



INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES

IMPACTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES TO CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS
BY MURLE MILITIA INSURGENTS IN THE GAMBELLA REGIONAL STATE

BY: CHOUL MABIEL

NOVEMBER 2023

ADDIS ABABA

Addis Ababa University

Institute For Peace and Security Studies

Impacts And Government Responses to Cross-Border Attacks by Murle Militia
Insurgents in the Gambella Regional State

By

ChoulMabiel Gak

A thesis submitted to Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa
University in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the
Degree of Master of Arts in Peace and Security Studies

Advisor: Fana Gebresenbet (Ph.D.)

November, 2023

Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa University
Institute For Peace and Security Studies

Impacts and Government Responses to Cross-Border Attacks by Murle Militia
Insurgents in the Gambella Regional State

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work, not presented for any degree in any university and that all the sources used for it are duly acknowledged.

Approved by Board of Examiners:

Advisor: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

Internal Examiner: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

External Examiner: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

November, 2023

Addis Ababa

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor, Fana Gebresenbet (Ph.D.) for his guidance, support, and invaluable insights throughout my research journey. His expertise and dedication have been instrumental in shaping this study.

I would also like to thank the participants who took part in the interviews and shared their experiences and perspectives. Their willingness to contribute to this research has been crucial in gaining a comprehensive understanding of the cross-border attacks by the Murle militias, and the government response in the Gambella region.

Furthermore, I am grateful to the local community members, government officials, and security personnel who provided their time and assistance during data collection. Their cooperation and willingness to share information have been indispensable in the successful completion of this study.

I would like to acknowledge the support and encouragement of my family and friends who have stood by me throughout this journey. Their unwavering belief in my abilities has been a constant source of motivation.

Tables of contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Background of the study.....	1
1.3. Research objective.....	6
1.3.1. General Objective	6
1.3.2. Specific Objectives	6
1.4. Research Questions	7
1.5. Significance of the Study	7
1.6. Scope of the Study	7
1.7. Limitations of the Study.....	8
1.8. Organization of the Thesis	8
CHAPTER TWO	9
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
2. Introduction.....	9
<i>Meanings and Concepts of Conflict</i>	9
2.1. Definition of Conflict.....	10
2.1.1. The Causes of Conflict.....	11
2.2. Historical Overview of Border Attacks in Ethiopia	14
2.2.1. The Impact of Cross-Border Attacks	18
2.2.2. Government Response to Borderlands Attacks.....	23
2.2.3. Trends and dynamics of Murle attacks in the border regions of Gambella.....	25
2.2.4. Empirical Related Review	27
2.2.5. Research Gap	29
CHAPTER THREE	30
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	30

3. Introduction.....	30
3.1. Description of the Study Area	30
3.2. Research Design.....	32
3.3. Selection of Research Sites.....	33
3.3.1. Selection of Research Participants	34
3.4. Techniques and Tools for Data Collection	37
3.5. Methods of Data Analysis	38
3.6. Ethical Considerations	38
CHAPTER FOUR.....	39
RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	39
4. INTRODUCTION.....	39
4.1. Demographic Characteristics	40
4.2. The Causes of the Murle Cross-Border Attack against the Nuer and Anywaa	
41	
4.2.1. The Root Causes of Murle Cross-Border Conflict against the Nuer	
Ethnic Group.....	41
4.2.2. The Major Causes of Conflict between Murle and Anywaa.....	59
4.2.3. The consequence of the conflict between Murle and Anywaa	61
4.2.4. Cross-border conflicts	66
5.1.1. Consequences of cross-border attacks	70
5.1.2. The government's response to the attacks.....	77
5.3. Discussion	82
6.3. Summary and Conclusion.....	87
6.4. Recommendation	88
References.....	90
APPENDIX I: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE.....	95

ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
ICJ	International Court of Justice
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugee
IEP	Institute for Economics and Peace
GPNRS	Gambella People's National Regional State
CSA	Central Statistic of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus group discussion.
AAU	Addis Ababa University
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
GPAA,	Great Pibor Administrative Area

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the cross-border attacks by Murle militia in the Gambella region, focusing on their impact on communities and the Gambella Regional state government's response. The study uses a qualitative approach, interviews, and focus group discussions with key stakeholders. The findings reveal severe socio-economic and psychological impacts on the affected communities, including loss of lives, displacement, property destruction, and disruption of livelihoods. The government has implemented security measures and community-based initiatives to promote peacebuilding and reconciliation. However, challenges persist, such as porous borders, limited resources, and complex conflict. The study recommends a comprehensive approach that combines robust security measures with sustainable development initiatives, strengthening border security, enhancing intelligence sharing, and fostering regional cooperation. Long-term investments in education, healthcare, and economic opportunities are also necessary to address the root causes of the conflict and promote lasting peace. The findings offer valuable insights for policymakers, security agencies, and humanitarian organizations involved in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.

Keywords: cross-border attacks, Murle militia, child abduction, impact & government response

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Among all the continents, Africa has frequently been the epicenter of bloody conflicts and battles. The frequency of violent armed conflicts in Oromia, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, SNNP, and Tigray regional states indicates that violent armed conflicts have been common in Ethiopia in recent years. Many systemic core causes of cross-border military confrontations may be traced back to colonial actions, such as the establishment of arbitrary borders in Africa (Mossa, 2013). For instance, South Sudan and Ethiopia have long shared borders and ethnic groups with similar cultural identities, customs, and patterns of sustenance. Nnoli (1998) defines ethnic conflict in Africa as "contradictions arising from differences in interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations, perceptions, and tendencies." (Nnoli, 1998. p, 6). He admits that these contradictions occur at all levels of society, including the individual, group, institution, and nation, and that "it is difficult to conceive of history outside the resolution of conflicts" (ibid.).

Many experts debate the African area's insecurity, with some claiming that the Horn of Africa is the most insecure region (Mesfin, 1999), (Markakis, 1998), and (Tasew, 2017). In the Horn of Africa, insecurity manifests itself in a variety of forms, including intimidation and warfare within or between countries (Dereje and Hoehne, 2010). The Al-Shabaab organization has been verified as the most terrorist group in the world capable of committing major violence in the area (Tasew, 2017). Furthermore, the Horn of Africa has a high death toll, which could lead to conflicts and breakdowns within communities, as well as the loss of resources needed for subsistence, a decline in economic stability, and political difficulties in certain areas (Wepundi, 2012).

Resource shortage is a common cause of conflict, whether violent or not, throughout Eastern Africa. In actuality, starvation and drought are the seasons when a cattle raiding occurs more frequently in pastoralist areas. With the animals becoming fewer in number, the raiders are now concentrating on any supplies that could help them live in this hazardous environment. The

resulting mortality toll, property damage, population displacement, and development endeavors are generally considered unbearable by both local and worldwide opinion.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) pact signed in Egypt's capital city (Cairo) in 1964 focused on borderland concerns between colonial regions. The party said that the typical colonial boundaries in the Horn of Africa were experiencing numerous violent difficulties; therefore, border laws were established to avoid intimidation against human life, which may address the instability of wellbeing (Tasew, 2017).

However, the borderlands' fragility, instability, and porousness render them open to smugglers and illegal commerce, inflaming tensions and leading to cross-border conflicts (Kurimoto et al., 2002). As a result, for the purpose of the state, the connection between the center and the borderland in the periphery about issues related to development, political-economic inclusion, infrastructure, and other public service allocation in the regions is severed.

Ethiopia and South Sudan are neighbors that may share bordering regions, notably the Gambella region; as a result, this border is relatively porous and easily broken. The majority of the people residing along that borderland area are Nuer, Murle, Opo, and Anywaa, all of which are Nilotic tribes with shared socioeconomic and cultural activities (Kurimoto et al., 2002). The Nuer and Anywaa tribes have been split by two nations that share a border with South Sudan and Ethiopia; as a result, the majority of Nuer and half of the Anywaa live in present-day South Sudan.

Some academics identified the Nuer and Murle tribes as nomadic pastoralists who may benefit from livestock, which led to movement from place to place, including border crossings for cow grazing. Long ago, the Nuer people were cow lovers; they used to keep their livestock safe and not lose them. Cattle, on the other hand, are required for a variety of survival needs, such as dowry for marriage and compensation for any wrongdoing, as well as crime and financial objectives. Livestock also holds cultural significance for the Nuer and Murle tribes, symbolizing wealth, power, and social status within their communities. Additionally, the nomadic lifestyle allows these tribes to maintain a strong connection with their ancestral and they have the right to possess resource in any claimed area.

They properly equip themselves to have a weapon to protect their cattle. Accordingly, the Nuer is the first tribes to be armed early, compared with the Murle tribes, and it became possible to use guns for different functions. The Nuer and Murle tribes always clash during the cattle raid period. The Murle tribe is raiding cattle from their neighbor's tribe (Gatluak, 2014). Murle ethnic groups mostly attacked both neighboring tribes, like the Nuer, Dinka, and Anywaa tribes, in the sack of the cattle raiding during the previous time, and in recent years, they have continued to abduct children from their neighbors (Wepundi, 2012).

Although it has happened in the past, cross-border violence between ethnic groups along the border between Ethiopia and South Sudan has increased recently (Tasew, 2017). The truth is that the Murle and Nuer tribes have historically engaged in combat during livestock raids in both Ethiopia and South Sudan. In recent years, the widespread availability of weaponry from Sudan's civil war has contributed to the severity and prevalence of these cattle raids by the Murle militia.

Thus, Gambella is a region that separates west Ethiopia from South Sudan by a boundary ranging from 50 to 31 kilometers. (Sandstrom, 2016). Since 2016, the Murle robber group from South Sudan has raided the Nuer zone in the Gambella area and scared 13 communities in Jekow and Lare Woredas. An estimated 182 individuals were killed in those areas, 108 people were kidnapped and almost 2,000 heads of cattle were seized by the Mural insurgency (Tasew, 2017).

Even though the porous borders are linked with a bad local government administration, which may contribute to upgrading corruption, disabling the policy, illegal trading, and smuggling of products, it also results in the circulation of arms and border militia insurgents within the land (Wepundi, 2012). Hence, illicit trade is used because traders' profit from the opened borders with no tight security by circulating small arms and exchanging light weapons (ibid.). This explosion of small arms and the exchange of light weapons is a very serious hazard to peace and security in pastoral areas. However, Tasew (2017) notes that more than a few countries in the Horn of Africa were suffering from cross-border attacks by militia insurgents. Concerning this, militia insurgents are local armed groups who may fight to find or fulfill their interests; sometimes their objectives seem unclear.

Cross-border conflict is exciting because different forms of conflict may involve a multifaceted conflict scheme (Kassahun, 2013). Land and cattle, according to Gordon (2014), are the primary sources of income and subsistence for borderland groups. Furthermore, cross-border attacks in entity counties are always worsened by inter-state conflicts of different levels and intensities, which may occur at varying levels. Easily, it says, cross-border attacks are closely aligned with the Horn of Africa. Cross-border military conflicts simply spill out across different boundaries, causing conflicts between countries, which may lead to country-to-country conflict (Redie, 2013). Respectively, the linked circumstance is often the fact that the country or region is winning the method to develop better relations with their neighbors (Mossa, 2013).

According to Adedeji (1999), the border dispute interface between issues related to ethnic identity, competitiveness, and other external factors (drought and climate change, weapon proliferation, the involvement of armed opposition groups, political change, and administration boundary reform) often enhances the opportunity for armed conflicts in the border areas between ethnic tribes in the Gambella district. According to Dereje (2013), the Ethiopian-South Sudan border appears to be a hotspot of cross-border violence, where ethnic (inter-communal) armed conflict sparked by coordinated insurgencies continues to stifle socio-economic development in the Gambella region.

For the sake of sharing borders that benefit living communities, Gambella can be seen as one of the border regions with a high potential to foster mutually beneficial economic integration between Ethiopia and South Sudan, despite historical ethnic tension across borders (Adeyomo, 2000). Gambella is one of Ethiopia's multiethnic regional nations, with five ethnic groups: Nuer, Anuak, Majang, Opo, and Komo. The Nuer ethnic group is the largest (40 percent), followed by the Anuak ethnic group. The highlanders Amhara, Tigrean, Oromo, Kambaata, Shakacho, and Kafficho were among the ethnic groups who lived in the area (CSA, 2007). In turn, residents of the Gambella region share not only boundaries but also cultural identities and socioeconomic trends with other South Sudanese communities such as the Nuer, Maban, Murle, Dinka, Shilluk, and Anywaa. In the past decades, ethnic disputes have arisen over the use and regulation of resources such as land, water, wetlands, and wild animals available in South Sudan as well as Ethiopia (Azar, 1990).

The Ethiopian government has responded to the attack from Murle insurgents. It launched an army to cross the border by targeting the suspected militia from Murle tribes (Tasew G, 2017). Ethiopia's national army has deeply entered South Sudan land through the Boma site, and they clashed back the abducted victims from the attackers which majority of whom are under aging. Furthermore, that great achievement was the mean of upgrading the security in the Gambella and their neighborhood country South Sudan. As a result, this research aims to investigate the causes of cross-border conflict, as well as the government's response to abducted victims of armed violence in the Gambella region.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

Armed conflict is one of the historical issues among communities living in the Horn of Africa region (Wepundi, 2012). Cattle raiding, on the other hand, has become common among pastoralist societies, posing a danger to the progress and well-being of Ethiopia's peripheral regions, including the Gambella region (Tasew, 2017). Since the 2000s, several cross-border attacks by Murle-armed ethnic insurgents from South Sudan have been recorded in the Gambella region's territorial Woredas, posing a threat to the region's socio-economic growth. Furthermore, the Murle militia attack in the Nuer and Anywaa zones resulted significant human and property loss in the areas (Gatluak, 2014). In 2016 the Murle insurgency groups from the Boma state in South Sudan attacked the Nuer zone in the Gambella region, and thirteen villages were affected by the war. Therefore, cross-border attacks are frequently occurring in the Gambella region, as well as the Nuer zone's and Anywaa zone's border with South Sudan. The Murle militia groups are always raiding cattle, abducting children, and ladies, and losing many souls around the Nuer zone, and Anywaa Zone peripheral areas (Tasew, 2017).

Historically, Ethiopia's government, and other countries in the Horn of Africa, has suffered from cross-border attacks and has tried to prevent the abduction of children and women, cattle raiding, illicit trade, smuggling, and other unlawful work that result in problems in the area (Tasew, 2017). What are observed are still high attacks from the Murle insurgency? Some of the studies noted that cross-border attacks must be prevented whenever there is good government administration in the country (Tronvoll, 2010).

In the late 1980s, inter-ethnic communities and conflict spillover had devastating effects in greater Akobo and Jekow, as cited by UNHCR (2020). According to what has been said above, the Murle militia attack in the Nuer zone and Anywaa zone is increasing, which has resulted in great destruction to the communities. This is also related to the lack of good security and the ignored responsibilities to respond to that issue from the Gambella government administration. Different researchers have tried to study the cross-border attacks by the Murle militia in the Gambella region and different countries around the globe in various sectors (Dereje, 2013; Mossa, 2013; Gatluak, 2014; Tasew, 2017; UNHCR, 2020). Regretfully, there has been no study done on the effects and reactions of the government to the cross-border assaults carried out by insurgents from the Murle militia in the Gambella region.

In response, the Ethiopian government freed kidnapped children; nevertheless, neither livestock nor combat victims received compensation. The number of abducted children, cattle raids, and human soul losses continues to rise despite efforts by the regional and federal governments to stop the issue by sending the army to the targeted border areas where there is access to murder in territories. Therefore, the goal of this study is to look into the cross-border attacks of those militants from the Murle militia carried out in the Gambella region, as well as the effects and official reactions.

1.3. Research objective

1.3.1. General Objective

This study's primary objective is to discuss the cross-border violence employed by the Murle insurgency, as well as to provide an overview of the attack's effects and the government's response

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives guiding this study will be below:

- 1) To scrutinize the causes of cross-border conflict in the border areas of the Gambella region.
- 2) To determine the impact of cross-border conflict in the border areas of the Gambella regional region.

- 3) To analyze the government response to reduce the associated effects of cross-border conflict in the border areas of the Gambella region.

1.4. Research Questions

- 1) What are the roots causes of the cross-border conflict in the border areas of the Gambella region?
- 2) What are the impacts/consequences of cross-border violence facing civil populations in the border areas of the Gambella region?
- 3) What are the government responses to cross-border conflict and the effectiveness of these responses to the associated crisis of cross-border violence?

1.5. Significance of the Study

This research would provide data that can be accessed by a variety of government agencies. Although this report can have useful evidence for scholarly purposes, it also acts as baseline knowledge and proposes proposals for resolving the ongoing inter-ethnic armed violent conflict. The results of this report included a detailed list of causes that trigger cross-border violence as well as strategies for preventing it. Although cross-border violence in the Gambella regional state border areas is largely contextualized and decentralized, this analysis would propose a realistic response plan for local authorities to use in the event of a humanitarian crisis in the region.

1.6. Scope of the Study

This research was conducted in areas vulnerable to cross-border conflicts, with an emphasis on the Nuer Zone, and Anywaa Zone, since cross-border violence has a long history in these areas. However, it has been a new and pressing problem in the Lare, Jekow, and Makuey districts (Woreda) in the Nuer Zone and Dimma and Jor in Anywaa Zone in recent years. Most theories of conflicts and cross-border attack concepts were considered. In addition, the paper is also a sample bound; it only takes respondents from those who are victims of cross-border violence, traditional politicians, and faith-based organizations, as well as the local government and

partners that participate in humanitarian response teams, who were considered and interviewed during field surveys to collect specific data.

1.7. Limitations of the Study

Gambella is the only region in Ethiopia that remains undeveloped among all regions and is also insecure. The lack of simple infrastructure is evident, and it limiting field surveys, telecommunication, data collection, and relevant knowledge in the area due to the incompetence of the local administration. Additionally, the researcher faced challenged of resources constraint (both time and money) are expected to be a restraint in the collection of sufficient data. On the other hand, this research was conducted in the Gambella border zones, where poverty and ethnic tensions are present, as well as a lack of better access to other areas and a good functioning local administration.

1.8. Organization of the Thesis

The major components of this study are defined in a sequence of five chapters in this thesis. The first chapter would cover the study's context, issue statement, goals or motives, hypothesis/research problems, meaning and scope/limitations, and a summary of the field under investigation. Chapter two, on the other hand, introduced a literature review and focused more on the related subject.

In addition, chapter three discusses the research processes, approaches, and strategies that would be used to collect and interpret the data needed to meet the research objectives. As a result, the fourth chapter used maps and texts to show the data interpretation and findings. Finally, chapter five offers an overview of the study outcomes as well as a conclusion. Similarly, this chapter was also commended with a list of recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This section presents the definition and concept, sources of cross-border attacks, theoretical discussion of the study, empirical analysis of the study, the conceptual framework of the study, and a critical review of literature together with literature related to the variables and objectives of the study. The review of related literature focuses mainly on the cross-border attacks by the Murle militia in the Gambella region: impacts and government responses.

Meanings and Concepts of Conflict

The nature of a dispute, its causes, and its resolution techniques has piqued the interest of numerous academic fields. In order to summarize some of the key theoretical ideas on how conflict can be defined, structured, and why it occurs, the sections that follow present an examination of a selection of conflict literature. It's crucial to keep in mind that each academic discipline developed its own viewpoints and approaches for researching the controversy as a result of the lack of an established methodology.

Conflict is seen as a part of power relations in political science, but class struggle is seen as the root cause of Marxist and Gramscian thought. Economists, on the other hand, see conflict as the product of reasonable decision-making by a person trying to increase his or her usefulness with a limited supply of resources, and they may also argue that conflict and rivalries are the same thing (Farrel, 2012; Johnson, 2003). As a result, conflict is not only a complicated matter, but the vast range of perspectives on the topic from various disciplines further complicates the picture. Most of the conflict literature, on the other hand, appears to be focused on the three main social sciences: sociology, politics, and economics (Mengistu, 2015). In contrast, this research aims to examine the contrasting and complementary theories proposed by the various disciplines for the study of conflict rather than identify the "right discipline for review.

2.1. Definition of Conflict

There are a variety of conflict definitions in the literature, but there is no single standardized term that scientists have unanimously agreed on. A state of dispute or animosity between two or more parties is known as conflict (Gordon, 2014). This means that there is no agreement between two or more parties in places such as two comparisons on the same subject. Conflict is described by (Rolandsen et al. 2012) as the pursuit of incompatible aims. Conflict is described as a collision path or opposition to an established viewpoint, stand, or stance.

Others see rivalry as a battle for ideas and rights to limited rank, influence, and wealth in which competitors try to neutralize, kill, or eradicate each other. Conflict is described as a potential conflict of interest or a perception that the parties' present goals cannot be met (Salih et al., 2001). Conflicts, on the other hand, are unavoidable in daily life, and their settlement will lead to positive progress (Bercovitch, et al., 2009).

Conflicts can range from domestic disputes to those orchestrated or instigated by pressure groups and social movements (environmentalists, feminists, and so on) up to armed military conflict; they can also exist between members of the same society, cultures, and higher levels of power, as well as between national governments. Johnson (2003) differentiated between Farrel's concept of "internal confrontation" and Johnson's concept of "conflict as behavior" (2012). The former is thought to be too linked to class conflict and physical abuse, while the latter, according to the report, provides for nonviolent disagreements of views and beliefs. Wallace (1993) distinguishes between non-coercive and peaceful disputes focused on the use of force.

