

Case study

Migration governance, peace, and conflict in Ethiopia

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Abstract

This case study, which was conducted in the framework of the [KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration](#), looks at migration governance and conflict dynamics in Ethiopia. It shows that addressing migration governance in peacebuilding is key to preventing conflicts and sustaining peace.

Illustrations from Ethiopia indicate that migration policies can negatively or positively affect peace and conflict dynamics. In addition, a closer look at the Ethiopian migration landscape reveals the potential positive or negative impact of peace policies on migration. Hence, there is an interrelationship between conflict, migration governance and peacebuilding, which is relevant to sustaining peace.

The following key messages and entry points for peacebuilding engagement at the peace-migration nexus result from this case study.

Key Messages

- Migration policies can impact negatively on peacebuilding. Hence, peacebuilding expertise is essential to ensure conflict-sensitive migration governance. In fact, peacebuilding initiatives can enhance the positive impact of migration policies at different stages of a migration cycle.
- Collaboration between migration and peace actors is essential to align policies, which in turn offers opportunities for preventing conflicts and sustaining peace.
- Migration policies offer collaborative frameworks, including opportunities for peacebuilding. Peacebuilding actors can complement and support humanitarian and development actors in humanitarian crises by assuming convening roles, advising on conflict sensitivity, and addressing long-term transformation of societal relationships.

Entry-points & opportunities for peacebuilding

- Integrated conflict and migration analysis
- Participatory and inclusive processes
- Conflict sensitivity

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1. Overview

1.1 Background

Migration¹ policies that fail to adopt holistic approaches increase the vulnerability of individuals and can lead to insecurity, instability, and the (re-)emergence of violent conflicts at community, state, and regional levels. In an attempt to find examples of policy and practice beyond securitized approaches to migration, this case study focuses on Ethiopia.

Illustrations from Ethiopia indicate that migration policies can negatively or positively affect peace and conflict dynamics. In addition, a closer look at the Ethiopian migration landscape reveals the potential positive or negative impact of peace policies on migration. Hence, there is an interrelationship between conflict, migration governance and peacebuilding, which is relevant to sustaining peace. This case study, which was conducted in the framework of the [KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration](#), shows that addressing migration governance in peacebuilding is key to preventing conflicts and sustaining peace.

Box 1: KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration

This case study was conducted in the framework of the KOFF Joint Learning Process on Peacebuilding & Migration, which aims to assist better understanding of how to systematically and strategically integrate migration into peacebuilding policy and programming. The underlying assumption, based on a desk study on the peace-migration nexus, is that the strategic inclusion of migration phenomena into peacebuilding offers yet untapped potential for peacebuilding (i.e., conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and dealing with the past). The goal of the process was to contribute to bridging the gap between policy and practice, and move toward a more nuanced and conflict-sensitive discourse on migration.

To this end, over 15 months, KOFF facilitated exchanges and learning among actors from the peacebuilding, development cooperation, human rights, humanitarian aid, migration governance, and security sector governance fields. At the same time, KOFF conducted research and developed case studies on issues that are relevant to the peace-migration nexus, that is, social cohesion, migration governance, and inclusion/participation. The insights from the process were used to create a migration toolbox for peacebuilding policy-makers and practitioners.

1 See Glossary in the Toolbox on Migration & Peacebuilding p.16 for more information on terminology used in this case study.

1.2 Methodology and scope

This case study builds on the analysis of information gathered through key informant interviews (KII), focus group discussions (FGD), participant observation, literature, and learning meetings held in Switzerland and Ethiopia. The focus in this case study is on conflict-generated refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Ethiopia, as they constitute a large part of the population residing in Ethiopia that is excluded from political processes and are affected by conflict. Moreover, Ethiopia has recently adopted progressive policies in the areas of refugee protection and internal displacement. To cover a broad range of perspectives, 22 KIIs and 7 FGDs were conducted with international and national organizations in the fields of humanitarian aid, migration, peacebuilding, and development, as well as with Ethiopian citizens, including IDPs, and Eritrean refugees living in Shire (Tigray) and Moyale (Borana), two border areas. The Human Security Division of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, the Swiss Embassy in Ethiopia, HEKS, and the Ethiopian Red Cross Society facilitated the field research.

