to mobilize for violence conflict.

- It appeared that ethnic conflicts were intentionally created by ethnic entrepreneurs in the way that ethnic elites benefited from the conflict that make it easy for them to mobilize and ignite conflicts. In so far, whenever conflict occurs, government often resort to dismissing leaders. Considering that, dismissal of the leaders has been encouraging ethnic elites outside the existing political system to use conflict as a tool to attain political power. This study therefore recommends that, before any measure taken by the federal government or regional government, role of the responsible leaders in the conflict as well as their response to resolve and manage that conflict must be critically evaluated. In fact, dismissal of the leaders considered to involve in the conflict through political evaluation or *gemgema* is crucial however, the role and response of particular leader in the conflict must need to be thoroughly investigated before dismissing the leader.

- It also appears that some of conflict resolution mechanisms and measures that have been taken to resolve ethnic conflicts in Gambella region have so far do not take into account or address the root cause of the conflicts. Failures to address the root causes of the conflicts led to the re-emergence of another conflict. Until now, different conflict resolution mechanisms have been attempted that include the recent approach of the traditional conflict resolution mechanism. For instance, the recent traditional conflict resolution mechanisms through the payment of 150 cattle between the two ethnic groups for the first time as blood money and as a dispute settlement may not address the root cause of the present conflict, which seem more political than mere ethnic dimension. So there is a need to link the root causes of the conflict with its resolution mechanism. Even so, in their traditions, there was no inter-communal compensation in forms of ‘cattle’. Therefore, compensation through the payment of more cattle may not solve inter-ethnic violent conflict; instead, it will make matters worse because, one group may not possess more cattle as compared to other. As such, government should focus on maintaining the rule of law and the legal justice system. In fact, one of the principles of peacebuilding is a ‘human right and justice-centered’ in which violation on basic human right need to be addressed. However, what has been experienced in GPNRS is that, in some cases, legal justice was not imposed on individual perpetrator particularly when it becomes inter-communal crime. Most of the times, perpetrators were not identified and even if they were identified, they were not be brought into justice and this contributed to the tendency by ethnic groups to resort to the killing and revenge killing. So if those individuals who committed crimes are brought into justice, the family of the victims may not resort to the revenge killing. Thus, regional government need to enforce rule of law

and fair justice on any individual perpetrator or criminal, irrespective of his/her ethnic background and political affiliation.

- In most cases, the GPNRS' security forces such as 'GPNRS Police Forces' and 'GPNRS Special Forces' were involved into ethnic conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa alongside their ethnic groups, that negatively contribute to the escalation and perpetuating of a particular conflict, while their primary task or role is to maintain or uphold rule of law, peace and security in Gambella Regional State. And because, armed forces lack of 'professionalism' and 'nationalism'; the study recommended that, the GPNRS' Security forces need to be reformed and transformed into more professional army with aims to maintain and uphold the rule of law, peace and security and to protect the people of Gambella Regional State.
- More importantly and if possible, debate on the nature of citizenship in Gambella need to be changed in the academic circle. A number of academic debates seem to portray Nuer as 'late comers' and Anywaa as 'first comer'. As a result, the prevailing of academic debates on citizenship status has negatively captured public attentions and consequently, weakened the peacebuilding initiatives and process in the region. Therefore, there is a need to change the nature of current identity debates in which, future studies should focus much on peacebuilding in Gambella Regional State.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS GUIDE

#### Dear Informant!

Please be informed that the objective of this interview questions is to collect data for the purpose of writing Master of Arts Degree (MA) thesis on: “ETHNIC IDENTITY AND CONFLICT IN GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE: THE QUEST FOR PEACEBUILDING” in Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University. As such, I am requesting your positive cooperation and contribution for this study.

Note that any information that you provided will be used only for academic purpose. Unless you agree for your name to appear in the research paper, your name will remain in confidential.