Mitchell (1991) describes conflict as the opposite condition of production: the force is used to acquire goods rather than using manpower to make them. In addition to this conflict, achieving the desired goals is necessary to improve the position of one part and make the environment conducive (Farrel, 2012). Conflict is the factor that governs relationships, according to Simmel (in Coser, 1972:34), and it is also noted that society keeps itself together by forming an agreement between communities. For the reasons above, this would not be the only means of causing conflict among people as well as communities. (ibid)

2.1.1. The Causes of Conflict

In the literature, there are several overlapping worldviews on what causes conflict, with relevant discussions and hypotheses centered on: political and institutional influences (such as poor state structures, elite power struggles, political isolation, social contract collapse and corruption, and identity politics); resource and environmental factors (such as greed, scarcity of natural capital, and unjust resource exploitation); and societal factors (such as injustice, alienation, and marginalization, lack or loss of social stability, and poverty) (Haider, 2014).

Furthermore, since the causes of conflict are different and nuanced, analyzing individual conflict scenarios is difficult. Nonetheless, conflict theories have progressed with their attempts to simplify the causes by categorizing each case. The systemic theory of conflict, Marxist theory, international capitalist theory, realist theory, biological theory, and psychological theory of conflict are among the theories that explain the causes of conflict (Farrel, 2012). Structural theory was considered in this analysis because it tries to understand conflict because of social tensions that occur as individuals fight for limited resources. The fundamental point of this sociological theory is that tension is integrated into the system or organization of societies. Mitchell (1991) suggested that structural conflict theory incorporates all relevant drivers of conflict, such as social exclusion, deprivation, class differences, discrimination, political marginalization, gender imbalances, racial disparity, economic exploitation, and so on (Oakland, 2005).

Like systemic theories, hierarchical and proximate sources of conflict have been identified. The origin or long-term fundamental forces that have been fabricated into a society's rules, institutions, and policies are referred to as structural causes of conflict. However, the average cause of conflict, known as immediate causes, is a more recent cause that alters more rapidly yet exacerbates systemic causes that intensify violent conflict. According to Johnson (2003), studying conflict necessitated the use of a variety of methods to capture critical factors such as socio-economic issues, politico-cultural activities, personality formations, historical circumstances, and social norms.

The systemic analysis of the causes of armed conflict and political activity regarding conflict resolution, which began in the 1950s and 1960s, is a relatively new phenomenon (Farrel et al., 2013). The causes, mechanisms, and extent of conflict are both determined by social systems (shaped by hierarchical interactions and value differences), as well as internal and external factors. Conflict theory and methods, on the other hand, are knowledge and ideas of social conflict in all societies, as they exist not only in social science but also in theological, legal, political, and metaphysical structures (Farrel et al., 2013). While psychologists described intra-personal conflict as any dispute between or among actors. Sociologists suggested intra-groups and inter-personal or group conflict. Conflict is classified by political scientists and historians as either an inter-ethnic or intra-state conflict, as well as a foreign conflict.

Others classified conflict into two types: internal (or intrastate/ethnic conflict) and foreign (or interstate/ethnic/group conflict) conflict (Farrel et al., 2013). An international war is fought between two or more countries and includes troops from several countries (Raleigh, 2010). Internal (or intra-state) war is violence in which a state's institutions are resisted by forces within the state attempting to undermine such authorities using force, and it exists mostly within the boundaries of such nations (Lasswel, 1991). Much research has concentrated on domestic (intrastate or ethnic) conflicts, neglecting to consider how regional (extraterritorial or interstate/ethnic) conflicts affect the peace and well-being of another country. Some of these experiments, on the other hand, are conceptualized from the viewpoints of political science and political economy to explain different facets of conflicts.

Internal (intrastate) conflict, on the other hand, happens where certain 'national' cultures or communities are ideologically or politically divided along racial lines or ethnic aspects such as ethnicity, language, and faith (Mossa, 2013). Internal conflicts have prevailed in Ethiopia, displacing other forms of dispute-regional conflict-around the world (Johnson, 2003). As a result, it is important to remember that Ethiopia has undergone a wide range of conflicts, except for a brief period of internationalized domestic strife. It's worth noting that in recent years, Ethiopia has seen either domestic (intrastate/ethnic) or foreign (interstate/ethnic) violence.

According to Gordon (2014), conflict can be studied at three levels: interpersonal, group/community, and global, as well as how these levels intersect with one another. It is

thought that conversation will devolve into a violent confrontation where there aren't enough outlets for debate and disagreement since it breeds opposition voices and firmly held concerns that can't be understood or answered in situations of insecurity, Inequality, and terror (Evans, 1940).

Conflict, according to Mengistu (2015), is a relationship between states or competing groups within a state that involves subjective hostility or friction reflected in subjective economic or military hostilities. The implications of conflict are arguable and irreconcilable in terms of these premises. Conflict is described as the result of inequality and deprivation resulting from a social structure that favors certain races, ethnicities, genders, and nationalities over others and institutionalizes unequal access to education, wealth, and recognition (Farrell et al., 2013). Conflict, deviant behavior features, and patterns that do not fit society's standards include rustling, raiding, stealing, robbery, and thuggery. Nnoli (1998) defines ethnic conflict in Africa as "contradictions arising from differences in interests, ideas, ideologies, orientations, perceptions, and tendencies" (Nnoli, 1998. p, 6). He admits that these contradictions occur at all levels of society, including the individual, group, institution, and nation, and that "it is difficult to conceive of history outside the resolution of conflicts" (ibid.). As a result, numerous scholars have questioned the meaning and appropriateness of the terminology and concepts of bandit, banditry, and conflict, and their meaning and interpretation are far from universal.

Although conflict connotes hostility or physical violence, it may also lead to actual animosity when there is a target incompatibility or perception or value discrepancies of an objective upsurge. Interestingly, the conflict and attack nexus has sought to analyze standard expressions that researchers use to characterize the conflict to improve philosophical interpretation of the subject matter.

Kydd (2004) described a collection of conflict vocabularies that can be used interchangeably. Discord, struggle, contest, strife, antagonism, controversy, clash, competition, contest, contention, brawl, fisticuff, fight, fighting, quarrel, fighting, and war are examples of these. Conflict exemplifies an actual state of disconnect among parties on a prevailing problem in politics; moreover, conflict narrowly exemplifies an established state of disconnect among parties on a prevailing issue.

Some scholars have recognized that conflict does not always mean war and that not all conflict scenarios are war situations. According to Leenco (2004), conflict is a state of mutually declared aggression between two or more groups carried out by conventional (uniformed and armed) soldiers under the control and knowledge of a third (neutral) party. Therefore, cross-border conflict always occurs as a clash between two tribes or groups (Leenco, 2004). Thus, only the principle of war between sovereign states was accepted by the classic rule of war (Mitchell, 1991).

However, internal conflicts, such as insurrection or insurgency, were not considered a war under international law but rather a civil war under the applicable national law (Mitchell, 1991). The standard definition of interstate war was based on the formal and arbitrary requirements of a unilateral declaration of war or ultimatum by the sovereign. Border conflict definition and description is a challenge because it necessitates theoretically systematized information. The sphere of empirical experience known as conflict occurs as a social and technological force formed by civilization's progress. As a result, it is important to characterize conflict at a scientific level that allows for a deeper definition of cross-border conflict and specific aspects of its expression from a scientific standpoint. Despite their decentralized origin as internal conflicts, cross-border attacks are expected to become more widespread in the future. (Tasew 2017)

2.2. Historical Overview of Border Attacks in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is one of the world's oldest countries, with a tradition of occupation marked by territorial skirmishes over frontier areas dating back some years. In the east, Ethiopia and Somalia shared a border over the Haud and Ogaden areas, making it one of the historical military conflicts in the 1960s and 1970s, which was followed by insurgencies from the Northern provinces (Carver et al., 2020). The Ethiopian-Somali border conflict was viewed as a pre-emptive war that began shortly after Somalia's independence to form Greater Somalia. The aim of the conflict was ignored because it interrupted the relationships of two neighboring countries, Ethiopia, and Kenya, as well as their borderland associations (Tesfaye Molla, 2015). However, after diplomatic political maneuvering to annex Eritrea ended the border dispute, relations between the two countries worsened again, resulting in a border conflict in 1998.

Local and regional tensions between both state and non-state parties have impacted Ethiopia's Gambella region, which borders South Sudan. Border disputes in Ethiopia's western regions, according to Mossa (2013), are between indigenous communities that are influenced and driven by dynamics such as resource shortages, ethnic origin, and political and civil war spillover from neighboring Sudan. Refugees and cross-border migration, according to Johnson (2009), have destabilized the Ethiopia-Sudan border. Similarly, continuing tensions in South Sudan because of state-building processes are now contributing to a slew of new local and national-scale conflicts.

Growth and socio-economic change, on the other hand, continue to play a major role in the escalation of frontier or ethnic armed conflict. According to Mossa (2013) and Dereje (2010), the introduction of federalism in 1991 resulted in frontier conflicts along ethnic lines. The new state, with its federal structure, was meant to bring peace and change, but instead, it exacerbated historical and territorial inter-ethnic boundary tension across the region. In Ethiopia, however, the trend toward ethnic-based democratic institutions has dominated the political spectrum. Regardless of the cause or number of conflicts Ethiopia has been engaged in, this research focused on cross-border (Murle) attacks rather than another conflict since they are the most common form of violence in the Gambella region.

Gatluak (2014) examined some of the most common cross-border and interethnic disputes that occurred in various parts of Ethiopia. The Silte-Gurage conflict, Wagagoda language-related aggression, Sheko-Mejang conflict, Nuer-Anuak conflict, Berta-Gumuz conflict, Gedeo-Guji animosity, Oromo-Amhara conflict, Barona-Gerri conflict, and Oromo-Somali conflict are among the violent conflicts. Along with disfranchisement and political exclusion of some ethnic groups from the decision-making process critical for resource allocation and the growth of the nation, ethnic origin tended to be the primary factor used extensively for mobilization purposes by political elites.

Since its inception as a federalist state in the 19th century, Ethiopia, according to (Mossa, 2013), has experienced many conflicts related to border disputes and ethnic origin. The analysis highlighted several significant territorial disputes that Ethiopia had encountered with ethnic

sentiments, such as the Eritrea-Ethiopian crisis in 1998 and 2000 and the Ethiopia-Somalia boundary dispute over the Ugandan side desert area from 1964 to 1978.

Though Ethiopia's experience of border strife was a great chance to solve the borderland dispute, on the other hand, it does not have a monopoly on any of the events it has experienced, as others have been marred by significant brutality and social conflagration. Since independence, many African countries have been at odds with one another over topics such as transboundary populations, transboundary infrastructure, ambiguous borders, and the contestation or inability to enforce current colonial and post-colonial boundary agreements (Miles, 1991; Mkutu, 2007).

Some of the disputes were settled by bilateral agreements, third-party facilitation, and regional and sub-regional mediation, while others desired to interfere with the International Court of Justice (ICJ) (Rothchild, 2007). Since the Cold War, the incidence of cross-border armed fighting in Africa has decreased dramatically, but it has increased around borders where strategic natural resources were discovered (Osaghae, 2006). Studies by Salih, Dietz, and Ahmed (2001); Yohannes et al. (2005); and Bekele (2008) have identified concerns such as resource shortages, marginalization, insecurity, and the absence of other ethnic groups in decision-making processes as primary factors fueling the growth of ethnic identity and violent conflict along ethnic lines not only in Ethiopia but also in other Horn of Africa countries.

During the several African countries struggling for their independence, numerous African nations were fighting each other over the borderland issue and ownership and usage of economic resources such as oil and minerals. According to Evans (1940) and Johnson (2003), the Anglo-Ethiopian Treaty of 1902 established a 1,600-mile boundary in western (current Gambella region) Ethiopia; this border is among the most dangerous areas with no functioning authority on both Ethiopian and South Sudanese sides. Furthermore, the people who live in this border area are culturally and socioeconomically alike. According to Adams (1995), the British colonial policy of divide and rule was implemented on purpose to undermine social structures that controlled the frontier using conventional norms.

People living along the Ethiopia-South Sudan border descended into Nilotic tribes, who share an ethnic identity and agropastoral economic structure (Dereje, 2013; Titeca et al., 2014). The Murle, on the other hand, are pure pastoralists who depend solely on cattle, while the Nuer are agro-pastoralists, with the Anywaa depending solely on crop production.

Nonetheless, political unrest in South Sudan has presented itself in the border areas, as the government has been unable to resolve the looming problems of insecurity, poor governance, and justice, as well as a shortage of basic facilities and widespread poverty. Building on the findings of Dereje (2013), the Ethiopia-South Sudan borderland region lacks a government to rule, draft, and enforce policies to reduce the proliferation of small arms, light weapons, and armed groups that exacerbate ethnic cross-border conflicts.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2020) argued that lands, water, and livestock are the main sources of survival and subsistence for the borderland populations, but the uneven allocation of these services restricted access to all, causing those who were denied access to use force and cause ethnic cross-border violence. Furthermore, the local government is ineffective and cannot regulate the use of resources or enforce the rule of law around the border regions of Ethiopia and South Sudan.

However, the cattle raids and child kidnapping activities by Murle ethnic militia have been recognized by Dereje (2010) and Chalfin (2004), as well as UNHCR (2020), as common threats that various ethnic communities living along the borders faced, but the severity of such violence was poor. To grasp the complexities of cattle rustling among the Nuer and Murle, a social cubism perspective is appropriate. As a philosophy, social cubism has been used to classify problems that have arisen in areas where conflict has erupted, as well as to measure the effectiveness of measures that have been implemented to address the crisis (Salih et al., 2001; Leenco, 2004). Furthermore, although the principle of social cubism was originally developed to analyze territorial disputes, this does not exclude it from being applied to smaller conflicts, such as those resulting from cattle rustling activities in South Sudan's states. Since it examines the conflict from historical, demographic, technological, psychological, religious, and political viewpoints, this approach is important for understanding cattle rustling-related conflict (Johnson, 2009).

Retaliatory attacks also followed the said acceptable rules. However, there has been experienced a total transformation of this traditional practice, to well-organized banditry attacks where livestock is often raided for commercial purposes and where the practice is more often than not, characterized by human rights violations such as killings, rape, and torture, Kothari, (1990). Endemic cattle-rustling and livestock raiding among the pastoralist communities have led to the following outcomes on the pastoralists' socio-economic and political fronts.

However, it must be noted that strictly speaking, traditional culture did condone the current practice of livestock theft which seems to be governed by the rules of the jungle as opposed to the sanctions of tradition and culture. The traditional basis of cattle raiding was solely for purposes of, inter alia, obtaining cattle to be used as dowry payment, as a rite of passage, or as a show of heroism and social power and prestige. The same was closely monitored by elders to ensure that no excesses were committed. The raids used to be conducted within well-accepted rules of engagement, and the practice was acceptable to the participating communities.

2.2.1. The Impact of Cross-Border Attacks

In the Horn of Africa, borders and borderlands are the major source of insecurity and lead to intra-country conflict, which is a great disaster for the communities living on that borderland (Barnes Cedric, 2011).

Ethiopia and Kenya share Moyale border proximity of 860 kilometers, which is 534.38 miles. It is among the areas that are divided by two countries in the Horn of Africa (Glowacki et al., 2013). Dereje et al. (2010) argue that borders in Africa have usually been considered obstacles and that opportunities and threats flow through them. The entire community on the Moyle regional border has been affected by communal conflict (Glowacki et al., 2013). Though the conflict within communities living in the Moyale borderland is not historically older, it has reached a certain magnitude and frequency of occurrence. Hence, the conflict that erupted between the Gabra and Borana tribes on the Kenya Moyale border between October 2011 and July 2013 was frequent for around three and five months, respectively (Glowacki et al., 2013).

During the conflict eruption in both the Ethiopian and Kenyan borderlands, there was a lot of destruction happening within living communities; the average number of people and livestock were killed, without identification being made between fighters and ordinary people existing in that area (ibid., p. 9). The cross-border attack is a very great disaster for the communities that are living around that borderland (Barnes Cedric, 2011). For example, the fight between two tribes, Garri and Borana, in 2012 in Ethiopian Moyale town, within a few days, caused many people (approximately 20,000) to leave the border into Kenya and resulted in the closure of the border, the burning down of villages, the closing of businesses, and the loss of the belongings of traders on both sides of the border for one week. In another manner, the conflict also greatly affected the Ethiopian government economy as well as revenue trade within Kenya-Moyale; the trade went down.

The pastoralist community living along the borderlands of Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, and South Sudan is always losing their lives to cross-border resource-based insurgency groups (UN-OCHA, 2008). For example, in the Uganda and Kenya borderland in the Koton area in proximity, 60 Turkana were killed in 2005. In 2008, the clash between Pokots and the South Turkana district caused 70 people to lose their souls, and over 2,800 cattle were raided.

In the borderlands of Ethiopia and Kenya, the conflict that erupted between Dasenech, Turkana, and Nyagatom was a result of competition based on the finding of water places and pasture for cattle grassing, cattle stealing, destruction of forestation, and illicit trade, including smuggling and inequitable trading (Yohannes et al., 2005). In addition, in 2006, a revenge attack took place by Ethiopian rustlers and killed almost 133 Kenyan villagers, including schoolchildren (UN-OCHA, 2008). Hence, the governments of Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda have been blamed for uncontrolled the problem as most pastoral populations living along the borders die from increased cross-border resources and armed-based conflicts (ibid.).

Markakis, J. (1993) Further explains that any incidents of traditional cattle raids amongst the pastoral communities were handled with maximum brutality, often leading to the deaths of many pastoralists. In other words, traditional morality has collapsed following a rupture in the structure of social relationships on which people's lives were hinged (Ibid). Since time immemorial, the nature of the pastoralists' way of lifestyle demanded that they be armed with

some form of weapon for purposes of protection or self-defense both for themselves and their cattle from attacks by wild animals and theft as presented by, Chemisto, (2010). Bows and arrows were the weapons of choice. However, in the past three decades, there has been an escalation of cattle-rustling attacks, which has been fueled by the increase in small arms. These illegal arms normally originate from neighboring countries that have been experiencing internal strife, including Uganda, Somalia, and Ethiopia Cheserek, 2007. This has led to the formation of heavily armed and militarized groups. The weakening of state control over the pastoralist region has resulted in the emergence of cattle warlords who run armed militias to protect their interests, Ali Chemisto, (2010).

Across Eastern Africa, resource scarcity is a common cause of conflict, whether it be violent or not. In reality, cattle raiding in pastoralist areas increases during times of famine and drought. The raiders are now focusing on any resources that may help them survive in this hostile environment as the number of animals has decreased. Local and global opinion typically deems the ensuing death toll, property damage, population displacement, and development initiatives intolerable.

The Ilemi Triangle and its fringe are home to one of the largest concentrations of pastoralist economies in the world. The Horn of Africa "...is home to the largest remaining aggregation of traditional livestock producers in the world" (Markakis, 1998. p, 41). The majority of these pastoralist economies are found in extremely rugged terrain, punishing climates and extreme temperatures, vegetation covered with shrubs and needle-sharp thorns, rattlesnakes, centipedes, scorpions, and other wild creatures and animals. This makes the pastoralist regions less policed and their border areas more porous than other border points in the region.

Pastoralists in Eastern Africa are known to frequently journey across national and ethnic boundaries in search of cattle (Amutabi, 1999; Turton, 1977, 1988, 1989, 1994; Fukui, 1994; Lamphear, 1994; Allen, 1994; Baxter, 1994; Tornay, 1993). These studies highlight the importance of herds and associated resources to the survival and economy of pastoralists. This is demonstrated by Tornay, who demonstrates how the Nyangatom (Dongiro) have fought nearly constant warfare with nearly all of their neighbors throughout history. Tornay highlights the impact of cattle raiding on the military equilibrium of the region with an outstanding

chronology of attacks and counter-raids by the Nyangatom (Dongiro) against their neighbors, including the Merile (Dassanetch), the Mursi, the Kara, the Bodo, and the Turkana (Tornay, 1993. p, 143-163).

According to Tornay, "Some Kibish individuals traveled to Sudan to trade cattle for automatic firearms. They claim that by doing this, they were able to obtain several hundred of these weapons and are now more equipped than they have ever been. (1993:148, Tornay). Superior arms allowed for simple access to cattle. Consequently, this encouraged indolence and a lack of motivation to increase animal numbers. Rather, pastoralist communities chose to take the easier route and concentrated on constructing weapons and organizing raiding expeditions.

Culturally, men marry with cattle, and historically bride prices have been very high; Young men have a powerful incentive to establish their reputations and build their herds through mounting raids on other pastoral groups (neighboring counties). Culture, taken in a broader sense, is the way of life of a people as Mary, C. (2002) puts it; "it includes socially acquired knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs, and habits, it is a life thought system, which influences the people's lives, activities and behavior towards others "cattle rustling is therefore a cultural aspect of the Pokot founded on their myth of origin and a belief that all cattle belong to them. This cultural belief in raiding is perpetuated by seers who have an economic and political interest in promoting the very cultural system that places them in a powerful position.

In the decade of the 1970s to date, these warrior herdsmen who had always fought with spears acquired modern firearms, which increased the momentum for raiding cows from the neighbors characterized by violence and loss of lives according to Kothari, (1990). The same culture is shared among all other pastoralist communities who launch violent attacks on their neighbors in search of cows to pay for either dowry or wealth pursuit. The pastoralist communities have continued to follow their traditions and culture way over many centuries. Many have refused to embrace the Western lifestyle. Many of these communities continue to rely on pastoralism as their sole source of livelihood and continue to lead nomadic lifestyles. To many pastoralists, cattle is seen as a valuable asset, a wealth reserve, and a sacrificial gift and a pastoralist can do all it takes to protect and seek for more cattle. Traditionally, having large herds of livestock was seen as a source of a secure livelihood base and a sign of prestige. A very high premium is

placed on the ownership of cattle, which is an integral part of the pastoralists' culture. High pressure is therefore placed on pastoral communities as culture demands that a successful member of the community has the biggest herd of cattle, Chemisto, (2010). Although it has been argued elsewhere in this report that the traditional practice of cattle rustling and ownership is increasingly acquiring a new face characterized by livestock theft, there can be no denying the fact that the vestiges of the traditional perceptions and practices of cattle rustling continue to play a big role in the current incidents of livestock-related inter-ethnic conflict among pastoralist communities. Research conducted by, Practical Action, an NGO working among pastoralist communities, further reveals the role of culture in fueling inter-ethnic conflict through pastoralists who openly ridicule their men through songs if they do not raid other communities to provide for the pastoralists' needs. This is prevalent among the Rendille, Samburu, Gabra, and Borana communities, Kothari, (1990). The centrality of cattle among the pastoralist communities is further augmented by Baxton's observation when he avers that, "a person stripped of stock is stripped of the most active social relationship and thereby of selfhood and self-respect; so, it is no wonder that almost everyone strives to keep some livestock and those fortunate few who have incomes from trade and regular employment continue to invest in stock.