1.3 Why migration governance matters to peace

Migration governance and peace and conflict dynamics are intertwined, as migration policies impact peace processes and conflict dynamics, and peace policies affect migration patterns and policies. Therefore, aligning migration and peace policies is an opportunity to enhance peace. Moreover, a better knowledge of migration policies, actors, and activities is key to preventing and resolving conflicts, and can strengthen peacebuilding methods, policies, and programs. Hence, addressing migration governance is key to sustaining peace. In fact, a strategic engagement of peacebuilding actors with migration actors and policies might offer opportunities for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. However, to understand the role peacebuilding can play in addressing migration governance, it is important to understand how migration governance and peacebuilding interact at policy and programming levels, and how the interaction affects the lives of migrants as well as host communities. Engaging with migration governance can also pose a risk to peacebuilding, as domestic policy interests that shape international and national migration policy and practice might lead to an instrumentalization of peacebuilding to prevent immigration or emigration. Hence, the focus of this case study is on understanding the opportunities and limitations of engaging with migration governance actors and policies in order to sustain peace. The case study builds on practical examples from policy and practice in Ethiopia and aims to contribute to a better understanding of the peace-migration nexus by focusing on the role of migration governance in preventing and transforming conflicts and building peace.

2. Regional context

Since 2018, Ethiopia has been going through a political transition process, characterized by a political opening and efforts to democratize the country, but also insecurity, rumors, controversies and frustration among the people. On the one hand, the new government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed began developing a national peacebuilding strategy, encouraging international and national organizations to implement peacebuilding initiatives in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has since set up several governmental institutions to deal with peace issues in the country, including a Ministry of Peace and a Truth Commission. Refugee protection and durable solutions fall under the mandate of the Ministry of Peace. On the other hand, there is a lack of accountability and trust in governmental institutions. Governance issues play a big role in Ethiopia's current transition process. The absence of inclusive and participatory processes, as well as unresolved grievances, land issues, and boundary disputes are creating and driving conflicts. Conflicts happen at intra- and interregional levels, as well as between regional and federal levels. Similarly, migration is an issue at all these different levels. These governance issues become even more relevant in migration contexts, for instance in and around refugee or IDP camps. With national elections expected in 2021, many questions arise regarding the participation of IDPs and refugees in political processes in the country and the way migration is dealt with in the reform process.²

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of February 29, 2020, Ethiopia sheltered 748,448 registered refugees and asylum seekers.³ The country acceded to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees and has ratified the Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. Ethiopia has maintained an open-door policy for people seeking asylum in the country, allowing humanitarian access to and protection for refugees.⁴ In fact, since 2016, the country has seen its refugee policy move from basic service provision to a more progressive and rights-based model. The movement toward more progressive refugee policies resulted in the adoption of a landmark framework on refugees in 2017: the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF).⁵ This paves the way for the implementation of the nine pledges Ethiopia made at the Leaders' Summit on Refugees in September 2016 in New York and provides a solid political basis for enhanced protection and provision of rights. Ethiopia has also been a key driver of the regional CRRF process. In January 2019, the national refugee law was revised. It is intended to enable refugees to become more independent, better protected, and have greater access to local solutions, making it one of the most progressive in Africa.⁶

In addition, Ethiopia has experienced the highest number of internal displacements associated with conflict in 2018 anywhere in the world. An escalation of conflict and intercommunal violence caused by underlying ethnic tensions and aggravated by competition for land and scarce resources triggered

2 Election Guide (2020) Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. <https://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3330/>

3 UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency (2020) Fact Sheet Ethiopia. <http://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/UNHCR%20Ethiopia%20Fact%20Sheet%20-%20February%202020.pdf>