#### Informant Profile

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Ethnicity \_\_\_\_\_ Wereda \_\_\_\_\_ Kebele \_\_\_\_\_  
Educational Background \_\_\_\_\_ Other Status \_\_\_\_\_

#### Interview Questions Guideline

**Note:** This study is designed to use semi-structure or unstructured interview method (open ended interview)

1. What are the commonalities/interactions that bind various ethnic groups in Gambella region?
2. What are the major causes of the conflict in Gambella Region since 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2016?
3. What are the structural causes of the recent ethnic conflict in Gambella?
4. If inter - ethnic conflicts occur in the region how do people resolve that conflict?
5. What are the conflict resolution mechanisms that were tried in the past?
6. Do women/church /elders and youth play any role in conflict resolution in Gambella region? If they do, what is the role of women/elders/church in conflict Management/ resolution?
7. Did the past conflict resolution mechanisms were successful or failed? If failed, what are the factors that contributed to their failure?

8. What are the institutions that have been involved in conflict management activities?
9. What are the institutions that have been involved in conflict resolution in the region?
10. What is needed to be done in order to avert /prevent conflict in Gambella?
11. Did federal or regional government try to change the basic interaction between fighting groups?
12. Why urban land in Gambella town is contested?
13. What is the role or policy of the regional government on land issue?
14. Do ethnic elites play roles in the conflict?  
If yes, what are those roles and how do they played?
15. Is the presence of the South Sudanese refugee affecting ethnic relations in the region?  
If yes, in what way?
16. Why ethnic groups settle separately in Gambella town?
17. Does this settlement pattern have an impact on inter-ethnic relations?  
If yes, in what way?
18. Do ethnic groups have social, economic and political interaction?
19. Is there any cultural attribute in ethnic conflict?
20. How can we build a sustainable peace in Gambella Region?

## APPENDIX 2: LIST OF KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEWED

**Note:** In this study, the researcher use coding system to protect the identity of informants

### Coding System for Nuer Informants

**NPE-** Nuer Political Elites, **NYM-** Nuer Youth Members, **NW-** Nuer Women, **NE-** Nuer Elders and **NRM-** Nuer Religious Member

S/N	Code Name	Date of Interview	Sex	Status
1	NPE	March 19, 2018	M	Former Head of Gambella Educational Bureau
2	NPE	March 19, 2018	M	Former Political Party member
3	NPE	April 23, 2018	M	Regional State Council Office Head
4	NPE	April 19, 2018	M	Senior Staff at ARRA
5	NPE	April 20, 2019	M	Deputy Head, GPNRS Security Bureau
6	NPE	February 22, 2018	M	Deputy Head, GPNRS Health Bureau
7	NPE	March 16, 2018	M	Former Head of Gambella Town Municipality
8	NYM	March 20, 2018	M	A member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum
9	NYM	February 09, 2018	M	Officer, Gambella Agricultural and Research Institute
10	NYM	March 17, 2018	M	Former Secretary, Gambella Youth for Peace Against Gun
11	NYM	April 26, 2018	M	President, Gambella Youth Peace Forum
12	NYM	March 20, 2018	M	An Eye witness, trigger factor of 2002 Nuer-Anywaa conflict
13	NW	March 06, 2018	F	Staff, Gambella Agricultural and Research Institute
14	NW	March 11, 2018	F	Former Head, Gambella Bureau of Social and Labor Affairs
15	NW	March 08, 2018	F	Women's Unit, Gambella Town Administration
16	NW	April 17, 2018	F	Former Women's Unit, Gambella Teachers' Education and Health Science College
17	NE	April 20, 2018	M	Deputy Head, Council of Elder
18	NE	March 25, 2018	M	Nuer Elder, <i>Kebele</i> 02
19	NE	March 24, 2018	M	Nuer Elder, <i>Kebele</i> 01
20	NRM	February 15, 2018	M	Former President of Gambella Presbytery Church, Western Synod
21	NRM	February 22, 2018	M	President of Gambella Presbytery Church, Western Synod
22	NRM	April 15, 2018	M	Church Secretary, Western Synod

### Coding System for Anywaa Informants

**APE-** Anywaa Political Elites, **AYM-** Anywaa Youth Members, **AW-** Anywaa Women, **AE-** Anywaa Elders and **ARM-** Anywaa Religious Member