The border conflict affected two neighboring countries, Ethiopia, and South Sudan (Gathigah, 2011). For instance, in 2005, cattle rustling became the most common in South Sudan in Jonglei State. The cattle rustling from robbers has caused serious destruction among three tribes, such as the Nuer, Murle, and Dinka Bor communities (Gathigah, 2011). In 2005, the lives of people in Jonglei State became a hazard, and many souls were lost. Furthermore, the conflict makes the communities act inhumanely, which may lead to heinous crimes. Gathigah (2011) expressed that the signs of conflict destruction are visible in the Jonglei state, like dry human bones on the fields, persons missing arms or other parts of the body, and losing loved ones.

In reaction to the Murle militia attacks, both the Jikany-Nuer and Anuak tribes from Ethiopia and South Sudan crossed the border and instigated revenge attacks. In the same year 2011, Lou Nuer from South Sudan fought with the Murle in Jonglei State, and over 600 people were lost (Manyok T. 2016). These repeated cross-border conflicts have cost the lives of many people in

the communities, even though the attack has resulted in the loss of thousands of cattle, separated little children from their families, and increased the number of internally displaced people.

Gambella, home to Ethiopia Nuer, is located 50 km away from South Sudan. RFI (2016-04-18) noted that the Murle and insurgency groups from South Sudan are ranked at the maximum average for cattle rustling, human trafficking, and smuggling in the Horn of Africa, but rarely on such a large or deadly scale.

In the mid of Aprilon Friday 2016, it was reported that the Murle militia from Boma state in South- Sudan attacked two woredas; Jekow and Lare at the location in the Nuer zone (Ethiopia's Gambella Region), and the war affected over 13 villages. On that day, an estimated 200 people were killed and 108 average people mostly school children abducted even the three-month-old children killed the mother and were taken. Moreover, the Murle militia rustled more than 2,000 head of cattle within the 13 villages on the Ethiopia side in April 2016. According to Ethiopian local journalists, it reported that Murle militia attackers carried AK-47 assault rifles and killed every person such as children, women, and elders. Therefore, the Friday massacre in the Gambella region was not only about killing the people it also led the community to evacuate the area they live in into another territory for their survival. Linked, with this several mentioned previously that Nuer ethnic people are pastoralists in history, therefore their community often lives in pasture or similar lands which may be suitable for an animal such as cows, sheep, and goats to eat for their daily life existent (Evans-Pritchard, 1940). Following this, the evacuation of communities to their existing areas resulted in the great loss of their properties. Even though it resulted in the loss of properties, disability of economic discontinues of learning in school children, and created insecurity in the area.

2.2.2. Government Response to Borderlands Attacks

Ethiopia and South Sudan governments identified the insecurity along their borderlands and have worked together to overcome the problems of the border (Tasew, 2017). In 2012, the two neighboring countries signed an agreement on the Joint Ministerial Commission to upgrade the country's social-economic and political stability. Hence, the agreement included a transportation

policy, communications policy, trade policy, educational policy, and capacity building at the borderlands, (Ibid). In that year, the regional government's joint activities to exercise the borderlands agreement policies on both sides, to tackle the issue of border security; and to enhance peace as well as community stability.

On October 3, 2012, the local governments of Upper Nile State, Maiwut County, and Gambella Regional State signed a joint borderlands treaty to address the anti-peace force, building manpower, general trade agreements, and relationships among people (Tasew, 2017). The local agreement between Ethiopia (Gambella region) and South Sudan (Maiwut County) conceded about developing better borderland relationships and improving the well-being of the border community, (Ibid). Following that, the improvement of the treaty resulted in disarming villagers in borderlands, controlling illicit trade, and the Ethiopian government constructed roads from Ethiopia at Gambella regional state in Lare District to South Sudan through Pagak County, also providing scholarships for South Sudan learners from Boma and Pibor counties of Jonglei State and Upper Nile State. Even though the South Sudanese government also disarmed the villagers along their border and committed to other agreements.

Respectively, when the disarmament took place among the villagers on both sides of the borderlands, the Murle militia used it as an opportunity to rustle the cattle and abduct the children on Ethiopia's side without obstacles to accomplish their goals (Diana F., 2016). On the other hand, in mid-April 2016, the Gambella massacre by Murle militia attackers occurred in two woredas (Jikow and Lare), and the Ethiopian government was wrathful for the unexpected deaths of innocent people (RFI, 2016). Respectively, the Ethiopian federal government launched the army to bring back the abducted children. The action was leading the Ethiopian army to cross the border up to South Sudan territory (death toll tops 200 in cross-border Ethiopia raid, 2016-04-18).

The Ethiopian government almost returned the abducted children to the Murle militia. This was a very hard shift in the Ethiopian government because the deployed army that moved to bring back the abducted children was well equipped and led them to cross the borderlands to South Sudan.

2.2.3. Trends and dynamics of Murle attacks in the border regions of Gambella

Several reports also provided an analysis of the major armed conflict's dynamics. The approach used to create the warfare patterns is based on the premise that armed confrontation is an indication of structural disruption of a state's and societal system's natural social dynamics. According to Johnson, 2009), confrontation is a sign of chaos when it is accompanied by inadequate conflict mediation and transforms group activity from positive to disruptive modes of conduct.

Raids and abuse between the Nuer and Murle communities have been particularly bloody in recent years. Murle militia has been attacking Nuer communities across the border since the 1960s when the Sudan government armed both Murle and Nuer communities to battle the southern resistance movement, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (Ibid). Murle and Nuer rebels have continued to conduct cattle raids and counterraid against each other since then, but such violent clashes have not been as frequent as they have been in recent years (Tasew, 2017). Against the historical existence of Murle attacks, resource shortages, political unrest (for example, in South Sudan), and the practice of certain social ideals or norms have not only increased but also influenced the dynamics of these attacks along the Gambella region's boundaries.

Tasew (2017) looked at developments in border violence in the Gambella area over a ten-year timeframe (2004–2016) and noticed just a few cross-border (Murle) assaults in 2004–2009. However, between 2010 and 2016, there was a significant rise in the number of cattle rustlings and kidnappings in the area. In the Gambella region's territorial administrative units, Murle insurgents attacked and raided nearly 960 cattle, abducted 72 children, killed several civilians in 2010, destroyed over 21 villages, and abducted 6 children in the Gog woreda of the Anuak zone in 2016. In the same year, Murle armed insurgents carried out similar attacks in the Nuer zone's Lare and Makuey districts (woreda), killing dozens of civilians, raiding over 2,960 horses, and abducting over 131 girls (ibid., p. 5).

The Gambella region has been severely impacted by the emergence of cross-border ethnic violence, which has disrupted socio-economic activity and administrative success in the

territorial regions. Although the costs of frontier ethnic war can seem to be high during that period, the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) estimates that the cost of the incident is huge, not counting the direct loss of life (IEP, 2018).

However, the cost of cross-border attacks in the Gambella area was not calculated to quantify economic harm as well as costs associated with relocation and property destruction. According to Obuluttsa (2019), ethnic groups have previously clashed over concerns relating to the use and distribution of resources such as land, water, and wetlands. On the other side, the civil war's spillover, as well as cattle raiding and child abduction activities by some ethnic groups in South Sudan, have sparked hostilities among border communities (Johnson, 2009; Farrel et al., 2012; Gatluak, 2014).

Cross-border tensions resulting from the spillover of Sudan's long-running civil war continued to wreak havoc on the growth and well-being of people living along the border in Ethiopia's southwestern region (Obuluttsa, 2019). Although the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed in 2005, cross-border ethnic or inter-communal conflict persisted in South Sudan, with extensive spillover into the tribal regions. Nonetheless, a significant cause of contention in the borderlands is a scarcity of natural resources, as well as uneven access to and allocation of natural resources.

Furthermore, the local government structures are insufficient to manage the natural capital of the borderland. On the other side, Murle, and Nuer livestock (cattle) farming, together with Nuer crop cultivation, is a primary development element. Murle and Nuer demand large territories of land resources for grazing, water, and farming, resulting in encroachment on neighboring lands (Dereje, 2013). The Murle also concludes that all cattle in the world belong to their forefathers and that they have a cultural duty to gather them, including cattle rustling from other tribes. Apart from the Murle and Anyuak cultural assumptions, droughts forced pastoralist communities to travel about in search of water and pastureland during dry seasons. Furthermore, the eco-zone of borderland areas has been devastated by prolonged drought, excessive land use, and overgrazing practices. In general, several factors, including conventional resource sharing and cultural sentiment, contribute to the perpetuation of hostilities between communities in border regions.

2.2.4. Empirical Related Review

To address the issue of cross-border attacks by the Murle militia in the Gambella region: impacts and government responses, some of the available relevant pieces of literature have been discussed below to give an insight into the previous work done on the study. The author of this finding is not consistent. Many researchers found that cross-border attacks disable government policy as well. One reason for using an empirical review as a major benefit concerning this topic is the ease of discovering information previously written on a chosen topic (Lores, 2011). This is conducted at no cost, where most of the information needed is available in libraries through articles, online journals, and databases.

Tasew (2017) analyzed cross-border conflicts within groups in the Horn of Africa. The study was concerned with the Ethiopia-South Sudan borderland peoples. The study aims to determine the cross-border conflicts between the Ethiopian and South Sudanese borderlands. The author concluded that borderland communities are at risk of various incurable challenges and will further develop hostile relations due to weak management of border security and resource scarcity in that country. Thus, it is understood that the suffering of borderland communities is the result of miserable management by the government within that region. These findings agree with the earlier revelations made by Dereje and Hoehne (2010) that for the well-being of societies, the government should set up a strong system strategy for these countries as well as the security cross-border. Hence, a strong structure of government is the foundation of good security in the territory inhabited by undeveloped communities.

The research conducted by Gatluak, (2014) is associated with the root cause of cross-border conflict in Gambella Regional State between Jikany-Nuer and Lou-Nuer. It included three Woredas (Makuey, Akobo, and Gog) grouped in Gambella by the displaced communities such as Jikany-Nuer from the Upper Nile to Gambella region and Akobo district of Jonglei. According to his study, he found that the Ethiopian and South Sudan administrations didn't achieve a remarkable resolution to the cross-border conflicts among communities. Likewise, the study revealed that cross-border attacks frequently occurred due to ignoring border security from both regions. Accordingly, the unnoticed borderland insecurity emergence of the loss of well-inhabited communities disturbed living animals around the environment also trashed the

government's developing system not to move forward to change the community's deity mind by killing each other with nonsense purposes.

Manyok T, (2016) investigated the effect of cattle rustling between Nuer, Dinka, and Murle communities. The researcher noted that cattle rustling, and raid activities have become more dangerous to the pastoralist communities, this may even affect their neighborhood and the nation in general. It even led to massive negative impacts on the economy of the regions and instability of the country's government structural system. This is as the governments often do for the people, if the well-being of people is trashed by something else; it leads the government body system to react sharply to get the solution to that phenomenon.

Axel B. and John H. (2009) also stated that lack of strong government security; crossing borders among communities, smuggling, illicit trade, human trafficking, and other factors are the main sources of borderland conflict. Additionally, a lack of information from the community to the regional government is a result of the delayed government response to that phenomenon. Tasew (2017), in his thesis, noted that if the governments need to set up good security around the borderlands, they can establish a strong strategy that may prevent illegal trade, abduction of people, smuggling, and rustling of the territory.

Dereje (2009) investigates a national perspective on the conflict in Gambella regional state. The researcher showed that the conflict situation in the Gambella region is also related to the introduction of territorialized ethnicity and the politicization of migration. It also notes that cross-border conflict arises due to local politics among tribes' livelihood in borderlands. However, the study of Mossa (2014) examines the conflict dynamics in a three-level game the conflict formation in the Gambella region. The researcher concluded the migration of Nuer South Sudan to Ethiopia is the result of conflict among communities. For instance, since 2012, thousands of the population across the border into the Gambella region due to the result of inter-conflict between Lou Nuer and Murle and displaced 21 Kebeles in Wanthoa Wereda of which four of them were Anywaa kebele.

Another study was done by Rachel Gordon (2014) to investigate the internal conflict in South Sudan's Jonglei State. The researcher suggested that inter-ethnic conflict was a result of a lack

of socio-economic access and opportunities or a clear national agenda, constant physical and livelihood threats, the proliferation of weapons, contested national and group territorial borders and boundaries, intra- and inter-group struggles for power and wealth increasing climate pressures, the breakdown of traditional conflict mitigation.

2.2.5. Research Gap

Several communities are suffering from inter-ethnic conflict among borderlands and throughout the world (Gordon, 2014). In order to enhance the welfare of individuals and the communities residing in borderlands, governments must address the problem that leads to cross-border attacks between tribes or between nations. Many academics have studied topics like competition between and within groups for resources and power, lack of socioeconomic access, ongoing threats to one's life and physical safety, proliferation of weapons, group territorial borders and boundaries, and so forth; however, these may affect the frequency of cross-border attacks among tribes.

The agreement that some characteristics are more significant than others as conflict causes and that these elements may persist for multiple generations is what unites this study with earlier ones. These earlier studies also used a variety of methods, including research, questionnaires, and in-person interviews, but their findings did not significantly differ and they did not explain the reason behind the regularity of Murle militia attacks in the Gambella region in the two administrative zones of Anywaa and Nuer as well as five Woredas (Jekow, Lare, and Makuey in the Nuer zone and Dimma, and Jor in the Anywaa zone) or the government's response to these attacks. One explanation would be that the elements that lead to conflict don't change, even though different methodologies and target populations were used in these studies. Consequently, this study's results, findings, and recommendations will address the gap that has to be filled. This study evaluates the effects and official reactions to cross-border attacks carried out by insurgents from the Murle militia in the Gambella region.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3. Introduction

This chapter presents the data collection methods, and analysis followed in the study. This chapter covers the research area outline, sample methods, and sample size, as well as the data types and sources of the data.

3.1. Description of the Study Area

Gambella People's National Regional State (GPNRS) is one of the federal states in Ethiopia. This area is in the southwestern lowlands, and it shares a frontier with South Sudan. This lowland plain is part of the Sudd?? hydraulic complex, and much of it is flooded between June and November, with marshes covering large fields (CSA, 2007).

Numerous significant rivers pass the Gambella, flow into South Sudan's Sobat River, and finally enter the White Nile. Rivers like the Baro, Akobo, Gilo, and Alwero provide both significant natural chances for their survival and movement as well as acting as natural barriers separating Gambella from South Sudan. In Gambella, 25,274 square kilometers of the area have been covered by grassland. In the east, it shares a border with Oromia Regional State, and in the south, it shares a border with SNNPRS. The most western boundaries of South Sudan are Jonglei and the Upper Nile State (CSA, 2007).

Figure 1. Ethio-South Sudan border: Gambella, Upper Nile States, and Jonglei of South Sudan



Source: Mossa (2007)

The Gambella Regional state's political past is one-of-a-kind and leads to present insecurity. The area has been recognized as the site of many colonial military power games due to its location in a strategic geopolitical corridor where the present boundary between Ethiopia and South Sudan is. Respectively, the Gambella district is a lowland area that was under British colonial from the 17th to 18th, the other hand in the 19th the state was conquered by the Ethiopian Empire, and it was a time Ethiopia controlled southern areas (Bahru, 1976). Thus, Gambella became fully owned by the Ethiopian Empire based on the agreement between Emperor Minilik II and the British Empire in 1902. As Markakis (2011) noted Gambella was exchanged for Kassala due to the wrong location on the northern frontier. Gambella became one of among regions in Ethiopia that shared borderlands with neighboring countries like Sudan. Since the mutual agreement was signed, it bordered Sudan until 2011 and then bordered the new country of South Sudan after the partition.

According to the 2007 census Gambella has a population of 307,000 people. Gambella is a multi-ethnic federal state in Ethiopia, consisting of five main "indigenous" ethnic groups, Anywaa and Nuer, and three smaller ethnic groups, Majang, Opo, and Komo.

3.2. Research Design

Research design is described as a means for the collection and analysis of data to survey a real phenomenon (Bryman, 2012). It is the principal arrangement in which the research was conducted and is also considered a framework for the collection and analysis of existing data (Bryman, 2012). It is a very important step in the research process if the studies of the problem area are sufficiently detailed. This study used a qualitative research design, given that the researcher had collected data at one point at a time.

As mentioned above, a qualitative research design was used, and the case-study method was employed in this study. Respectively, the guiding research approach in this thesis was qualitative because it aims to generate an intensive examination of a single case within the link within the theoretical analysis. The qualitative approach is more than basic features. Qualitative designs are thought to be an acceptable method that considers not only the categories of research challenges, goals, and ethical problems but also the instrumental technique for data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2015). The qualitative study architecture, according to Kothari (2004), focuses on individual attitudes, habits, thoughts, and feelings, as well as organizational dynamics, social movements, cultural phenomena, and group interactions. The objective of qualitative research is to gain insight into the fundamental situation rather than generalize it.

Qualitative testing, on the other hand, produces findings that are either non-quantitative or have not been exposed to rigorous quantitative analysis. In addition, qualitative architecture is a method in which the inquirer often makes information assertions based predominantly on a constructivist viewpoint to create a pattern theory, advocacy, and participatory perspective (Creswell, 2009). When the research uses non-statistical knowledge to interpret a phenomenon, the qualitative design is the most helpful and relevant. Since conflict is a prominent characteristic of human society that develops through social practices and engagement, qualitative research

would be ideal for developing data collection, interpretation, and presentation strategies and resources.

3.3. Selection of Research Sites

The Nuer Zone and the Anywaa Zone are selected as the study area and sample size, respectively, to comprehend the cross-border attacks in the Gambella region. In addition, there are three zones in Gambella: the Nuer Zone, Majang Zone, and Anywaa Zone. Of the other tribes residing in Gambella, the Nuer tribe has the greatest number in these zones. Given that two borderlands—South Sudan and Ethiopia—divide people the Nuer zone is therefore situated close to the borders of the Jonglei and Upper Nile regions of South Sudan. Consequently, the part of the Gambella with the greatest concentration of cattle is known as the Nuer zone. As a result, the tribes residing in the Nuer zone were traditionally pastoralists and agrarians. Anywaa peoples have been agrarian in history; their zonal area covered the largest land in Gambella compared to other zones. Also, the Majang tribes have a hunter and agrarian history; their area land is smaller compared to the other two zones in the Gambella region.

The sites have been chosen based on the presence of cross-border or inter-ethnic groups linked to the organized conflict in the areas chosen. Bryman (2012) explains that a sample site is a subset of the population that you select to be participants in your research. To reduce research bias, cluster random sampling was employed in this study to choose the district of research. Hence, among the three zones in the Gambella region, two have been selected: the Nuer Zone and the Anywaa Zone, because they often experience cross-border attacks from the Murle militia. Additionally, between the two zones, the selected woredas from these two zones were Jekow, Lare, and Makuey from the Nuer zone, and from the Anywaa zone, the selected woredas were Jor and Dimma.

Following this, the selected cluster has become knowledgeable about the natural means and strength of the facts, and the interactions of the community have been explored. Therefore, the qualitative approach is a significant technique that helps the researcher select participants who may understand the condition of the study (Creswell, 2009). Accordingly, the reason for selecting the research in a sampling manner is to reach the information being studied.

3.3.1. Selection of Research Participants

As revealed in the above paragraph, qualitative research scrutinizes the exit populations being studied by exploring their innermost conditions. Further, to convey the idea of the innermost condition of the study and to answer the developed questions, the researcher intentionally selected the research participant. According to Patton, cited by Creswell (2009: P-109), in rational sampling, the best way to use selected research respondents and sample sites is always signified by the availability of information from the target groups.

Hence, the researcher scientifically selected the research participants from the site of the study. Rationally, purposive and snowball sampling has been employed in this study to get the remedial information started from individuals and spilled out to the whole population. The respondents to this study were sixty (60) of all selected woredas. Though the process of selecting the participant is revealed below in such a manner,

Nuer Zone

In Nuer zone woredas, Jekow, Makuey, and Lare, the total population probably reached 112,606 (CSA, 2007). Therefore, these Woredas have been selected by the researcher using the cluster sampling method to group them into three because they are mostly victims of frequent attacks from the Murle insurgence.

Jekow Woreda

The researcher employed specific selection criteria to choose the 10 respondents in the Jekow Woreda. Two of the participants were selected based on their personal experience of losing their parents during the attacks by the Murle militia. Another two respondents were chosen because they had firsthand experience of losing their cattle through rustling. Additionally, two participants were selected from among the individuals whose children had been taken by the Murle insurgence. The remaining two respondents were selected from the Offices of Security in Jekow Woredas, as their insights and perspectives are crucial for understanding the security

dynamics in the affected villages. These selection criteria were designed to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and experiences related to the conflicts in the area.

Makuey Woreda

For this study, the researcher employed a purposive sampling method, also known as judgmental or selective sampling. This method was chosen to ensure that participants were selected based on specific criteria relevant to the research objective. In this case, the researcher selected 10 respondents from Makuey using purposive sampling. This method allowed for the inclusion of individuals who had firsthand experience with the attacks by Murle militias, including those whose parents were killed, cattle were taken, children were taken, as well as individuals from the Offices of Security and the elders of affected villages.

Lare Woredas

The selection of participants in this study is important for several reasons. By including individuals whose parents were killed, whose cattle were taken, and whose children were taken by the Murle insurgence, the study aims to capture the diverse range of experiences and impacts of the conflict. Additionally, including participants from the Offices of Security and the elders of affected villages provides valuable insights into the official response and the community's perspective on the war. This comprehensive approach allows for a more nuanced understanding of the effects of the conflict in Lare Woreda and the surrounding areas.

For the process of choosing the participants, the researcher considered ethnic respect by selecting individuals from different ethnic groups within each Woreda. This ensured that the perspectives of multiple ethnic communities were included in the study. Additionally, gender issues were taken into account by ensuring an equal representation of male and female participants. This allowed for a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of the Murle attack on the communities, taking into consideration the experiences and viewpoints of both genders.

According to constructivist research, focus groups discussion are critical for providing insight into the many parties participating in the change process, making the process more controllable

and effective. It is also a good method to use when creating surveys (ODI, 2009). Furthermore, one focus group discussion has been conducted per Woredas; hence, these approaches are used for gathering information from communities. The focus group discussion had eight members; four of them were women and the other four were males. This was done to decrease gender prejudice, which can help impacted people obtain critical data.

The Anywaa Zone

The researcher chose two Woredas (Jor and Dimma) from the Anywaa Zone because they had been attacked. The researcher chose these Woredas using the cluster sampling approach to divide them into two groups because they are frequently attacked by the Murle insurgency each year.

Jor Woreda

The Jor Woreda is one of the Woredas closest to South Sudan, with a distance of approximately 10km from the town. The people living in this area are the same as those living on the South Sudan side, and they even share some villages, such as Pochalla Ethiopia, and Pochalla South Sudan. The researcher selected five respondents from the Woredas using purposive sampling. One participant had parents who were killed during attacks by the Murle militia, another had lost their property due to rustling, and one respondent had children taken by the Murle insurgency. Additionally, one respondent was from the Offices of Security in the Jor Woredas, and the remaining respondent was an elder from the villages affected by the war.

Dimma Woreda

The researcher employed purposive sampling to select the respondents for this study. Purposive sampling was chosen because it allows for the intentional selection of individuals who have experienced specific aspects of the conflict and displacement in Dimma Woreda. By selecting five respondents who have been directly affected, such as those who lost their parents, property, or children, the study aims to capture a range of perspectives and experiences related to the impact of the conflict. Additionally, including a representative from the Offices of Security and an elder from the affected villages provides insights from key stakeholders in the community.

Okugo Camp in Dimma and GTTHSC

It is important to note that the researcher carefully selected the five Murle refugees based on specific criteria. These criteria included considering individuals who had direct involvement in raiding and child abduction incidents, as well as individuals who could provide valuable insights into the causes of conflict between the Anuak, the Murle tribes, and the Nuer. The selection process involved interviewing a larger group of Murle refugees and then choosing the participants who demonstrated a deep understanding of the issues and were willing to share their experiences. Moreover, the researcher again selected another's five Murle participants from Gambella Teaching Teachers and Healthy Science College who were study as scholarship students in Gambella Ethiopia.

Gambella Regional State Security Sectors

The participation of ten individuals from various security sectors ensured a comprehensive and diverse perspective in the discussions. Their expertise and experience, particularly that of the former head of the Peace & Security Bureau, the president's security advisor, and the police commissioner added valuable insights to the deliberations.

3.4. Techniques and Tools for Data Collection

Semi-structured and structured interviews, self-report questionnaires, issues encountered and realistic events, focus groups, and biographical information are all methods for gathering data. During a field survey in the research area, data has been collected by observation (or transect), interview, and focus group conversation (FGD). Data was collected from participants in the sample areas using an open-ended questionnaire. Questionnaires have been used to gather primary data, and secondary data has been obtained by a critical and thorough reading of government records, papers, books, written and broadcast news, and other documentation related to the topic under investigation (Creswell, 2015). According to Spear (2006), primary evidence is obtained from subjects in their normal environment through interviews, assessments, and focus groups. As a result, secondary data is needed to fill in the gaps in knowledge and enrich awareness of issues.

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

The methodology of qualitative analysis was used to scrutinize both primary and secondary data obtained from respondents in the Gambella region. Qualitative research, according to Creswell (2015), is an apt method for describing topics relating to human actions and societal aspects such as violence. The analysis of the data is a vital part of the research study. The data collected from various sources was analyzed using narrative information to make it easy to interpret. The collected data is analyzed and compared to the secondary data from the literature to assess the cross-border attacks by Murle militia insurgents in the Gambella region: impacts and government responses. Thus, this can be helpful for the researchers to scrutinize the collected data in the middle of data collection.

3.6. Ethical Considerations

Respondents were assured that their personal identifying information would be kept confidential and separated from the data. Any data collected would be assigned a unique identifier to ensure anonymity. Additionally, access to the data would be restricted to the researcher and authorized personnel only. These measures were put in place to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of the respondents, ensuring that their information would not be shared or used for any purposes other than academic research at Addis Ababa University.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS

4. INTRODUCTION

Cross-border attacks remain one of the principal challenges experienced by ethnic groups inhabiting southwestern parts of Ethiopia, especially along the borderland of Gambella regional state. This study explored the major factors associated with Murle cross-border assaults against the Nuer and Anywaa ethnic groups living between the two ethnic zones of the Gambella regional state. The main causes and government mitigating strategies are examined. Empirically approaching this topic may yield significant results for both communities and the government. The work is important since it enables us to view the degree of the situation in the communities. Cross-border conflicts usually erupt due to the interests of specific groups that are inspired by the outcome of their actions.

Conversely, the use of local communities' impractical tactics to increase output led to tribal warfare. The main likely cause of the cross-border attacks along the borders between Ethiopia and South Sudan is a variety of intruders working within the neighboring side of the Republic of South Sudan. As a result, the community and ethnic groups experienced social unrest, political unrest, and economic uncertainty as a result of the invading groups' frequent attacks.

This chapter presents the extent of the cross-border attacks among the two zones of the Gambella Regional State inhabited by the Nuer and Anywaa Zones. It is divided into three sub-sections. In the first section, the root causes of the Murle cross-border conflict against the Nuer and Anywaa were delineated. Precisely in the second section, the major consequences of the Murle assaults in the societies living in Nuer and Anywaa Zones are examined. Finally, the third part considered the mechanisms used by the government to respond to the adverse effects of the Murle cross-border conflict in the Nuer and Anywaa Zones.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics

Cross-border violence between the Anywaa, Murle, and Nuer communities in Ethiopia and South Sudan has been a longstanding issue. This violence is often rooted in historical tensions, competition for resources, and ethnic conflicts. It has resulted in loss of lives, displacement of communities, and social and economic instability in the region. Understanding the causes and dynamics of this violence is crucial for developing effective strategies to prevent future cross-border assaults and promote peace and stability in these communities.

Table 1. Types and Categories of the Study Respondents

Categories		N	%	Age
NUER ZONE	Lare Woreda	10	50.0	32-60
	Jekow Woreda	10	50.0	40-65
	Makuey Woreda	10		30-50
	Total	30	100	
		N	%	Age
ANYWAA ZONE	Jor Woreda	5	20%	40-50
	Dimma Woreda	5	20%	35-50
	Okugo Camp	5	20%	40-60
	GTEHSC	5	20%	30-50
	GRSSS	10	20%	41-60
Total		60	100	

NB: The study participants and respondents were community administration and community elders, Government Leaders or government officials, and data providers.

By considering the diverse range of ages among the participants, researchers can ensure that their findings are representative of a broader population. This age diversity allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic being studied and increases the validity of the conclusions drawn from the data. Therefore, acknowledging and accounting for this variety is crucial to making accurate generalizations about the entire population.

4.2. The Causes of the Murle Cross-Border Attack against the Nuer and Anywaa

In this section, two main sub-sections are going to be addressed. The first part is about the root causes of cross-border conflicts among the Murle tribes against the Nuer. The second part of this finding attempt highlights the root causes of cross-border assaults carried out by the Murle tribes against the Anywaa ethnic group in the Anywaa zone.

4.2.1. The Root Causes of Murle Cross-Border Conflict against the Nuer Ethnic Group

The initial causes of the conflict between the Murle and the Nuer had their roots in the times of massive population movement that occurred among different ethnic groups in the East and the Horn of Africa. The Nuer, in their myth of origin, are believed to have moved from the western part of the Nuerland to the east in the second half of the 19th century. The Eastern Jikany Nuer, inhabiting the Nuer Zone of the Gambella region, moved eastward from the west bank of the Nile which is the present Unity State (Bentiu) in South Sudan to the present land of the Gambella region in the early 19th Century. Their eastward expansion was traced to the 1800s and finally settled along the "Sobat(Baro) River by the early 1860s (Kelly, 1985). Most writers, by mistake, used to say that this Nuer section migrated from the Sudan to Ethiopia. However, they were not moving from the Sudan to Ethiopia but from present-day South Sudan to present-day Ethiopia. Thus, the artificial boundary separating Ethiopia from Sudan, or present-day South Sudan was delimited on 15th May 1902, long before the settlement of Nuer in today's Nuer Zone.

The Nuer eastward population movement was due to push and pull factors such as demographic pressure and the need for green pasture. A small flock of Nuer subsequently moved from the western part of the Nuer land (CiënTan) and settled toward the eastern part. This eastward advancement of the Nuer ethnic group has displaced the Dinka, Murle, and Anywaa from the lands occupied by them earlier¹. Furthermore, the Nuer pushed the Anywaa people toward the east side along the salient corridor of the Baro River and Dinka was pressed westward, and the Nuer instantly settled. Oral traditions and archival records suggested that the Nuer population

¹ Monyjuok Chuol is elder in the Mangok kebele he was assigning in the local office of security at Korgeng Town, Lare woredas. I interviewed him on April 10, 2023 at Mangok village.

movement and infiltration into other people's territory was characterized by peaceful negotiation. They donate to a girl or give a head of cattle to stay and graze the cattle in the area. On some occasions, when they failed to reach promising cordial relations, they began to expand their territory by occasional raids².

When the Nuer started to settle eastward, most of them began to share borders with other ethnic groups such as Anywaa, Opo, and Dinka, who were seldom familiar with cattle rustling and child abduction. Some sections of Lou Nuer advanced southeast and settled closer to the Dinka people. When the Murle moved from east to south, they pushed back both the Nuer and Dinka tribes. At the end of the 19th century, the two tribes began to encounter each other when youth taken their cattle to far-distance swamp areas for pasture. In 1900–1912, minor cattle smuggling began to occur between Murle and the Lou Nuer but not between Jikany Nuer, who shared no common boundary with them. For instance, in the 1930s and 1940s, the Lou Nuer donated about 300 heads of cattle to the Murle tribe to be granted the legal right to possess the area called Biem on Khor Geni for grazing land during the dry season. However, the Murle reclaimed and resettled in the area by the mid-1950s (Hutchinson, 1962).

In 1912, the British colonial government of the Sudan annexed the Murle land to their administrative milieu. At this time, British administrative agents lightly ruled them. However, the abduction of helpless women and children continued as a standard practice at the Murle. They raided cattle from Dinka and the Nuer, especially during the dry seasons. The cattle raids conducted during this time were undertaken using spears and sticks and resulted in a minimal death toll. However, for about a decade (1944–1954), a British government agent by the name of Richard Lyth was appointed as Pibor District Commissioner. Lyth was known for his attempt to restore peace in the Murle area by strictly prohibiting cattle rustling carried out illicitly by the Murle young men. He formed a strong and able elderly council to effectively restrain cattle raids and attacks. He ordered punishment to be imposed on anyone caught in cattle-raiding practices by other ethnic groups (Arensen, 2012).

² I conducted an interview with Luk Gatkuoth, a victim from Jekow Woreda on May 20, 2023.

During the time of their movement eastward, the Dinka and Anywaa tribes waged a stiff resistance to protect territory against the advancing Nuer. The small section of the Nuer tribe (Jikany-Kiir) occupied the largest territory of the Anuak tribe, starting from the present-day Nassir in South Sudan. The participant stated that some of the villages back to the riverside are named in Anuak, such as Jingmire (Ajungmir), Dojok, Nyangnyi, Kual, and others³. The Nuer when peacefully permitted to settle with the Anywaa occupied some areas.

The Nuer ethnic group infiltrated local regions formerly occupied by the Anywaa ethnic group in the first part of the twentieth century. The Nuer-Anywaa war began with this (Mossa, 2013). Mr. Lilu, a Murle participant, said that when the Anywaa realized they were about to lose their rich territory, they began gathering Murle militias to join the attack on the Nuer. If the Nuer towns are destroyed, both groups have agreed to share cattle and other valuable items⁴.

As a result, a joint assault was coordinated and was launched by both the Anywaa and the Murle against the Nuer during the dry season in 1987. The Murle carried out attacks at Tiph, Luelthooni, and Luel-Manthiich. During an interview, Gatluak also argues that in 1987, the Murle ethnic group was brought by the Anywaa community's leader Mr. Gurgak Oman from the Gog area to fight on their side against the territorially encroaching Nuer. The congruent source from respondents residing in Lare Woreda mentioned that Murle youth did not know the areas, especially the Nuer zone. They used to align themselves with the Anywaa to scout for robbing⁵. After the repetitive attacks, the Murle assailers began to be familiar with locations and areas inhabited by the Nuer to raid the cattle and abduct the children without fear of being lost in the bush.

3 Field notes taken at Mangok village's Lare Woreda. April 11, 2023

4 Baloch traveled from South Sudan to Ethiopia as a Murle scholar. He attends Gambella Teachers and Health Science College. On April 13, 2023, I interviewed him at Gambella College.

5 Gatluak Yang Thon is a Puokueth kebele elder who was assigned to the Nuer zone as Ager Chumagile. On April 13, 2023, I interviewed him at the Makuey Wareda.

The cross-border attacks experienced in the territory of Gambella in the 20th century coincided with the need for the advancement of resources among the Murle. These cross-border linkages have been characterized by conflicts over resources. A cattle rustling has become the social norm for Murle tribes. They frequently practiced raids with their neighbors. The borderland communities in Gambella have been experiencing intermittent raids and child abductions with ethnic groups across the border in present-day South Sudan.

The Gambella region has been rated as one of the districts with conflict frequently spilling from the neighboring region of Jonglei. This cross-border conflict from Murle assaulters occurred intensively in 1985 and has continued up to date in the Gambella region, particularly in both the Nuer and Anywaa Zones.

One of the research participants stated that the conflict between the Murle and the Nuer ethnic groups intensively occurred during the SPLM/A era. These Sudanese rebels established their military camp in Bilpam, which is present-day Puldeng Kebele. Itang was established as the military headquarters. It also served as the largest refugee camp in the world since there was a greater influx of Southerners who encamped there (Young, 1999). The SPLA/M army began to establish a new garrison around Mangok and Chatyier Kebeles, which are nearer to the Jekow side of South Sudan⁶. Therefore, SPLM/A military operations via the Nuer zone area became a government armed both the Murle and Nuer communities to battle the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) (Johnson, 2009).

Before the 1980s, the Murle men lived armless and were less acquainted with firearms. They didn't even know the use of guns. In the 1960's the Sudan government recruited some local militiamen among the southerners to deal with the rebellion ignited by the southern Sudan guerilla group in 1955 (Johnson, 2009). Thus, through these recruitments, few light arms fall into the hands of Murle, Dinka, and Nuer civilians in both Jonglei and the Upper Nile States. Diverting the objective, the local men began to use these light weapons to raid the cattle of their

⁶ Donyang Lew is an elder in the Lare Woreda as well. At the time, he was 60 years old. On April 10, 2023, I interviewed him and mentioned that it was the first time since 1987 that I had witnessed the Murle attack in Pibor village.

neighboring communities. During that period, loss of human souls and child abduction were quite rare in their endeavors. With regards to Anyanya(I) insurgents, there were armed bandits and insurgents who engaged in illicit activities such as plundering and abduction among the local communities in Gambella (Regassa, 2007).

With the resumption of the Sudanese civil war, light guns fell into the hands of civilians. In 1984 and 1985, the Murle armed youth carried out heavy attacks on Lou Nuer, burning down more than six mini-villages (Manyok, 2017). According to Tasew (2017), in terms of frequency of the incursion and intensity of damage, the average death related to cattle rustlings and abduction of children steadily increased annually. Cattle raiding and human trafficking between Nuer and Murle are particularly bloody.

By the onset of the second Sudanese civil war in 1983, the territories inhabited by Anywaa and the Nuer where areas were youths from South Sudan usually crossed the border to join the rebels' training camps in Bilpam and Bonga for recruitment. After the deployment, the soldiers were dispatched in these directions and some of the ill-trained soldiers used to engage in outrages such as looting and plundering and went unpunished. When the areas become familiar to the South Sudanese living along the border especially the Murle intruders who reside in the Jonglei State, it becomes easier for them to initiate the organized raids against the Nuer and Anywaa living in Gambella. This movement made it possible for raiders to carry out their work of unbridled violence such as cattle rustling and abductions along the Ethio-Sudanese border⁷.

In 1983, the two zones had not been free from the grievous consequences of the Sudan Civil War. When the dissenter battalions from Pibor, Pochalla, Akobo, and Bor garrisons sparked open mutinies against the Nimeiri's leadership, large numbers of defected armies and refugee populations from the Sudan fled in mass into Ethiopia via Anywaa and Nuer territories. Many people began to know the localities and acquainted themselves with the essential resources

⁷ Tutkuack kong from Jekow Woreda at Chatyier kebele, the victim of 2016 Murle attack, this realistic event was recorded. He narrated that, three children were abducted and one of his children was killed with her mother, I interviewed him on June 20/2023

available in the areas. In addition, these mutinied armed forces intruded into Ethiopia. Before crossing the border, some sold their lightweight weapons to the communities residing around the mutinied garrisons ⁸

Mossa (2013) states that SPLM/A was a friend of the Derg regime in Ethiopia by sharing an enemy Sudan regime; the issue led the Sudan rebel group to stay in the Gambella region for the permission of the Ethiopian government. Like this, the surrounding areas where the SPLM/A stay to confront their enemy Sudan are (the Nuer zone), especially those areas located where an army exchanges bullets and the people living in the area are vulnerable to the frequency of war as well as the activities (Tasew, 2017). On the other hand, the Gambella region has become the headquarters of SPLM/A to train their army and illicit trade; smuggling has been practiced during the crisis (Mossa, 2013).

When the civil war broke out in the Sudan in 1955, Ethiopia became a haven for dissident factions. The imperial regime hosted both the Southern Sudanese insurgents and the refugees, though they secured their normalcy through the successful arrangement of the 1972 peace agreement. Similarly, the Sudan government began to show its political hospitability by accommodating Eritrean rebels. Influenced by the global and political atmosphere, the two neighboring countries began to run a pattern of tit-for-tat political and diplomatic strategies that continued until the last decade of the twentieth century. The tit-for-tat politic characterized by mutual mistrust, both the Ethiopian and Sudanese governments continued to accuse each other of providing military support to their hosting rebels to topple the respective regimes. After the abrogation of the 1972 peace agreement, a good number of Sudanese rebels fled to their neighboring Ethiopia. They were warmly welcomed by the Derg regime. They were given training camps and garrisons within the kebeles of Gambella Awraja, where Anywaa and Nuer resided (Mossa, 2013).

Similarly, the surrounding area where the SPLM/A stayed to confront their enemy in the Sudan is the Nuer zone, especially, those areas located closer to the disputed towns. The people living

⁸ Lual Lock Interviewed him on May 12 Lare Woreda

in these areas were vulnerable to the frequent combats using heavy weapons, which are being launched discriminately. The civilians also suffered from the undisciplined activities of the roaming rebels' soldiers (Tasew, 2017). On the other hand, the Gambella region has become the headquarters of SPLM/A to train their army. As a result, there was illicit trade. Arm smuggling has been practiced during the crises (Mossa, 2013).

In the second half of the 19th century, due to push and pull factors such as demographic pressure and the need for green pasture, a small flock of Nuer subsequently moved from the western part of the Nuer land in the present-day Unity State (Bentui) of the Republic Sudan and settled toward the eastern part. This eastward advancement of the Nuer ethnic group has displaced the Dinka, Murle, and Anywaa from the lands occupied by them earlier, Hutchinson. S.E (2009). Furthermore, the Nuer pushed the Anywaa people toward the east side along the salient corridor of the Baro River and Dinka was pressed westward, and the Nuer instantly settled. This event of settlement was completed in the 1870s, before the Anglo-Ethiopian treaty of 15th May 1902, which delimited the Ethio-Sudanese boundary.

Oral traditions and interviews suggested that the Nuer population movement and infiltration into other people's territory was characterized by peaceful negotiation. They donate to a girl or give a head of cattle to stay and graze the cattle. On some occasions, when they failed to reach promising cordial relations, they began to expand their territory by occasional raids (Warbay Pal 2023).

The Nuer tribe (Lou) gave 300 heads of cattle to the Murle sometime during the 1930s or 1940s for the right to dry-season their cattle around Biem, on Khor Geni, although the Murle had moved back into the area by the mid-1950s (Hutchinson, 1962). During that period, the Dinka and Anuak tribes had resistance to receiving the head of cattle from the Nuer and used the technique of fighting with the Nuer tribe to protect territory not occupied, but the Nuer still advanced strongly in the land. The small section of the Nuer tribe (Jikany-Kiir) occupied the largest territory of the Anuak tribe, starting from South Sudan (Nassir). The participant stated

that some of the villages back to the riverside are named in the Anuak language (Jingmire, Dojok, Nyangnyi, Kual, and others)⁹.