S/N	Code Name	Date of Interview	Sex	Status
1	APE	April 17, 2018	M	Gambella Town Mayor
2	APE	February 21, 2018	M	Legal Expert, GPNRS Council Office
3	APE	April 25, 2018	M	Deputy Head, Bureau of Water and Irrigation
4	APE	March 13, 2018	M	Political Advisor, Regional Administration
5	APE	April 26, 2018	M	Secretary of the ruling Party, GPUDM
6	AYM	February 17, 2018	M	Former member of Gambella Youth for Peace Against Gun
7	AYM	April 24, 2018	M	Member of Gambella Youth Peace Forum
8	AYM	January 05, 2019	M	An Ordinary Anywaa Youth
9	AYM	February 16, 2018	M	Unemployed Anywaa Youth
10	AW	April 07, 2018	F	Women's Unit, Youth and Sport Bureau
11	AW	April 08, 2018	F	An Ordinary Anywaa Woman
12	ARM	February 17, 2018	M	Church Pastor of Gambella Eastern Synod of Mekane Yesus
13	ARM	February 17, 2018	M	Evangelist, Gambella Eastern Synod of Mekane Yesus
14	ARM	February 17, 2018	M	Church Member, Gambella Eastern Synod
15	AE	April 20, 2018	M	Head, Council of Elder
16	AE	April 22, 2018	M	Anywaa Elder, <i>Kebele</i> 03

### Coding System for Highlanders Informants

**HGO-** Highlanders Government official, **MHY-** Member of Highlander Youth, **HBP-** Highlander Business Person

S/N	Code Name	Date of Interview	Sex	Status
1	HGO	February 18, 2018	M	Government official, GPNRS
2	HGO	March 30, 2018	M	Government official, GPNRS
3	MHY	February 21, 2018	M	Student at Gambella Teachers' Education and Health Science College
4	MHY	February 20, 2018	M	Youth
5	HBP	April 23, 2018	M	Business Person, <i>Kebele</i> 02
6	HBP	March 30, 2018	M	Business Person
7	HBP	April 23, 2018	M	Business Person, <i>Kebele</i> 03
8	HBP	April 27, 2018	M	Business Person

### Appendix 3: List of Focus Group Discussions

#### First Focus Group Discussions with Anywaa Community Elders

**FGDACE-** Refer to the Focus Group Discussions with Anywaa Community Elders

S/N	Code Name	Date of Interview	Sex	Place of Interview	Status
1	FGDACE1	April 23, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 05, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
2	FGDACE2	April 23, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 05, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
3	FGDACE3	April 23, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 05, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
4	FGDACE4	April 23, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 05, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
5	FGDACE5	April 23, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 05, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
6	FGDACE6	April 23, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 05, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder

#### Second Focus Group Discussions with Nuer Community Elders

**FGDNCE-** Refer to the Focus Group Discussion with Nuer Community Elders

S/N	Code Name	Date of Interview	Sex	Place of Interview	Status
1	FGDNCE1	April 24, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 01, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
2	FGDNCE2	April 24, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 01, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
3	FGDNCE3	April 24, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 01, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
4	FGDNCE4	April 24, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 01, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
5	FGDNCE5	April 24, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 01, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder
6	FGDNCE6	April 24, 2018	M	<i>Kebele 01, Gambella Town</i>	Community Elder

#### Third Focus Group Discussions with South Sudanese Refugee

**FGDSSR-** Refer to the Focus Group Discussions with South Sudanese Refugee

S/N	Code Name	Date of Interview	Sex	Place of Interview	Ethnicity	Status
1	FGDSSR1	April 30, 2018	M	Jewi Refugee Camp	Nuer	Refugee
2	FGDSSR2	April 30, 2018	M	Jewi Refugee Camp	Nuer	Refugee
3	FGDSSR3	April 30, 2018	M	Jewi Refugee Camp	Nuer	Refugee
4	FGDSSR4	April 30, 2018	M	Jewi Refugee Camp	Nuer	Refugee
5	FGDSSR5	April 30, 2018	M	Jewi Refugee Camp	Nuer	Refugee
6	FGDSSR6	April 30, 2018	M	Jewi Refugee Camp	Nuer	Refugee