In the first half of the 20th century, when the Anywaa realized that they were about to lose their plentiful land, they started to mobilize the Murle militia to attack the Nuer people. Both factions have agreed that if Nuer settlements are destroyed, they will share livestock and other important assets among themselves. However, the land must remain in the possession of the Anywaa people. In the second half of the 20th century, the Nuer tribe penetrated traditional Anywaa territories, and this marked the genesis of the Nuer-Anywaa conflict (Mossa, 2013).

According to Arensen (2015), the previous several years have been the deadliest, with raids and fighting between the Lou Nuer and the Murle. As a result, the attacks became more common in the 1960s, when the Sudanese government armed both the Murle and Nuer populations in their war against the southern rebel movement, Anyanya I. This was not a new situation during the 2003 conflict between Anywaa and the Gambella Region's highlands. The Ethiopian central government claimed that the SPLM/A armed Anywaa youths at Pochalla (Mossa, 2013).

Most of the populations of the Nuer are agro-pastoralists. They combine agriculture with cattle keeping based on seasonal migration (Prendergast *et al.*, 2012). During the focused group discussion, the participants acknowledged that for both Nuer and Murle traditions, cattle have special cultural value among the communities. The usual term used by the Nuer people is "cattle are the lifeblood of the Nuer". Both Murle and Nuer have their lives centered on livestock and are less likely to farm. The Nuer used cattle rearing along with crop cultivation. As a result, they demand large territories of land resources for grazing, water, and farming. This results in encroachment on neighboring lands (Dereje, 2013).

It is regarded as a mark of prestige among the Nuer and Murle ethnic groups to own huge flocks of cattle. Cattle are essential to social interactions. They hold a particular position in the plans for marriage. These ethnic groups of cattle herders give bride prices in the form of livestock. It's true

⁹ Omot Oman one of the victim from Jor Woreda I interviewed him on June 10, 2023 at Ulwao kebele he telling me his family story that, they are currently living in Pignudo refugee camp for survival.

that different towns provide different numbers of cattle as bride prices. According to Emmanuel, a groom may show the Murle his affluence by presenting 60 head of cattle as a bride.

In contrast to this, Mossa (2013) found that in the Murle community, a groom may present 400-500 cattle as bride wealth. During data collection, a Murle young man who became one of the key informants narrated that marriage was a social arrangement that involved both the parents of the bridegroom and groom. Coming into a common term, the two families can reach an agreement that the family members of the bridegroom can present 60 head of cattle to the family of the girl as bride wealth. However when the family of the groom is not willing to accept the marriage proposal offered to them by the bridegroom's family, the loved friends cannot come into a stage where they may become a couples. Finally, when the girl's parents accept the proposal, the bridegroom's family will be charged 80-90 head of cattle. In addition, there is a fierce competition for a beautiful girl. When such an accession happens, the bridegroom can pay approximately 100 cattle or even more than that.

Despite the exact number of bride prices, bridegrooms among the Nuer may present a certain amount of bride wealth. Currently, the functional amount ranges from 30 to 35. Meanwhile, the amount of bride wealth paid by the family of the bridegroom is steadily increasing. As a result, a community-based organization known as the Nuer Development Association (NDA) strictly regulated the amount to a minimum of 25 heads of cattle, though there should be a voluntary agreement between the parents of both the groom and the bride concerning the legal number of the bride's wealth¹⁰. The major factor contributing to the reduction in the number of cattle used as bridewealth is economic hardship and frequent cattle rustling.

Many young people among the Nuer prefer elopement at these recent ages because it saves resources and avoids several steps of the formal system of marriage locally known as *ku2n luaak* (byre marriage). Thus, those who choose elopement can pay 15 cattle, cease quarrel payments, and disburse fees.

¹⁰Nuer Development Association (NDA), it's an organization of Nuer, it also helps the community to modernize their cultural activities. I interviewed the manager of the office at Gambella Region in April, 20,2023

There are multiple explanations for why young males choose to run away. It occurs when there are not enough bride prices owned by the groom. It may also happen if the prospective in-laws reject the bridegroom's proposal. Another reason a girl might elope is if a man she doesn't like presses her to marry him. The girl becoming pregnant and not being able to tell her parents about it is the final reason.

Eloperments mostly end up with disputes. Girls are treated like corporal chattels. Therefore, the stealing (elopement) of the girl may trigger the father's anger and disappointment. Nuer girls are raised by their parents as valuable assets. They expect them to be exchanged soon with the bride's wealth of approximately twenty-five cows. To some extent, it may exceed such an amount. More gifts sometimes accompanied these marriage cattle. In recent times, elopement has been frequent. Through elopement, the would-be family will escape the marital procedures and form their own home at their whims. When a man has illegally run away with the girl, he will report it to the kebele leaders and both in-laws will be called to sit and discuss cattle of about 15 cows. When the groom's side fails to pay, the social court sanctions them by paying fines. These fines are worth thousands of amounts of money or cattle. Nuer Development Association (NDA, 2023)

Many Nuer elders do not consider elopement as an old-age tradition among Nuer. They consider it as a culture of stealing rampant among the society because of the normlessness that occurred by the time the SPLA started to operate in the early 1983s. Some years back it occurred in a rare case. When someone elope an individual's daughter, it seems he steals another person's asset. When you meet him, nothing can save his dear life. This is disrespect, contempt, and unlawful possession of your observable property. People called this a "secret" or "informal" marriage (Jones, *et al.* 2016).

The Nuer, in their social and economic history, views cattle as principal sources and symbols of life. According to Evans Pritchard (1940), cattle are not only reared because of their nutritive utility but also for their common social value. Cattle are attached to health, fertility, status, and prosperity. People see themselves as bound to their herds in an intimate symbiosis of survival. Whereas cattle depend on human beings for protection and care, people depend on cattle as

insurance against ecological hazards and as vital sources of milk, meat, leather, and dung. It is the payment of blood wealth that enables people to resolve violent conflicts peacefully.

Apart from milk and meat, cattle furnish the Nuer with numerous household necessities. When we consider how few their possessions are, we can appreciate the importance of cattle as raw materials. The bodies and bodily products of cattle have the following uses:

Their skins are used for beds, trays, for carrying fuel cords for tethering and other purposes, flails leather collars for oxen, and the tympana of drums. They are employed in the manufacture of pipes, spears, shields, and snuff containers. The scrota of bulls are made into bags to contain tobacco, spoons, and other small objects, and hairs are made into tassels used as dance ornaments by girls and to decorate the horns of favorite oxen. Their bones are used for the manufacture of armlets, and as beaters, pounders, and scrapers. Their horns are cut into spoons, used in the construction of harpoons. Their dung is used for fuel and plastering walls, floors, and the outsides of straw huts in cattle camps. It is also employed as a plaster in minor technological processes and to protect wounds. The ashes of burnt dung are rubbed over men's bodies and are used to dye and straighten the hair, as a mouthwash and tooth powder, in the preparation of sleeping skins and leather bags, and for various ritual purposes. Their urine is used in churning and cheese-making, in the preparation of gourd utensils, for tanning leather, and bathing face and hands. The skins of sheep and goats are worn as loin garments by married women, used as rugs to sit on, made into bags for storing tobacco and millet, and cut into strips to be tied around their ankles by youths when dancing. (Evan-Pritchard, 1940).

Based on the above citation, cattle have had instrumental value among the Nuer throughout the ages. Evan-Pritchard (1940) continued to describe the keen interest the Nuer placed in cattle with the following words: "Cattle are the dearest possession, and they gladly risk themselves to defend their herds or to pillage those of their neighbors" (*Ibid.*).

Moreover, the Murle share the same spirit that values cattle most, like their Nuer counterpart. There are several reasons why Murle intruders are the most dangerous cattle rustlers and kidnappers in the Anywaa and Nuer areas at the adjacent border between Ethiopia and South

Sudan. Among the key informants, the Murle kidnap children for two reasons. Principally, it is to expand their numbers so that they are more competitive in the area and obtain more control over resources. Additionally, the Murle kidnap children to exchange them for cattle in the future. One of the young men from the Murle stated that the reason children are abducted is that when someone has a female child, they only adopt a boy. If a woman only has a boy, she may adopt a girl to be the child's sibling. Murle also argues that the practice of abducting children is deeply rooted in their cultural beliefs and traditions. They believe that by taking children from other communities, they can ensure the continuation of their lineage and strengthen their social fabric.

During an interview, Murle participants stated that the exchange of children for cattle is used not just for economic reasons, but also to form alliances and preserve peaceful ties with other tribes. Regardless of these opposing opinions, it is critical to recognize that child abduction is a very worrisome issue with serious ramifications for the children involved. It not only disrupts their lives and denies them their rights, but it also feeds a cycle of violence and instability within the community. To prevent future harm and establish a safer environment for all children, efforts must be made to address the core causes of child abduction, such as poverty and restricted access to education¹¹.

However, child abduction is a crime that knows no border. It affects children from all walks of life. It is a problem that requires a multi-faceted approach, involving collaboration between governments, law enforcement agencies, and non-profit organizations. One crucial aspect of addressing this issue is raising awareness and educating communities about the dangers of child abduction and the importance of safeguarding children's rights. By empowering individuals with knowledge and resources, we can create a collective effort to protect our most vulnerable members and work towards a world where every child can grow up in a safe and nurturing environment.

¹¹ Zakaria is a Murle refugee from Ukugo Camp at Dimma Woreda I interviewed him on April 15, 2023.

Furthermore, critics argue that the practice of adopting girls to provide companionship for boys perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and reinforces the idea that women exist solely for the benefit and comfort of men. They argue that this practice undermines efforts towards gender equality and empowerment. Additionally, it is important to consider the long-term psychological and emotional impact on the abducted children who are forced into these adoption arrangements, as they may suffer from trauma and a loss of identity.

Practically, the Anywaa and Nuer people are the primary victims of these abductions. Therefore, in 2016, a band of the Murle insurgents crossed the Ethiopian border from South Sudan and abducted 131 children from three districts of the Nuer Zone and the Gog district of the Anywaa Zone. Once, they locked the children alone inside a hut surrounded by heavily armed men and gave them only milk during their captivity. Ethiopian troops crossed into South Sudan in search of the abducted children but could only rescue 93 children in that operation. The rest have not yet been repatriated. The 2016 abduction stands out for the number of children taken. However, child abductions have been increasing in previous years, and secondary to that, neither the Ethiopian government nor the local administrations have taken steps to actively protect their citizens along the border.

The Murle's child abduction practice has disturbed every family of the Anywaa and the Nuer along the border, and even the local administration could not take any measures to rescue the abducted children. Previously, Murle insurgents avoided casualties while carrying out their raids to not draw attention to their activities, sometimes combining the abductions with cattle rustling. Thus, the central governments of Ethiopia and South Sudan were aware of these situations (FGD, 2023).

Moreover, child abduction represents a serious human rights violation that, under international law, should be condemned. Insurgents' activities tear apart families, typically from the Anywaa and Nuer tribes. Child abduction across international borders is the most heartbreaking of all, and it violates family law and fundamental human rights. The Murle insurgents are strangers who remove children, usually babies, from Anywaa, Nuer, and other people across the border with the

intent to bring up the child as their own and inculcate these children with their cultural practices and values.¹²

The finding reveals that cattle are valued above and beyond their material contribution to human survival. On the other hand, cattle are the principal medium through which Nuer and Murle create enduring social bonds among themselves and forge new alliances with outsiders. Without access to cattle, a man cannot procreate. As mentioned above, transfers of bride wealth and cattle alone ensure a man heir who will carry on his name and line. Hence, without access to cattle, a man is effectively barred from participating in the negotiation of extended political alliances through cattle exchange. Therefore, the finding shows that interest in cattle from Murle tribes is regularly increasing, and to own the cattle, youths mobilize themselves to bring the cattle from where they get them.

Droughts caused pastoralist tribes to move in search of water and pastureland during dry seasons, in addition to the Murle and Anywaa cultural assumptions. Furthermore, borderland eco-zones have been damaged by extended drought, unsustainable land usage, and overgrazing practices. Since then, Murle and Nuer militias have continued to undertake livestock raids and counter raids against each other, although violent battles were not as frequent as they have been in recent years (Tasew, 2017).

Furthermore, upgrading the cattle values from both Nuer and Murle communities, also means the values of humans are less than having a herd of cattle and livelihoods. Missing the values of humans has been revealed to be unethical actions among three groups (such as adultery, theft, deaths, bride wealth, and personal injury). Hence, cattle are the subject target of many problems, In Nuer society there is a saying; "ThieĽ duēr mī/bāäl Yaŋ"¹³ which means 'No human error exceeds the cow' (Peter Monyjuok, 2023).

¹² Flied Notes on May 8, 2023.

¹³ "ThieĽ duēr mī/bāäl Yaŋ" which means 'No human error exceeds the cow' the Nuer slogan (2023).

Although cattle are a certain subject for the promotion of family life and self-motivation to the youths, Nuer valued the cattle more than every resource they owned. Moreover, the people who don't have a herd of cattle are considered poor in the community; sometimes they are not even allowed to participate in the community socio-policy. While Nuer are fears of 'the death' (which is to say, a death without surviving children to 'stand one's head,' remember one's name, and more generally revitalize one's influence in the world.

Hence, the Murle tribe valued the cattle function more than human existence. Mr. Baloch notes that the Murle participants strongly argued that, the youths are going out to raid cattle and abduct children to test their capacity to be men. In addition, the abducted children and women are used for commercial purposes. Each child taken to the market is sold out for 60 herds of cattle. From this point of view, the responsibility will be given to the big brother to distribute the earned cattle; five cattle will be provided to the uncle, and the remaining will be to the owner.

Therefore, inter-ethnic cattle raiding now occur for commercial as well as political reasons. As was demonstrated in 2012 by the near-violent clash in the Pibor area between the Sudan People Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Lou Nuer youths, cattle raiders have become highly armed and better organized to conduct large and complex raiding operations (Small Arms Survey, 2012). Based on analysis of the interviews and observation, the main causes of the exploding level of violent cattle raiding were identified in this study as six different causes.

The participants included the availability of guns and other types of dangerous weapons among members of the communities, commercialization of the cattle raids, incitement from political leaders and self-serving businessmen, high rates of poverty and the need to accumulate wealth, traditional values, and a long history of cattle raiding encouraged by the community leaders, high rates of illiteracy, and increasing dowries as the principal causes of cattle rustling.

Historically, cattle raids were mainly a means for poor families to acquire wealth and cattle (Hutchinson, 1962). Based on various accounts, the main types of weapons used during the raiding activities included spears, sticks, bows and arrows, and clubs. However, from comparison and interpretation of the documentary materials, it became clear that over time, such

cattle thefts have evolved into organized cattle rustling with sophisticated methods (Manyok, 2017). This evidence is supported by the analysis and interpretation of the interview results.

Careful data analysis of the key formant interview and observation yields a list of the major factors that drove the communities into the cattle raid attack against each other, wreaking death, and property loss. Therefore, the factor that was prevalent in the responses and supported by the analysis of the documentary sources was the high value of cattle among individuals from the Murle community. Through analysis of information from documentary sources, interviews, and the researcher's interpretation of the observation, some of the main reasons why civilians demand weapons were more. The key factors discussed in the analysis that follows including easy access to dangerous weapons and instigation from political leaders or leaders with self-interests who rally communities to rise against each other.

Another factor is that most of the people from Boma County are poor, and their thought to earn resources is engaged in cattle raiding just to increase their herds and livelihoods (Manyok, 2017). The protection of its citizens ought to be the main objective of any government. Most people who live in rural areas of Gambella rely on livestock as their main source of livelihood. The ethnic groups in Gambella have been disarmed by the Ethiopian government as a means of maintaining security among local communities. However, the pastoralist communities around the borderland in Gambella need weapons to protect themselves in the absence of government security along the remote frontiers.

Manyok, (2017) notes that, civilians keep weapons and light arms to protect their heads of livestock from cattle rustlers. As the average people who live in rural areas are mostly cattle keepers, carrying a weapon is an opportunity to protect their herds of livestock from cattle rustlers¹⁴. It became a big opportunity for Murle rustlers when they found out that the Ethiopian government disarmed communities. They started to move without threat from anything. Likewise, when armed groups in Jonglei State hear that the Ethiopian side is disarmed, it becomes a blessing for them to raid communities with easy challenges. (Mossa, 2013).

¹⁴ Field Note, at Jekow Woreda on April 25, 2023

During an interview, one of the key informants stated that the weak government of Sudan at the time failed to render defense against raids. The recent failure of the South Sudan national government to provide security to its people has forced civilians to search for weapons to defend themselves, their households, and their communities. In this pastoral setting, the need for grassy lands and water points has become the most pressing resource in the region. The people, therefore, keep weapons as a form of deterrence against attacks on the territory they occupy. Moreover, since South Sudan has been torn apart by many forms of ethnic and political violence, the anticipation of renewed violence is a major reason for the people to feel the need to arm themselves. Food insecurity is a major cause of anxiety and violence in the Murle community (Krause-Jackson and Richmond, 2011).

Zakaria reiterated this situation like this¹⁵:

The abducted children from the Nuer and other communities were taken to market to be sold in Pibor (Murle) County. The target people who purchase the children are different based on the need to have a child. Some people need to buy a boy if they are lacking a boy child, and some need to buy a girl if there is no girl child at home.

Thus, during the crisis, the Murle assaulters placed more interest in the children and cattle. They kill adult men and women. In recent attacks carried out in the Nuer zone, most dead people were ages 18 and above. Thus, during those incidents, the death toll for children was lower, and it happened because of crossfire. Cross-border cattle raids and child abductions by the Murle ethnic groups have been common threats to various ethnic communities living along the borders (Dereje, 2010). Hence, the kidnapping of children by Murle insurgences is becoming a threat to Nuer and Anywaa zone areas currently¹⁶.

The practice of abduction of children by the Murle insurgences has imposed a dreadful peril on the communities living along the borderline areas. The findings reveal that the Murle system of

¹⁵ As a Murle scholar, Zakaria traveled from South Sudan to Ethiopia. He attended Gambella Teachers and Health Science College. On April 19, 2023, I interviewed him at Gambella Teacher Teaching & Health Science College.

¹⁶ Gatluak Yang Thon is a Puokueth kebele elder who was assigned to the Nuer zone as Ager Chumagile. On May 20, 2023, I interviewed him again at the Makuey Woreda.

child snatching is exceptional in the sense that other ethnic groups on the frontier do not conduct such practices. In contrast to this, the Murle community is not the only ethnic group in South Sudan that participates in these activities¹⁷.

Nonetheless, some scholars argue that the Murle community's participation in abducting children is due to infertility and cultural dominance (Horn of Africa Bulletin, 2017). Other researchers believe that victims of illness are not fertile, and they wish to acquire the child by being abducted from other communities. In this case, the Nuer community living on the borderline between Ethiopia and South Sudan suffers exceedingly from subsequent attacks carried out by the Murle Youth. Child abduction is therefore a major security concern for both pastoralists and agriculturalists on the frontier.

The research finding states that inter-ethnic conflict is a result of a lack of socio-economic access and opportunities, a clear national agenda, constant physical and livelihood threats, therefore, the proliferation of weapons, contested national and group territorial borders and boundaries, intra- and inter-group struggles for power and wealth, increasing climate pressures, and the breakdown of traditional conflict mitigation (Gordon, 2014). The research participants reveal that the period of assaults in the Nuer zone by the Murle insurgence groups has occurred seasonally, and the starting time to abduct children is habitually in the winter, especially in the months of December. It also occurs intermittently in April and May. A similar view was supported by Mossa (2017), who noted that everyone in the community runs away when it is about the time of Murle's arrival. He remarkably mentioned that the Murle cross-border assault occurred in Gambella between December and May. For that range of time, the dangerous season is from April to May. During this time, the entire community left the village and moved to other locations. In these two months, all rivers and streams started to dry up; even the Baro River (the largest river in the Nuer Zone) could be easily crossed without swimming or canoeing. The local community residing in Nuer Zone started to leave the other villages and is now confined to Woreda towns, which seem

¹⁷Emmanuel was a Murle scholar who traveled from South Sudan to Ethiopia. He attends Gambella Teachers and Health Science College. On May 3, 2023, the same interview was held at Gambella College.

relatively more secure. In other places, the participants state that when the community comes together in one village, they initiate youth grouping (Bunnam), which is to mobilize youth to protect the insurgency group from rustling and abducting people. These are the periods of tension in the Nuer zone caused by Murle rustlers.

4.2.2. The Major Causes of Conflict between Murle and Anywaa

In conflict theory, it is evident that conflicts do not occur in a vacuum. For a conflict to manifest itself, some root causes encourage it. The types of root causes differ from place to place and from situation to situation.

In history, the settlement patterns of the Anywaa people are mainly concentrated along the main four rivers in the Gambella region, namely Baro (Openo), Alworo, Gilo, and Akobo (Ojot 2013). Based on these riverine settlements, the Anywaa practiced an agrarian economic system. They grow maize and sorghum for their survival. To a lesser degree, the Anywaa also engaged in cattle-rearing activities (Lange, 2020). They usually supplement their livelihood by fishing and hunting (Kagno, 2019).

In the era of territorial expansion in the 19th century, different ethnic groups began to encounter each other. The Murle, who were in the east, began to move westward, where they encountered Anywaa and the Nuer. They began to carry attacks and counterattacks to expand their territory. For instance, in 1910, there were large-scale invasions carried out by neighboring ethnic groups. At that time, the Murle descendants were made captives by the Anywaa (Ibid.). In 1932, due to territorial aspects, the Anywaa waged two raids against neighboring Murle, and as a result, twenty-seven Murle men captured about eighty women and children. At the same time, about eight hundred heads of cattle were seized by the Anywaa. The British government tried to contain the raids, but the Anywaa escaped to the Ethiopian border, Bahru (1982, p.142).

Research participants stated that trade relations are the major cause of conflicts between the Murle and Anywaa ethnic groups. The other cause of the conflict is the competition over land and other valuable resources. Illicit actions such as the abduction of young women and children were also a principal cause. Cattle raids carried out by the Murle against Anywaa were also

mentioned to be among the foremost causes. In an interview, it was illustrated that there are many challenges related to excessive bride prices among the Murle tribes. A marriage arrangement for a divorced woman is worth 70 cows. A virgin girl aged about eighteen is worth thirty to forty based on the agreement between the bridegroom and the bride. The informant narrated that the community pays for seventy cows because a lady is taken with her children. Whenever an incident happens, especially when one of the children kills someone, the event will go to their uncle. Mr. Lilu Ibon said that divorce is decreasing because of the resolution between families¹⁸.

Furthermore, he expounded that if a man doesn't have a family, he must adopt children to have a family at home. A woman who gives birth only to a female child and without a boy child may remain at home alone when all her daughters are married. As a result, she must adopt a boy child to remain at home and perpetuate children. Participants reveal the fact that they adopted children from Dinka. For the first time, the Dinka sold their children to Murle tribes. When the Murle saw that transaction, they mobilized themselves to go and abduct the children. Businessmen always face challenges. There are no accessible roads. There were killers in the bush. The unknown gunmen attackers travel along the road. The Murle don't know how-to live-in town. Among the towns established in Murle territories, they perceived that the living standard was so high. Thus, Murle aspired for cattle because they presumed that all cattle were their possessions.

The conflicts between the Murle and Anywaa communities in villages like Pakok, Raat, Chuuri Murle, and Gnalangore are rooted in territorial disputes. While the Murle claims these lands as their own, there is ongoing debate among participants regarding their rightful ownership. In 2013, despite the tensions, females from both communities showed compassion by welcoming Murle refugees without resorting to violence. However, tragically, the peace was short-lived, as 102 people lost their lives in the subsequent violent clashes between the two communities. The cycle of violence and bloodshed has deepened the divide between these communities, making it

18 Lilu Ibon was Murle scholars from South Sudan to Ethiopia. He studies in Gambella Teachers Teaching and Health Science College. The same interview was conducted at Gambella College on May 3, 2023

increasingly difficult to reach a resolution. Efforts to mediate and find a peaceful solution have been met with resistance and mistrust from both sides. The government's intervention has been limited, further exacerbating the situation. Reconciliation seems like a distant dream as the wounds from these clashes continue to fester, leaving a trail of death and destruction in their wake.

In 2013, females welcomed us without fighting, but 102 people were killed in the Ukugo camp from 2018 to 2022 G.C. Murle refugees fled South Sudan out of fear of being killed by the Anywaa. Murle respondents claimed they were called by Anuak to raid a Nuer cow and abduct children, causing conflict in Ethiopia. This conflict escalated over time, with retaliatory attacks and counterattacks leading to a cycle of violence between the Murle and Anywaa communities. The Ethiopian government struggled to maintain peace and protect the affected populations, leading to an influx of international aid and humanitarian organizations to assist in the crisis. Efforts were made to reconcile the warring factions and address the root causes of the conflict, including resource disputes and historical animosities, in order to achieve a lasting peace in the region.

4.2.3. The consequence of the conflict between Murle and Anywaa

Social conflicts, both inter-clan and intra-clan, can have both direct and indirect negative impacts on disputants. Historical incidents between Murle and Anywaa have varying consequences based on their nature and period, leading to significant human loss and economic crises. These challenges are significant and impactful¹⁹. The loss of lives during inter-clan conflicts not only devastates families and communities but also undermines the social fabric of the affected region. Additionally, the economic aftermath can be equally severe, as agricultural activities are often disrupted, trade routes are disturbed, and infrastructure is damaged. The magnitude of these

¹⁹ Othow Okoth is deputy of the Peace and Security Bureau Security Affairs at Gambella Region. I interviewed him at Gambella Town on May 18, 2023.

challenges necessitates urgent interventions to restore peace, provide assistance to the affected populations, and support long-term development efforts in order to prevent further human suffering and economic decline.

According to the informants, one of the challenges among these conflicts is the cattle raids carried out by the Murle against the Anywaa in the Gambella regional state. Because of the attacks carried out by the Murle tribe, the fatal consequences for Anywaa ethnic groups were indiscriminate killings, denial of access to water sources, food shortages, and road missing. The Murle trains their children to hide themselves when they go after the cattle. However, an area such as Jor is susceptible to murder raids.

The Murle tribe has a system of securing the local area before they wage an attack. The security must assess both the challenges and possibilities of carrying out an attack. Research findings have revealed the fact that these conflicts result in the loss of lands, resources, and properties among both tribes. The FGD sources have elucidated candid evidence about the consequences of the conflicts for the victimized groups.

As an indirect factor, conflict also destroys interactions and social relationships. It perverts harmonious relationships among the disputant tribes. It also causes the conflicting ethnic groups to have limited information exchanges caused by suspicion and discord. More importantly, it can disrupt social ties. Communities that once had frequent social contacts among themselves could not visit each other. The Murle and Anywaa seldom share resources. Some ambushes kill along the roads or at night in the villages.

Conflicts are a serious threat to the lives and well-being of disputant ethnic groups. Unless issues of peace building are addressed, the chance of their survival is in peril. There are displacements, abandonment of farmlands, and exposure to a new environment where the displaced clans become settlers. Among all, women and children are the victims of these violent conflicts.

The Murle tribe's cattle raids against the Anywaa in the Gambella region have led to indiscriminate killings, denial of access to water sources, food shortages, and road deaths. The Murle tribe trains their children to hide when pursuing cattle, while areas like Jor are susceptible

to murder raids. Civilian possession of guns is another tragic result of Murle-Anywaa hostilities. Men can purchase illegally imported AK-47 firearms from South Sudan's war-torn areas, leading to numerous weapons in the hands of young people. These young men have created mandatory communal assemblies (Bur) as a main source of strife, encouraging young males to own firearms. The price of one gun is four large cows, equivalent to ETB 35,000, causing significant human loss and economic disaster. The Murle-Anywaa conflict has led to the creation of mandatory communal assemblies, which encourage young males to own firearms.

During an interview, informants explain that there has been no government response from the Murle side in South Sudan to address the tendency of Murle youths to go on cattle raids. As a result, the government of South Sudan decided to launch an offensive against the Murle tribe, causing most Murle clans to desert the area.

Furthermore, the Murle participant claims that another concern that Murle suffers in their region is the lack of military garrisons that might regulate security issues like abductions and livestock raids. The Murle area has primary schools; nevertheless, they are understaffed. Murle is comprised of several towns. Among them are Gumuruk, Boma Bertert, Pibor, Bertet, and Lekwangole. There is neither effective school nor appropriate security protection for the residents in these places.

Practically, the Murle have various social classes they teach to attack humans. Bototh (Duck), Lango (Antelope), Kureene (Giraffe), and Tibithwa (Hyena) are the species. As a result, there is a new generation known as Tibithwa (Hyena) who prefer night warfare. Furthermore, things would change if the government prioritized social development. Peace would be nice if the South Sudan administration would implement development projects as quickly as feasible.

Seasonal floods in 2020 and 2022 infected a large number of animals, but the community was mainly damaged by the absence of government intervention in the region; if the government imposed stringent regulations on the Murle youth, they would not encourage abduction.

David Yau Yaw, a prominent leader in the community, took action to address the issue of child snatching, which has been a longstanding problem in the region. GPAA, which stands for Great

Pibor Administrative Area the Murle militias, is a group that focuses on combating child snatching and protecting the welfare of their own communities. Child snatching refers to the act of forcibly taking children from their families, often for purposes such as forced labor or recruitment into armed groups.

Historically, the Murle and Nuer communities have had a complex relationship, with interactions often centered on cattle. When the Murle hears cattle, they view it as an opportunity to acquire resources and engage in cattle raids. This has led to a cycle of interactions between the two communities, characterized by conflicts and tensions over the control of cattle and resources.

On both sides of the conflict, there are diverse perspectives from different stakeholders. Government leaders from both the Murle and Dinka communities have been involved in the situation, each with their own motivations and interests. Community members, particularly the youth, also play a significant role in shaping the dynamics between the communities. Additionally, religious figures from both communities may have different perspectives on the conflict and potential solutions.

The Boma plateau is known for its gold mines, where both Murle and Anywaa communities engage in mining activities. It would be helpful to provide more details on the scale of these mining operations, such as the number of people involved and the economic significance of the gold extraction. Additionally, discussing the impact of these activities on the environment and the local communities would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the situation.

The absence of a functioning government in the area has had significant consequences for the communities involved. Cross-border conflicts and ethnic tensions have escalated, leading to the loss of resources and land. Additionally, the absence of governance has resulted in the vulnerability of young people, who are often caught in the midst of the battles and face the risk of being abducted or harmed. Providing specific examples of conflicts and their consequences would enhance the analysis.

Another key informant among the Anywaa stated that there is no government response to Murle attacks that launched on the Anywaa side. He continuously argues that, Ethiopia's defense force

only protects those who are in the refugee camp and investors workers in the Anywaa Zone. FGD revealed that Gambella regional police and Special Forces have tried to protect the Anywaa zone against the intruding Murle but could not achieve success due to the low involvement of the government. It needs the government to train more militias to protect land and children of Anywaa.

Research results show that the Anywaa villages were deserted, and the people migrated from rural to urban areas due to the frequent conflicts and child abductions committed by the Murle. Second, the respondents believed that both Nuer and Murle wanted to carry out genocide against Anywaa and wanted to loot their resources. The participants said that those two tribes needed to abduct our children. They also want to kill us and want to take land as their property. There were Special Forces, but today these Special Forces are integrated into regional police forces, federal police forces, and the Ethiopian National Defense Forces.

Mr. Okoth stated that, the Murle intruders carried out regular attacks on ethnic groups residing on Ethiopian soil, and the Murle dwelt in neighboring locations, such as Buma. Others resided in Pibor communities such as Pibot, Biter, Lakekawgnole, Gumruk, and Jebel-Buma. He also stated emphatically that the Friday massacre in the Nuer Zone was not only about killing people but also about forcing the community to flee the area they were living in to survive²⁰.

The Murle population is estimated at one hundred and sixty thousand up to one hundred and seventy thousand (although the number may exceed that). They lived along the border between Ethiopia and South Sudan. Centuries ago, the Murle were believed to have moved from the southern part of Ethiopia to the southeastern corridor of today's Jungle State. The Murle usually exits Ethiopian land via Boma to Rat, Raprap, Boi, Nyikane, Agnela, Thoh, and Ashanya to Adong. This migration route has been followed by generations of Murle, as they have established communities and settlements along the way. The Murle are primarily pastoralists, relying on cattle herding for their livelihood. They have developed a deep connection with their animals and

²⁰ Othow Okoth is deputy of the Peace and Security Bureau Security Affairs at Gambella Region. I interviewed him at Gambella Town on May 18, 2023.

consider them to be a symbol of wealth and status within their society. The Murle are known for their intricate beadwork and colorful traditional attire, which reflect their rich cultural heritage. Despite their nomadic lifestyle, the Murle have managed to maintain a strong sense of identity and community, with each clan having its own distinct customs and traditions. Based on their livelihoods, the Murle divided themselves into two. The first were the lotillas. Today, this section of Murle inhabited the Pibor, Veveno, Lotill, Kegnen rivers, Maruwo Hills, and Labarab (Costa, 2013).

Seasonally, these Murle moved and formed a huge livestock camp known as *Jom*, in which they kept their cattle throughout the dry season because this region is very swampy for grazing land and watering their livestock. However, a small section of Murle resided in the Boma plateau and its environs. This group was farmers, and other Murle derogative called them Ngalam (those with no cattle). Moreover, they share a common identity. Despite their differences in occupation and lifestyle, both the pastoral and farming groups of the Murle community share a common identity rooted in their cultural heritage. This sense of unity is bolstered by their traditional practices, language, and customs. It is through these shared experiences that the Murle people continue to maintain their strong sense of belonging and connection to one another, regardless of their varying economic activities.

4.2.4. Cross-border conflicts

A different level of conflict in the Gambella region is cross-border incursions. This is related to large-scale cross-border cattle raiding and the associated loss of human lives from the attacks by the Murle from Southern Sudan. Cross-border livestock theft in border areas has become a source of cross-border conflict between border communities. The Gambella traditional stories revealed that cattle theft is the main cause of the many problems among Nuer pastoralists. However, the participants said cattle raiding between Nuer, Anywaa, and Murle is the root cause of cross-border conflicts.

The Anywaa and Nuer community leaders and the various levels of the regional government have appealed to the federal government to put an end to the havoc Murle is causing on the Anywaa and Nuer pastoralist communities. Despite the deployment of a sizeable federal army in

the region with the principal mandate of giving protection to the oil companies located near the villages subjected to the raids, none of the local communities got the protection they badly needed.

Sources from the key informant interview and FGD demonstrate that Anywaa and Murle agreed. So, Anywaa told the Murle to where they could raid cattle. The Anywaa showed the Murle the way to the Nuer Zone, after the successful agreement Murle began to attack. Some evidence that the Murle raiders began to carry on their raiding activities using guns in a place called Wechpuot in the Makuey of the Nuer zone in May 1985. They raided livestock in two villages, Gnapkuok and Dukdeng, in December of the same year.

According to key informant interviews and focus group discussions, Anywaa and Murle reached an accord. So Anywaa directed the Murle to a livestock-raiding location. And once the Anywaa showed the Murle the route to the Nuer Zone, the Murle began to assault. Some evidence suggests that the Murle raiders began utilizing weapons in May 1985 in a place named Wechpuot in the Makuey of the Nuer zone. In December of the same year, they attacked cattle in two villages, Gnapkuok and Dukdeng. In February 1985, the Murle armed youth attempted another assault on Luel-Manthiech Village. They grabbed over 8,000 livestock and seven men as a consequence. Because of the tension between the Nuer and the Anuak at the time, Anywaa purposefully assisted Murle livestock rustlers. They planned a concerted effort to steal Nuer's livestock. When they were successful, the Murle gave some animals to the Anywaa as part of the spoils.

However, when the Murle heard about livestock raiding in the Nuer Zone, they reacted violently. And they lost many battles with the Nuer, so they decided not to give their share to the Anywaa. This decision was met with resentment from the Anywaa community, who felt betrayed by the Murle's refusal to honor their agreement. Tensions between the two groups escalated, leading to a breakdown in trust and further conflicts. The Murle's decision to withhold the share not only strained their relationship with the Anywaa but also jeopardized the fragile peace that had been established in the region. As the tensions between the Murle and the Anywaa continued to escalate, neighboring communities became increasingly concerned about the potential for a full-

blown conflict. The fragile peace that had been painstakingly established in the region was now at risk of collapsing under the weight of resentment and mistrust. The decision by the Murle to withhold the share not only affected their relationship with the Anywaa but also had far-reaching consequences for the entire community.

The Murle attacked the village of Luore at Makuey Woreda in March 1985 to raid the livestock, but they were unsuccessful despite the killing of four men during the incident. The village young men succeeded in returning their herds of cattle to Murle cattle rustlers. The conflict between the Nuer and Anywaa was exacerbated by this episode. The Nuer vowed vengeance for the lives lost during the unsuccessful attack and started planning their next course of action. The villagers created a unified front to defend their livestock. They also came up with a strategy to fortify their villages against potential attacks. As a result of the Luore villagers' tenacity in the face of the Murle rustlers, they came to be seen as a symbol of resistance and inspired other nearby communities to band together and defend themselves from the shared danger.

Murle launched an attack on the Nuer clan of Chiechaany and Chiewaw in Dualchagor hamlet in March 1986, according to FGD from Jekow woreda. The murderer then went after the livestock and killed them. They then abducted two married women and three 15-year-old girls from Chotlieth hamlet. In 1986, the Murle assaulted Loldeng hamlet and looted 50 cattle heads without causing any damage. These incidents highlight the persistent disagreements and hostility between the Murle and Nuer communities in the Nuer Zone. Raids on cattle and kidnappings of young girls and women are obvious manifestations of the desire for domination and power that drives these horrific acts. Motivated by their interests, the Murle are willing to use harsh measures to assert their domination and control over the area's resources. On the other hand, these attacks have frequently targeted the Nuer, causing them to lose their jobs and loved ones.

Because of the need for grazing land, water sources, and fish, the Nuer young men historically used to move away from Jekow Woreda in the dry season to some land in Jor Woreda and return to their wet season camp in June. This seasonal mobility has ceased today due to a cross-border attack carried out subsequently by the Murle youths.

The Murle launched an attack on the Lare woreda villages of Palkoini, Koat-Manchuong, Biltutthuor, Koy, and Kutoch in March 1987. This was a planned attack. The Murle plundered around three hundred heads of cattle. Anuak tries to block the Murle robbers' path after they plunder the farm animals. Following their successful attack on the Nuer, the Murle engaged in battle with the Anywaa, inflicting five fatalities on Gurgak Oman, who had delivered the Murle to the Nuer and is now fighting alongside the Anywaa against the Nuer. This serves as the catalyst or driving force behind the conflict between Murle and Anywaa up to this point. The animosity between the Murle and Anywaa has long-standing and profound historical origins. Concerning the land resources and livestock, there was a complicated web of rivalries and quarrels. The raid on the cattle of the Nuer was just one incident in a long history of hostilities and conflicts between two adjacent peoples. The murder of the five people simply fueled the conflict, escalating hostility and ensuring that the conflict between the Murle and Anywaa would persist.

The Murle also launched another assault on Nuer villages in Makuay Woreda, such as Thiajak, Pet-Machyier, and Manmagur, in December 1988. They looted more than 2,000 head of cattle, but there were no casualties from that attack.

In January 1989, the Murle attempted but failed to assault Puokkueth village at Makuay Worked to capture the children. This attack, however, resulted in the deaths of two persons. The Murle kidnapped the mother and her two children (a boy and a girl) during a raid on the village of Luel-Nyegal the same year. To prevent similar incursions, William Nyuon Bany, the SPLA military chief, supervises the repatriation of abducted women and children from the Murle in Pibor town, which is the Murle town. The kidnapping of a mother and her two children in Luel-Nyegal hamlet sparked outrage and increased tensions between the Murle and neighboring communities²¹.

²¹ Mer Thokwang she is a victim from Puokueth Kebele, and I interviewed her on May 21, 2023, at the Makuay Woreda.

During an interview, Peter Monjuok recalled that the Murle armed groups' invaded Bilrutvillage in April 1991, killing two individuals but failing to raid and kidnap children. On the other hand, the Murle mounted another significant attack on Bilrut village in April 1991. Once more, eight people, including women, men, and children, were slaughtered, the area was abandoned by the local people, and 1,000 heads of livestock were taken. The Murle armed groups launched another heavily targeted attack on Palbuol and other villages in Lare Woreda in February 1992, resulting in the murder of five people and the kidnapping of two children.

In Machbany village, the Murle also killed five women and one man and pillaged forty heads of cattle. The Murle looted 5,000 livestock and attacked Puldeng Kebele in Itang Special Woreda in the same month of 1992. The Murle were able to continue their coordinated assaults on multiple Nuer woredas and villages. These armed wars have terrible effects on vulnerable people, such as little children and innocent women. It was a devastating reminder of the devastation that had been inflicted on these communities. People were forced to flee their homes due to the violence, leaving the area desolate and haunted by memories of the atrocities committed. As a result of the wounds these attacks left behind, the survivors' lives and those of the whole community are still being affected today²².

4.2.5. Consequences of cross-border attacks

The pastoralist communities living along the borderlands of Ethiopia and South Sudan are continuously losing their family members and resources because of cross-border attacks by insurgent groups (UN-OCHA, 2008). Consequently, cattle rustling is one of the vital sources of the attack; it is the most violent form of murder in Nuer Ethiopia. Richardson (2011) also found that cattle rustling in Jonglei State cause all violence among pastoralists. In addition to this, the Nuer and Murle tribes attacked each other, leading to a dozen deaths and the displacement of thousands.

²²I interviewed Chuol Chuol Makuey Woreda Chief Administrator on May 20, 2023, in the Makuey Woreda.

The frequent attacks from Murle assaulters on several villages in the Ethiopian communities made many people leave several villages that are located along the borderland. Attacks and the frequency of cattle rustling led to most people fleeing between the border communities from the Nuer Ethiopia side. According to one of the key formats, the first attack from Murle Rustler on the Nuer living in Ethiopia side has been carried out since 1985. In that year, the Murle attacked Ngapkuok village. Thus, the Nuer brought back the cattle, and no man was dead²³.

“In addition, the Murle militias raided another village called Lual-Manthiech the same year. During the battles, they grabbed over 800 livestock and killed seven guys. As a result, the attacks have been more frequent from 1985 until the present. Murle rustlers killed valiant guys in the previous attack, according to the participants. This is because Nuer men are more likely than women to keep livestock. Thus, the informant stated that Murle intruders committed their heists in the green fields. In comparison to the latest attack, it is a very rare attack that may have resulted in a dozen deaths, the killing of women, and the abduction of children. Only able guys can sprint after Murle robbers who steal a head of livestock from the field and return it back.

Accordingly, Evans Pritchard (1940) argues that Nuer’s men are the foundation of their family that might care for survivable overall people. In the past, women were only intense to specific activities at home due to cultural influence; they had no universal responsibility to the family²⁴. Well-nigh, when a person is lost by any accidental issue, the family becomes vulnerable as prosperity flows out through men. Therefore, the families that their men-personal were lost during the Murle conflict are victims of poverty. During an interview, one of the victims of an atrocious raid carried out by the Murle in Lare Woreda glaringly expounded this on the slaughter incident that occurred on Friday, April 15, 2016, with the following words²⁵;

²³Gatluak Yang Thon is an elder in the Puokueth kebele; he was assigned to the Nuer zone as Ager Chumagile. I interviewed him again on May 20, 2023, at the Makuay Woreda.

²⁴ Field Note, Jekow Woreda from small village Mading on May 20, 2023

²⁵ Nyazan Monyong, she is a victim from Kuany-Lualthoan kebele, I interviewed her at Lare Woreda on May 15, 2023.

When the attackers opened fire indiscriminately in the village of Kuany-Lualthoan around 5:00 PM, my husband went out and hurried to rescue livestock from Murle rustlers. He returned to rescue us when he thought he had transported cattle to a location where the Murle assailants would not be able to approach them. When he passed us on the road and inquired about the location of our children, I informed him that Murle had abducted two of them. My husband dashed over there (one boy was 11 years old and another was 3 years old) to retrieve the children from Murle. I attempted to persuade him not to pursue them, but he refused. He was killed when he fled and came face to face with rustlers. As a result, my husband has three wives, one of whom was murdered with his mother. For the time being, my two boys were returned when the Ethiopian government returned the children. Following that, the 11-year-old child was trained to be the family's leader in 2021, when he became 16 years old. He began to take on more responsibilities at home. In December 2021, he committed suicide for an unknown reason.

A sudden attack in Jekow Woreda kidnapped 108 children and resulted in 208 fatalities, with women and children being the majority. Gizachew (2023) states that, eighty people were wounded from Murle attacked with more women and children than men. The armed Murle youth took 2,000 cattle, and 56 children were returned to their families. Thus, cattle have significant social and economic values among pastoralist communities. This may leave the whole village to live in poverty since all cattle are taken. Not all people agree on killing and are not responsible. Therefore, one of the most severe consequences is poverty since resources are taken from the hands of the local people.

The loss of cattle can lead to the loss of life in the pastoralist tribe²⁶. Therefore, with the availability of small arms, cattle rustling, and child abductions have become more frequent and fatal. Over the years, insurgent groups among the Murle have increasingly killed more civilians, rustled more cattle, and abducted more children, especially from communities that are not well protected, such as the Nuer and Anywaa living in adjacent areas of Ethiopia.

26 Chambang Jock was the Nuer zone's chief of security. I interviewed him at Makuey Worked on May 21, 2023,

Unfortunately, most attack ends with great losses on ethnic groups living in Ethiopia borderlands, The Murle wage an attack and destroy villages, raiding cattle, and abducting children. For instance, in 2006 Murle insurgents attacked Ngor village around Lare Woreda, raided 4000 cattle and almost 20 people lost their lives. Consistency, 2007 Murle attacked Bilimkun village in the same area of the Lare Woreda and killed more than 18 people most of them women, children, and elders' people. In these years the attack frequently occurs and unrecorded clashes between Murle rustlers and cattle keepers in the field. The Murle community adopted the mobilization of youths which became a serious threat to their neighboring community. Tasew, (2017) cited that, Murle youths have the slogan "No Gun, No Life" to reinforce their tribe and protect themselves from entire enemies. Therefore, the mobilizations of youths and external attacks have also led to an increase in the practices of cattle raiding and child abduction.

The community living in the villages that were in front of frequent attacks such as Luel and Chatyier was deprived of living peacefully and in great poverty, unhealthful behavior, and missed education for their children. Some scholars mentioned that missing education is a crisis in the formation of personality; feelings of mistrust, shame, and doubt may come and affect society. In addition to this, children who miss school easily choose to commit suicide, self-harm, drug use, and harm others in the community. The finding showed that the communities living along borderland areas are practicing illicit arms trade and other illegal activities, which may result in a great tragedy for human life. The porous borders coupled with weak local government administration contribute to the intensity of corruption, illicit trade, smuggling of goods, the circulation of small arms, and border insurgents (Tasew, 2017).

Furthermore, the availability of handguns increased cattle rustling and child abduction. In recent years, the Murle rustlers have increasingly killed more villagers, more children were abducted, and the average cattle were rustled. Respectively, the community of the Nuer tribe on the Ethiopian side is the victim of the attack from Murle rustlers because it is not well protected. (FGD, 2023)

According to Abang Ujot, he resides in Jor at Aparwang village state that. Murle attacked often after that, and we abandoned our settlement to travel to Gog Woreda. After more than three years of being internally displaced in the Gog, we struggled to provide for our family's needs. Then, to enter the Pinyudo refugee camp, we had to pretend to be refugees²⁷. Since there is no other way to survive, I registered. Since the Murle militias would attack you while you were working, no one was going out to cultivate their field as normal, which is why we had to apply for refugee status. They kidnap kids, murder people, set fire to every house in the villages, and steal belongings and property. Being internally displaced was difficult enough, but the lack of food made things intolerable. We were forced to flee our houses and take sanctuary at the Pungido camp. I had to register as a refugee to guarantee my family's existence. We had no choice but to leave since the Murle militias were often threatening to attack us while we were working on our crops. They killed, burned, looted, and even kidnapped children—a level of savagery seldom seen in innocent people. Although it was a painful choice, our security had to come first.

Furthermore, Nuer participant Nyaboth recalls that to be safe, we travelled to the nearby border of South Sudan when the Murle attacks were on-going. After that, though, there was food scarcity, so we went to a refugee camp to acquire food, and I registered there along with a few other people to receive food for survival. A portion of the affected communities may be found at the Gnuengyel, Terkidi, Kule 1 and 2, and Pungido shelters. Thousands of displaced people, including women, children, and elderly people who were forced to flee their homes due to the continuous violence, have found temporary refuge and help in these camps. Many of us have persevered in dreaming about and hoping for a settlement to the war despite the challenging conditions.

On the other hand, the Murle militia along the Dimma Woreda had driven the Anywaa from Dimma to Okugo Camp and the four villages. These folks go to Gambella in search of safety, and they end up returning home as refugees. The bloodshed and continued turmoil caused by the Murle militia have compelled them to leave their homes. The Anywaa people take refuge in the

²⁷Abang Ujot, he resides in Jor at Aparwang kebele I interviewed her on Aprile 23, 2023

Gambella area, where they intend to reconstruct their lives and find protection despite being internally displaced. The irony of refugees becoming refugees in their own country is depressing and serves as a stark reminder of the awful circumstances and the urgent need for action to safeguard these vulnerable populations.

In contrast, Murle used to cross the border and attack the people to raid the cattle, and kidnap the children; the Nuer has also been driven from their settlement near the border. The Anywaa and Nuer also took preserves at the camp established in Gambella. The Nuer people endure unbearable hardships due to their congested living quarters and few supplies in the refugee camp²⁸. They find comfort in the assistance they get from relief groups and the community they have formed among themselves despite these challenges. But they want a peaceful and stable future since they are always afraid of new assaults and are still being uprooted from their ancestral territories. However, they continue to be strong and motivated to improve their circumstances and start over amidst the uncertainty.

Therefore, in mid-April Friday 2016, the Murle rustlers from Boma state in South Sudan attacked two Woredas (Jekow and Lare) at the location in the Nuer zone (Gambella Region), and the war affected over 13 villages. The participants indicated that over 182 people were killed and 108 average people mostly school children were abducted. Moreover, the Murle rustlers have raided more than 2,000 head of cattle within the 13 villages on the Ethiopia side (Death Toll tops 200 in cross-borders Ethiopia raid' 2016-04-18). In contrast to this, Murle robbers have raided 4,000 over 13 villages. The participants claimed that the average number of cattle that were raided was more than 4,000 in the entire 13 villages.

In these villages, five people have 1,000 heads of cattle that were raided by Murle robbers. These repeated cross-border conflicts have cost the lives of many people in the communities, even though the attack has resulted in the loss of thousands of cattle, separated little children from their families, and increased the number of internally displaced people. However, the cost of cross-border attacks in the Gambella area was not calculated to quantify economic harm as well

²⁸ FGD on April 21, and May 10, 2023 at Jor Woreda and Jekow Woreda.

as costs associated with relocation and property destruction. According to Obuluttsa (2019), ethnic groups have previously clashed over concerns relating to the use and distribution of resources such as land, water, and wetlands.

The unnoticed borderland insecurity resulted in the loss of well-inhabited communities. It disturbs the living animals in the environment. It trashed the government development system. It results in killings among the community for nonsense purposes. The villagers noted that Murle militia attackers carried AK-47, PKM, GM-3, and RPG assault rifles and killed every person, such as children, women, and elders²⁹. Linked to this, several mentioned previously that Nuer ethnic people are pastoralists in history; therefore, the community often lives in pasture or similar lands that may be suitable for animals such as cows, sheep, and goats to eat for daily life (Evans Pritchard, 1940). Following this, the evacuation of communities to their existing areas resulted in the great loss of their properties. Even though it resulted in the loss of properties, the disability of economic discontinuities of learning in schoolchildren, and created insecurity in the area,

In the community of Makuety Woreda, the Murle assaults resulted in the displacement of the communities in key areas that are suitable for agriculture. Due to insecurity from the Murle insurgency, more than ten main villages were deserted. These were Chotlieth, Longjiok, Bil, Manmegur, Gear, Lual-nyegal, and DukPadiet³⁰. Ochod stated that the frequent attacks from Murle and Lou Nuer led us to leave some areas³¹. The undeserved situation is the actual in other Woreda (Lar and Jekow); the vital pastoral land for agriculture and cattle grazing is not even

29 Othow Okoth is the deputy of the Gambella Region's Peace & Security Bureau Security Affair. On May 18, 2023, I interviewed him in Gambella. Othow stated emphatically that the Friday slaughter in the Nuer Zone was not only about killing people, but also about forcing the population to flee the region in which they were living and seek refuge in another zone.

30 Puok Koak is also the Makuety Woreda's elder. At the time, he was 67 years old. On May 5, 2023, I conduct an interview with him. He claims that the Murle attack in Pibor village happened for the first time in 1987.

31 Ochod Aballa is an elderly victim in the Jor Woreda. On May 17, 2023, I conducted an interview with him.

reached. Some of the villages are Chatyier and Lual; Billimkun, Ngor, Palkoini, and Palbuol; the villages are settled back to the Baro River³².

Sharon (1998) mentioned four main sites or routes of violence, namely, the Jalle-Maar-Pibor route, Kongor-Wernyol-Pibor route, Duk-Payuel or Duk-Padiet-Pibor route, and Ayod/Akobo-Duk-Padiet or Duk-Payuel at Pibor route. Those people living in that area are always suffering from insecurity and violence. When the researcher requested that the participants explain what usually happens when an attack occurs, they argued that Murle rustlers usually attack a village at midnight so that there would be no safe place for all people.

4.2.6. The government's response to the attacks

A coordinated attack by the Murle arm youth from neighboring South Sudan occurred in the Nuer zone of Ethiopia's Gambella region and killed 10 individuals, while 12 others sustained minor and serious injuries. The attackers initiated the assault by indiscriminately opening fire on local people in two Woredas namely Wanthoa and Makuey during the late hours of Saturday, 20 May according to the regional government press secretariat.

According to the press secretariat, the chief administrator of the Nuer zone said the gunmen infiltrated the border on Saturday night, resulting in one fatality and one injury in the Bilkechvillages of Makuey Woreda, whereas the militants claimed the lives of nine individuals and inflicted serious and minor injuries on eleven others in MekaneYesus Church of Matar town of Wanthoa Woreda. He stated that individuals with critical injuries have been promptly transferred to Gambella General Hospital for urgent medical treatment, while those with minor injuries have sought care at local healthcare facilities. Therefore, Gambella region's vice president Thakuey Jock, along with other top officials, visited the victims on Sunday and expressed profound grief over the incident while unequivocally condemning the actions carried out by the Murle tribe militants.

32 Luk Gatkuoth is the kebele leader of Oret in Lare Woreda. On May 8, 2023, I interview him in Kuergeng.

Thus, the regional government underscored its unwavering commitment to bring the attackers to justice and affirmed that robust protective measures would be implemented to prevent any recurrence of such incidents in the future. On February 7, 2023, the Murle tribe's armed intruders attacked Uboa village in the Gog district of the Anywaa zone, killing two people and critically injuring another one (The Gambella Police Commission Report 2023).

In January 2022, militiamen from South Sudan's Murle tribe crossed the border and launched an offensive attack on the region leaving eight people dead and five others injured. It was followed by another attack in the second week of February, of the same year, where Murle armed men killed one, injured two others, and abducted three children in Dimma Refugee Camp and Gog district of Anuak zone (the Gambella police commission, 2021).

The regional government has repeatedly called on communities to actively defend their localities in addition to the government's attempts to stop similar attacks in the two zones sharing a wider border with South Sudan: Anywaa and Nuer. Ethiopia and South Sudan governments identify the insecurity in their borderlands and have a cooperative strategy to overcome the problems along the border area (Tasew, 2017).

Concerning government response during the Murle rustlers' attack on the villages, participants state that 'since 1985 up to 2011 there are no visible responses used by the Ethiopian government as well as the Gambella region government. The Gambella regional security office stated that the regional government deployed militia to the key areas where Murle rustlers frequently launched their belligerent attacks since early 2011. Thus, the militias are not well equipped and trained. For each kebele, the regional government supplied five rifles. Thus, there is no regional defense force deployed to protect the lift of civilians.

The members of the Ethiopian National Defense Force protect the foreign companies engaged in agricultural investment and drilling for oil³³. In contrast, the Ethiopian National Defense Force is

33 Changkuoth Chot was the former head of the Gambella Region's Peace and Security Bureau. On May 14, 2023, I interviewed him in Gambella Town. declare the presence of government authorities and the deployment of the National Defense Force to critical regions where development is taking place.

relaxed to give more attention to providing enough security for the communities in the Gambella region³⁴. This could be a covert strategy of the central government to evade the local people from their land needed for massive agricultural investment and from potentially oil-rich areas (Mosse, 2017).

Based on the inquiry as to whether the government forces responded as soon as the attack erupted or not, one of the village elders responded this way: "In 2006, when the Murle rustlers attacked Ngor village in Lare Woreda, the Ethiopian National Defense Force living in Lare (Kuergeng Town) joined the fight. As a result, two soldiers were killed, and some others were injured by Murle". The other respondents from different villages expressed their idea that when Murle launched a surprise attack on different villages, there was no immediate response from the Gambella government. The reinforcements sent by the regional government usually arrived very late, while the attackers made wanton distractions of rustling cattle and abducted children.

The Nuer community in Ethiopia recognized the 2016 government rescue mission for abducted children in the Jekow and Lare Woredas. The Ethiopian government was wrathful for the deaths and after mourning, the government launched the army to bring back the children, crossing the border to South Sudan territory. Addis Ababa, WIC, (2016).

In recent periods, Ethiopia's government secured all-open borders along Murle with a well-equipped army and peace can be built among Nuer, Anywaa, and Murle in both Ethiopia and South Sudan³⁵. Therefore, all the borders should be secured by establishing good administration in the towns of most Woredas of the Gambella region. They strongly suggested that, if the entire community of Murle needed to be citizens of Ethiopia, they should be integrated so that the Ethiopian government could take the overall responsibility for them. Thus, in the Murle community, there is no development reached to them, they don't have enough schools, the health center is few and all other development issues are not there.

34 Flied Note, at Gok Woreda on May 17, 2023.

35 AbalAbong is elder in Dimma Woreda. I interviewed her at Achanya kebele on May 27, 2023.

In another way, the abducted child should return to their parent through a peaceful procedure. It's also supported that, the absence of Ethiopian security forces in the border areas combined with the defenseless position of the communities in Gambella left them situated to the severe raids of the armed Murle and Lou Nuer from Jonglei State (Mosse, 2017). In other words, the government should call for peace and reconciliation among three communities the Nuer, Anywaa, and Murle.

In the 2016 Murle attack, the Ethiopian government returned the abducted children from the hands of the Murle militia. This was a very hard shift in the Ethiopian government because the deployed army that moved to bring back the abducted children was well-equipped and led them to cross the borderlands to South Sudan. Therefore, this movement cost the Ethiopian government some of the budgets that may contain the basic needs of the army, fighting equipment, and others (Death Toll, 2016–04). The victim of the Murle attack was compensated by being given a food item for one year, and the government did not provide non-food items. Tasew (2017) noted that, on April 4, 2012, representatives of the regional governments agreed to undertake a range of joint activities along the shared border to address the issues of border security and to ensure sustainable peace and stability.

In addition, scholars argue that, in 2012, the two neighboring countries signed an agreement on the Joint Ministerial Commission to upgrade the country's socioeconomic and political stability. Hence, the agreement included a transportation policy, communications policy, trade policy, educational policy, and capacity building at the borderlands (Tasew, 2017).

In that year, the regional government's joint activities were to exercise the borderlands agreement policies on both sides to tackle the issue of border security and to enhance peace as well as communities' stability. The local government of Upper Nile State, and Gambella Regional State signed a joint borderlands treaty on October 3, 2012. The subject matter is to address the anti-peace force, building manpower, general trade agreements, and relationships among people (Tasew, 2017). The local agreement between Ethiopia (Gambella region) and South Sudan (Maiwut County) conceded about developing better borderland relationships and improving the well-being of the border communities (Tasew, 2017). Following that, the

improvement of the treaty resulted in disarming villagers in borderlands and controlling illicit trade, and the Ethiopian government constructed roads to South Sudan (Pagak), also providing scholarships for South Sudan learners.

The South Sudan government disarmed the villagers along the Ethiopian border and committed to other agreements. Thus, their community began to suggest the disarmament of the community living on the Ethiopian side by the Ethiopian government. The community in Ethiopia complained of being disarmed by the South Sudanese army, which crossed the border and made disarmament on some kebeles of the Nuer Zone. They complained that they were very tired of being disarmed by the two governments. The areas where the Murle rustlers rise and attack are Bilnyaka, Jou, Dalerow, Thorwunbal, Gneele, Thook, Ciethor, Gony, and Tuor. These villages are between Akobo, Jore, and Gog. Hence, to bring peace and security to the Nuer zone (Ethiopia), the government must deploy the army to those areas.

Donyang responded that in 1987, for the first time, in Pibor village I experienced the Murle attack. Thus, the Murle raided 340 cattle. According to him, his father, who had 88 cows, was taken by Murle. We call him “J’bvF6k” which means Murle without a gun, just rustling the cattle as a thief. We pursue the Murle up to the Luel-Manthich village, who killed three men, and we return all the cattle to Pulruethni. The murder took three guns, and it served as a kind of looting by force. He further stated that³⁶.

When God, distributed livestock to humans, God called them Nuer, Dinka, and Murle. He said, "When I give you what I give, kindly take yours and do not see your back go straight, and God gave you cow, ox, and Murle first and said, don't see your back go straight, then Murle go. God gave the same livestock to Nuer and Dinka and instructed them to go straight; do not see their back. Then they follow the instructions. In the end, Murle believes that he is the only person God has given him cattle in the world." (FGD & Donyang)

³⁶Donyang Lew at Jekow Worerda and FGD in Makuey & Lare Worerda on May & June 2023

Therefore, the participants note that there are many challenges, such as poverty, stereotypes, fear of movement to go far to work, and other activities. The victims were the Anywaa victims. Annually, the Murle used to travel from their area and come to Bilpam, which served as a military barrack in Ethiopia in the Gambella area. The Murle men who served as soldiers were very familiar with the area. Moreover, when they returned to their local area, they started to launch an attack on Longjiok. Thus, they established a joint attack comprising Murle and Anywaa armed youth. The Murle and Anywaa raided cattle, but when they reached Agnele village, they started to give some cattle to the Anywaa. Thus, they began to clash and fight each other. Then, the murder killed five people on Anywaa's side, including Gurgak Oman³⁷.

Moreover, in the 2016 attack, we found a dead Boulais, which is Anywaa. We recognized that the people fled the violence, but they returned to attack, as in our area. From the beginning, Murle kidnaps a thief from Jekow and Makukey and the Anywaa Zone. On January 23, 2017, a similar cross-border murder assault was carried out in the Anywaa zone of Jor district.

5.3. Discussion

Insurgencies resulting from cross-border conflicts have had a significant effect on the Gambella region in western Ethiopia. The purpose of this essay is to examine and make conclusions regarding the ways in which the insurgency has affected Gambella's political stability, economy, and society at large. A thorough grasp of the effects of the cross-border offensive insurgency in Gambella can be obtained by looking through the data, reports, and academic studies that are currently available. The research that is now available leads to the conclusion that the Murle militia's cross-border attacks in Gambella have had a negative impact on both the stability of the local community and the wider region. The following key points summarize the research findings:

Impact on Human Lives: The attacks by the Murle militia have resulted in the loss of numerous innocent lives, including men, women, and children. These attacks often involve brutal violence,

³⁷ Gatluak Yang and Peter Muonyjuok in the Nuer Zone I interviewed them in April & May 2023.

including killings, abductions, and cattle raiding. The affected communities face psychological trauma and are forced to live in constant fear.

Displacement and Destruction: The attacks have led to significant displacement of people from their homes and villages. Many have been forced to flee to neighboring towns or seek refuge in other regions or countries. Additionally, these attacks have caused the destruction of infrastructure, such as schools, health centers, and houses, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis.

The displacement of the Anywaa and Nuer communities by the Murle Militia through cross-border attacks in Gambella has had a significant impact on the affected populations. These communities have been forced to flee their homes and seek refuge within their own country, becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The Murle Militia's cross-border attacks have left the Anywaa and Nuer villages in a state of extreme terror, devastation, and fatalities. The afflicted people's lives have been upended by these attacks, and they now feel vulnerable and insecure. A major humanitarian crisis has resulted from the loss of many people's houses, means of subsistence, and loved ones. There are several difficulties that the Anywaa and Nuer have as IDPs. They do not have access to basic amenities like food, potable water, medical care, and education. In addition to uprooting families and communities and creating psychological anguish and emotional distress, the relocation has also damaged their social fabric.

The government and humanitarian organizations have been working to provide assistance and support to the displaced communities. Efforts have been made to establish temporary shelters, distribute relief supplies, and provide medical aid. However, the scale of the displacement and the ongoing security concerns make it difficult to fully address the needs of all IDPs.

The displacement of the Anywaa and Nuer communities highlights the urgent need for peace and stability in the region. It is crucial to address the root causes of the conflict, promote dialogue, and find sustainable solutions that ensure the safety and well-being of all communities involved.

Additionally, initiatives to support the IDPs' safe return and reintegration into their home communities should be undertaken. Rebuilding infrastructure, reestablishing livelihoods, and offering psychological support to kidnapped children and their communities are all part of this, since it aids in their recovery from the trauma they have endured.

Inter-ethnic Tensions: The cross-border attacks by Murle militia have intensified inter-ethnic tensions between the Murle community and other ethnic groups (Nuer and Anywaa) residing in Gambella. This has resulted in retaliatory attacks and a cycle of violence, leading to a breakdown of trust and social cohesion among different communities.

Political Stability and Security: The insurgency in Gambella has had a detrimental impact on the region's political stability and security. The presence of armed groups and the constant threat of violence have created an atmosphere of fear and insecurity among the population. This has hindered efforts to establish effective governance structures and maintain law and order. The region has witnessed a power struggle between different ethnic groups, fueled by the conflict. This has resulted in a loss of trust in the government's ability to provide effective security and address the grievances of the local population. The insurgent groups have exploited this discontent, recruited disillusioned individuals, and further destabilized the region in particular the Anywaa Zone and Nuer Zone communities. The conflict has also strained diplomatic relations between Ethiopia and South Sudan. The inability to effectively manage the border and address the root causes of the conflict has created tensions between the two countries. This has hindered regional cooperation and impeded efforts to find a peaceful resolution. And the constant threat of violence has limited people's freedom of movement, hampering their access to basic services such as education and healthcare. Children are particularly affected, as their education is disrupted, and they are exposed to physical and psychological trauma. The social fabric of Gambella has been torn apart, leading to a sense of mistrust and division among different ethnic groups.

The insurgency has also strained the relationship between the local communities and the government. The inability of the government to provide adequate security and protection has eroded trust and confidence in its ability to address the concerns of Gambella's residents. This

lack of trust has further marginalized certain communities and fueled grievances, potentially leading to further instability.

Furthermore, because Ethiopia's diplomatic relations with its neighbors have been strained, the cross-border attacks have had an impact on the area. Tensions have grown as a result of cross-border assaults and the existence of armed organizations, militarizing the area and raising the possibility of cross-border conflict. This has made attempts to end the violence and bring stability back to Gambella more difficult.

Regional Security Concerns: The cross-border nature of these attacks poses a significant challenge to regional security. It not only affects Ethiopia but also impacts neighboring countries, such as South Sudan, where the Murle militia originate from. This requires coordinated efforts between governments to address the issue effectively.

Need for Comprehensive Solutions: It is evident that a comprehensive approach is required to address the cross-border attacks by the Murle militia. This should include strengthening security measures, enhancing border control, promoting dialogue between different ethnic groups, and addressing the root causes of the conflict, such as resource scarcity and historical grievances.

Economic Consequences: These attacks have disrupted agricultural activities and trade, leading to food insecurity and economic instability in the victims' communities. Farmers are unable to cultivate their lands due to fear of attacks, resulting in decreased food production and increased dependence on external aid. The cross-border attacks in the Gambella have resulted in significant socio-economic consequences for the region. Firstly, it led to the displacement of thousands of people from their homes, causing a humanitarian crisis. This displacement has strained local resources and infrastructure, leading to over-crowded in Woredas Town and Gambella Town and inadequate access to basic services such as healthcare and education.

Generally, the cross-border attacks by the Murle militia in Gambella have had devastating effects on the local communities and regional stability. Urgent action is needed to protect the affected populations, restore peace, and foster long-term reconciliation among different ethnic groups in the region. However, the impact of cross-border attacks in the Gambella is multi-faceted and far-

reaching and caused significant socio-economic challenges, including displacement, reduced agricultural productivity, and increased food insecurity. The cross-border attack has also undermined political stability and security, straining relationships between communities, the government, and neighboring countries. Additionally, it has led to environmental degradation, further exacerbating the region's vulnerabilities. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes efforts to promote peace, and enhance security in Gambella.

CHAPTER FIVE

6. Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

6.3. Summary and Conclusion

This study sought to elucidate the cross-border attacks by Murle militia insurgents in the Gambella region. The impacts of the Murle attack and the government responses presented above in each specific Woreda in the Gambella region now need to be synthesized and analyzed to understand the frequency of conflict within the community.

From the findings of the research and review of literature, it was evident that cross-border attacks are rapidly growing due to cattle interest and children abducted by Murle insurgents in the Gambella region (Nuer Zone and Anywaa Zone). Cattle rustling and child abduction have not only had an impact on people in the communities involved; they have also led to massive negative impacts on the economy and stability of Gambella nation, mainly in the Nuer zone area.

As discovered through the research, the main reasons or factors that trigger cross-border attacks from Murle in the Gambella region are economic factors; cultural influence; political figures motivated only by their self-serving gains; the lack of stable governance from neighborhood countries like South Sudan; human trafficking; high rates of illiteracy; poverty; and most importantly, over-reliance on cattle as the only source of livelihood for the Murle community. The high proliferation of cheap weapons such as firearms was also cited as one of the main reasons behind the increased number of deaths during the cattle raids.

The results of the study established that a cattle rustling has substantial and significant impacts on the communities in the Gambella region (Nuer and Anywaa). Distinguished was that the impacts of historical cattle raid activities among the communities had not been as dangerous as the impacts of heavily armed cattle rustling activities today in the Nuer zone. Though cattle rustling dates to historical times, the historical cattle raids were much friendlier and could be easily resolved by the elders and leaders of the involved communities. The main impacts of cattle rustling in historical times included the loss of cattle, with minimal human fatalities during the cattle raids.

However, as detailed by the respondents in the research, cattle rustling and raid activities have become more dangerous to the communities involved, their neighbors, and the nation in general. Some of these impacts include increased poverty caused by theft and destruction of property; loss of lives during the raids from both the raiding group and the victims of the raids; the increased prevalence of cattle raids and revenge killings; and destruction of the social order and relationships between communities in the neighbor's country.

As noted in the above analysis, the Gambella regional government attempted to care for the community's security. The response of the government to the Murle attack occurred after the attack was carrying on while ought distraction was happening in the community. The lack of a well-organized army in the Gambella region, as well as the Anywaa Zone and Nuer zone local government, resulted in a wing of care from the Murle insurgence group to the Nuer zone community. The absence of Ethiopian security forces in the border areas combined with the defenseless position of the communities in Gambella left them situated to the severe raids of the armed Murle and children abducted. As discovered through research, the main factor that causes the frequency of attacks from Murle in the Gambella region (Nuer & Anywaa zones) is the lack of viability of small weapons from the community to protect themselves as well as their property.

6.4. Recommendation

Based on the major findings generated from the interviews and discussions conducted with participants and informants, the following incisive comments were suggested:

The government should recommend that cattle rustling and child abduction in the Gambella region from the Nuer and Anuak Zone have been a significant source of cross-border conflicts for decades if not centuries. The Nuer and Murle communities clashed during the cattle raids and child abductions in the Gambella areas. Cattle are a symbol of social standing and wealth and are often used in cultural practices as well as in marriage ceremonies.

Ethiopia's government should protect all open borders areas along the Murle with a well-equipped army, and peace can be built among Nuer, Anuak, and Murle in both Ethiopia and South Sudan. Therefore, all the borders should be secured by establishing good administration in

the town of Woreda. The Ethiopian government should take overall responsibility for the Murle community if the South Sudanese government fails to take responsibility. The government should be recommended for the following reasons: the government should work closely with Murle through peacebuilding and the joint commission for development with education, health, and hygiene; and the government should protect those issues and contribute a lot to bringing peace.

In the Murle community, the successful acts of cattle raiding demonstrate a rite of passage for the male child from adolescence to adulthood. The importance and significance of cattle among the communities have placed the people from these communities at the center of confrontations and conflicts. The discussion showed that pastoralist migration from one district to another in both Ethiopia and South Sudan is driven by the climatic conditions of the area, which determine the availability of cattle feed and water. During the dry seasons, the communities that live in the more drought-stricken areas herd their cattle in the areas that have abundant pasture and water.

Although the Ethiopian and South Sudanese countries need to be active and prominently present in the region, as well as the international initiatives on attack resolution, it has become apparent that these countries have made little progress in controlling the trade of illegal arms among their citizens. The lack of policies to regulate the trade of firearms has allowed the significant proliferation of firearms in the countries, and thus the massive cattle rustling. As was noted in the discussion section, firearms have become very cheap and easy to obtain in the region.

References

- Allen, T. (1994). "Ethnicity and Tribalism on the Sudan-Uganda Border" in K. Fukui and J. Markakis (Eds.). *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press, pp.112-139.
- Amutabi, M.N. 1999. "Cattle Rustling Among Pastoralists in Northern Kenya: The Genesis and the Truth", the article presented at the conference on Community Education co-hosted by Action-Aid and Association for World Education (AWE), Isiolo, Kenya, August 25th-28th, 1999.
- Arensen, J. (2012). *The Red Pelican* (pre-publication version)
- Azar, E. E. (1990). *The management of protracted social conflict: Theory and cases*. Dartmouth Publishing Company.
- Bahru Zewde, (1982). "An overview and Assessment of Gambella Trade". East Africa History Conference on Aspects of the Economic History of East Africa. Nazareth, Addis Ababa University.
- Baxter, P.T.W. 1994. "The Creation and Constitution of Oromo Nationality" in K. Fukui and J. Markakis (Eds.). *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press, pp.167-186.
- Bercovitch, J.;Kremenyuck, V. and Zartman, I.W.(2009) 'Introduction: the nature of conflict and conflict resolution', In Bercovitch et al,(eds) *The Sage Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, Los Angeles: SAGE, Pp:1-11
- Bryman. (2012). *Social Research Method*, 4th Edition., Oxford University Press., published in the United States.
- Cheserek G.J., 2007. Resource use conflicts between pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Kenya. A Case Study of Pokot and Marakwet.
- Costa, Diana Felix da (2013). "We are one, but we are different": Murle identity and local peacebuilding in Jonglei State, South Sudan. Norwegian Peace Building Centre. *Policy Brief*, June 2013.

- Creswell, J.W. (2015). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*. London: SAGE publications.
- David Rochefort. (1991). "Nationalism Versus Ethnic Identity in Sub-Saharan Africa." *American Political Science Review*, 85, 2: 393-404.
- Evans Pritchard, E. (1940). *The Nuer: A Description of the Modes of Livelihood and Political Institutions of a Nilotic People*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Farrell, Theo, and Olivier Schmitt (2012). *The Causes, Character, and Conduct of Armed Conflict, and the Effects on Civilian Populations, 1990-2010*. Legal and Protection Policy Research Series.
- Feyissa, Dereje (2013). 'Alternative Citizenship: the Nuer between Ethiopia and Sudan'. In the *Borderlands of South Sudan: Authority and Identity in Contemporary and Historical Perspectives*, edited by Christopher Vaughan, Marieke Schomerus, and Lotje de Vries, pp. 109-131. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.
- Fukui, K. 1994. *Conflict and Ethnic Interaction: The Mela and their Neighbors*. In K. Fukui and J. Markakis (Eds.). *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press. pp.33-47.
- Gatluak R. Jal (2012). *Cross Border Conflict in Gambella Regional State (from 1991 to 2011): The Traditional Skills, Experiences, and Indigenous Knowledge Used by Nuer, Anuak, and Murle Ethnics in Resolving Conflict*.
- Gatluak R. Jal (2012). *The Roots Cause of Cross Border Conflict in Gambella regional state between Jikany-Nuer and Lou-Nuer.*, Ethiopian Civil Service University.
- Gizachew Teshome (2020). *Conflict Transformation and Peace Building in Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia*. PhD dissertation. Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Glowacki, Luke and Gönc, Katja (2013). *Investigating the Potential of Peace Committees in Ethiopia: A Needs Assessment in IGAD CEWARN's Karamoja and Somali Clusters*.
- Gordon R., (2014). *In the eye of the storm: An analysis of internal conflict in South Sudan's Jonglei State*. Researching livelihoods and services affected by conflict. Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium Overseas Development Institute: London, UK.
- Holewinski, S., & Keenan, M. (2014). *A Conversation with the Center for Civilians in Conflict on Preventing Civilian Suffering*. *Fletcher F. World Aff.*, 38, 13.

- Hutchinson, Sharon E. (2009). Peace and Puzzlement: Grass-roots Peace Initiatives between the Nuer and Dinka of South Sudan. In *changing identifications and Alliances in North-East Africa: Sudan, Uganda, and the Ethiopia-Sudan borderlands*. Gunther Schlee and Elizabeth Watson (eds). New York: Berghahn Books.
- Johnson, Douglas H. (2003). *The Root Causes of Sudan's Civil Wars*. Oxford University Press.
- (2009). *When Boundaries Become Borders. The Impact of boundary-making in Southern Sudan's Frontier Zones*. Rift Valley Institute.
- Jones, Nicola, Bekele Tefera., *et al.* (2016). *One Size does not fit all: The patterning and drivers of child marriage in Ethiopia's hotspot districts*. UNICEF reports. Overseas Development Institute. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- Kagno Ochan Okongo (2019). *A History of Anywaa People of the Southwestern Ethiopia. C.1898-1991*. MA Thesis, Jimma University, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.
- Kassahun, B. (2013). *Conflict in the Horn of Africa and Implications for Regional Security*. 2013). The Horn of Africa. Intra-and Inter-State.
- Kjetil. Tronvoll, "The Ethiopian 2010 federal and regional elections: re-establishing the one-party state." *African Affairs* 110.438 (2011): 121-136.
- Kothari, R. C., (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. 2nd Edition ed. New Dehli, India: New International Publisher.
- Kothari, R.C. 1990. *Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques*. 2nd Edition. New Delhi: WishwaPrakashan.
- Kurimoto, E. (2002). *Fear and anger: Female versus male narratives among the Anywaa*.
- Kydd, Andrew (2004). "The Art of Shaker Modeling: Game Theory and Security Studies", in Detlef F. Sprinz and Yael Wolinsky-Nahmias (eds.): *Models, Numbers, and Cases. Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan Press.
- Lamphear, J. 1994. "The Evolution of Ateker 'New Model' Armies: Jie and Turkana" in K. Fukui and J. Markakis (Eds.). *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press.pp.63-94.
- Lange Nyala Omod (2020). *Bride-Wealth Payment and its Impact on Married Women's Status among the Anywaa Community in Gog Woreda of Gambella Regional State, Ethiopia*; MA Thesis; AAU.

- Manasseh, Wepundi, et al. Availability of small arms and perceptions of security in Kenya: an assessment. Geneva: Small Arms Survey, 2012.
- Markakis, John. 1998. Resources conflict in the Horn of Africa. London, Sage Publications.
- Markakis, J. (ed) (1993). Conflict and the decline of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa. London: Macmillan.
- Markakis, J. (ed) (1993). Conflict and the decline of pastoralism in the Horn of Africa. London: Mengistu, Muhabie Mekonnen. "The root causes of conflicts in the Horn of Africa. American Journal of Applied Psychology, 4, no. 2 (2015): 28-34.
- Mesfine Wolde-Mariam. 1999. Resources conflict and poverty.
- Miles, William F.S., David Rochefort. (1991). "Nationalism Versus Ethnic Identity in Sub-Saharan Africa." American Political Science Review, 85, 2: pp 393-404.
- Mitchell, Chris (1991). 'Recognizing Conflict,' in Woodhouse (ed.) Contemporary Conflict Resolution. Cambridge, Polity Press.
- Mkutu, K. A. (2007). Small Arms and Light Weapons among Pastoral Groups in Kenya-Uganda Border Area. African Affairs 106 (422), pp 47-70.
- Mossa Hamid Wassie (2014). Conflict Dynamics in a Three-Level Game: The Conflict Formation in Gambella, Southwest Ethiopia. Addis Ababa University School of Graduate Studies. Pages, (94).
- Nnoli, O. 1998. "Ethnic Conflicts in Eastern Africa." In O. Nnoli (Ed) Ethnic Conflicts in Africa. Dakar, Senegal: CODESRIA.
- Oakland, T. (2005). Commentary# 1: What Is Multicultural School Psychology?
- ODI, (2009), <https://odi.org/en/publications/research-tools-focus-group-discussion/>
- Osaghae, Eghosa E. (2006). "Ethnicity and the State in Africa. Afrasian Center for Peace and Development Studies. Ryukoku University.
- Raleigh, Clionadh (2010). "Political marginalization, climate change, and conflict in African Sahel state." International studies review 12, no. 1 (2010): 69-86.
- Redie, Bereketgab. (2013). The Horn of Africa: intra-state and inter-state conflicts and security. Pluto Press and Nordisk an Afrika institute.
- Regassa (2010). War and Peace in Sudan and its Impact on Ethiopia, the Case of Gambella: 1955–2008. Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press, 2010.

- Rothchild, Donald S (2007). *Managing ethnic conflict in Africa: Pressures and incentives for cooperation*. Brookings Institution Press,
- Spear, Joanna (2006). "From political economies of war to political economies of peace: The contribution of DDR after wars of predation." *Contemporary Security Policy*.
- Titeca, K. and Flynn, R. (2014) 'Hybrid Governance, Legitimacy, and (Il) legality in the informal Cross-Border Trade in Panyimur, Northwest Uganda', *African Studies Review* 57: 71-91.
- Turton, D. 1993. "We Must teach them to be peaceful': Mursi views on being human and being Mursi" in T. Tvedt (Ed). *Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: human and ecological consequences of warfare*. Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University (Department of Social and Economic Geography). Pp.164-180.
- Tornay, S.A. 1993. "More Chances on the fringe of the state? The growing power of the Nyangatom; a border people of the Lower Omo Valley, Ethiopia (1970-1992)" in T. Tvedt (Ed). *Conflicts in the Horn of Africa: human and ecological consequences of warfare*. Uppsala, Sweden: Uppsala University (Department of Social and Economic Geography). Pp.143-163.
- Turton, D. 1994. "Mursi Political Identity and Warfare: the Survival of an Idea" in K. Fukui and J. Markakis (Eds.). *Ethnicity and Conflict in the Horn of Africa*. London and Athens: James Currey and Ohio University Press. pp.15-32.
- UNHCR (2020). 'Ethiopia: UNHCR deplores violence in Gambella, applauds Ethiopia's continued protection of refugees, Geneva.
- Walta Information Addis Ababa, April 18, 2016(WIC), https://waltainfo.com/38124/#pll_switcher
- Young, John (1999) "Along Ethiopia's Western Frontier: Gambella and Benishangul in Transition", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 37, p. 331.

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a postgraduate student, studying Master of Art (MA) at the Institute for Peace and Security Studies at Addis Ababa University (AAU), carrying out research titled: “CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS BY MURLE MILITIA INSURGENTS IN THE GAMBELLA REGION: IMPACTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSES”. As a result, I am here to collect data by interviewing target respondents in this area.

Additionally, this study adhered to the data and information confidentiality code of conduct of the AAU, meaning all the information provided by respondents shall be used for academic purposes only in the university; therefore, your usual cooperation will be highly appreciated.

SECTION 1: Demographics Information

Instruction: Please tick (✓) your response in the bracket against or next to the answer.

1, Respondent Profile

Gender: Male Female

Age (in the year) of the respondent

Under 20 years

21-35 years

36-45 years

46-55 years

56 years and above

Marital status

Never married/Single

Married

Divorced

Widow(er)

Educational level: _____

Question 2: Experience/opinion of Respondent (s) about Cross-border Attack

2.1. For how long have you lived in this area?

2.2. Have you experienced any cross-border attacks in this area?

2.3. If yes, then, what motivated such attacks?

Question 3: Cross-border (Murle) Attacks in the border areas

3.1. What do you think are the causes of the cross-border attacks between Murle and Nuer?

3.2. How do you see or explain the dynamics of cross-border attacks?

3.3. Could explain any possible (internal/external) factors that contribute to cross-border attack escalation in the area?

3.4. When do cross-border attacks become more frequent, where, and why?

Question 4: Consequences of Cross border Attacks

4.1. Please explain what usually happens when an attack occurs.

4.2. After an attack occurs do you think people flee violence return home and receive humanitarian assistance?

4.3. Apart from losing property, cattle, grains-foodstuff, and human lives, to what extent do cross-border attacks affect a normal way of life including livelihood activity in this area?

4.4. What other impacts do you think people face after an attack occurs in this area?

Question 5: Government Response to Cross-border Attack

5.1. Could you please explain if there is a permanent police or security force station barrack to protect civilians against unknown Murle insurgents or armed criminals?

5.2. When your village or area comes under attack by Murle for instance, does the government respond immediately or not?

5.3. After the incident, does the government take care of the victims or compensate the affected civilians in the areas?

5.4. What would you suggest that the government can do to protect civilians, and avert and resolve cross-border attacks?

Part 3: Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Question(s)

6.1. Participant's profile _____

Age range _____

Gender _____

Level of education _____

6.2. What do you think are the causes of conflict between Murle and Nuer?

6.3. What do youth think could be the role of government (regional and federal) to stop cross-border attacks?

6.4. How do you see or explain the dynamics of cross-border attacks?

6.5. Could explain any possible (internal/external) factors that contribute to cross-border attack escalation in the area?

6.6. What would you suggest that the government can do to protect civilians, and avert and resolve cross-border attacks?