4 UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency (n.d.) Ethiopia. <https://www.unhcr.org/ethiopia.html>

5 UNHCR The UN Refugee Agency (2018) Briefing Note. CRRF Ethiopia. <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/65916>

6 Maru, M. T. (2019) In depth: Unpacking Ethiopia's new refugee law. Africa Portal. <https://www.africaportal.org/features/depth-unpacking-ethiopias-revised-refugee-law/>

almost 2.9 million new displacements in 2018.⁷ The conflict-induced displacement must be understood in the context of the broader political transition that followed the change of government in 2018. On the one hand, the new government has acknowledged the presence of conflict-induced IDPs within its border, which is a crucial step toward addressing their plight. On the other hand, the change in power has intensified previously existing tensions between different groups, and created new ones, which led to internal displacements. In 2019, the Government of Ethiopia, with the support of the UN and the international community, launched a Durable Solutions Initiative (DSI). The DSI provides a framework for coordinated efforts from policy, to legislative to operational level, to support IDPs in ending their displacement.⁸ Ethiopia also ratified the Kampala Convention in February 2020. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed has commenced a number of other initiatives to address displacement, including the creation of an advisory group on IDPs comprised of international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and a national steering committee to protect people displaced by conflict between the Somali and Oromia regions.

Shire

By the end of April 2020, 148,981 people were registered as refugees in Shire. There are four refugee camps in the northern Tigray region. The refugee community is of great relevance to the economy and makes significant socioeconomic contributions in the host communities. Local Ethiopians and Eritrean refugees share the same ethnicity, a similar culture, and often speak the same language (Tigrinya or Amharic). In many cases, host and refugee communities have developed peaceful and mutually beneficial relationships. Counter to this trend, policies that were in place to protect Eritrean refugees are currently undergoing changes, most likely because of the rapprochement between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Hence, refugees in the northern Tigray region are feeling the impact of the peace deal between Ethiopia and Eritrea. For instance, there has been a shift in practice to no longer recognize Eritreans as *prima facie* refugees. In addition, in April 2020, Ethiopia's Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs (ARRA) announced to residents in one of the four camps in the area, the Hitsats camp, that the federal government was planning to close the camp and that they would be relocated. The Hitsats camp is home to about 26,000 people, including about 1,600 minors. The plan has yet to be executed. However, residents of the camp have expressed concern about these developments.⁹

Moyale

In 2017, there was an outbreak of fighting along the border between the Oromia and Somali regions. According to the IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix conducted in November 2017, around 1 million persons were displaced by the conflict along the Oromia-Somali regional border in 2017.¹⁰ The conflict over the disputed border has since been aggravated by drought, which led to increased competition for scarce resources. This has led to the displacement of thousands of ethnic Oromos living in the Somali region and ethnic Somalis living in Oromia between 2017 and 2019. The town of Moyale was severely affected by clashes between Somali Garreh and Oromi Borenas sub-clans. The heavy fighting in Moyale triggered around 80,000 new displacements in December 2018.¹¹

7 IDMC (2019) *Global Report on Internal Displacement. Ethiopia*. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID-spotlight-ethiopia.pdf>.

8 IOM (2019) *Ethiopia Launches National Durable Solutions Initiative for Internally Displaced Persons*. <https://www.iom.int/news/ethiopia-launches-national-durable-solutions-initiative-internally-displaced-persons>.

9 Creta (2020) *Ethiopia plans to close Eritrean refugee camp despite concerns*. Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/04/ethiopia-plans-close-eritrean-refugee-camp-concerns-200417165129036.html>.

10 Reliefweb (2018) *Ethiopia: Conflict Displacement Situation Report (23 January 2018)*. <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-conflict-displacement-situation-report-23-january-2018>.

11 IDMC (2019) *Global Report on Internal Displacement. Ethiopia*. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/publications/documents/2019-IDMC-GRID-spotlight-ethiopia.pdf>.

3. Migration governance, peace, and conflict in Ethiopia

3.1 Progressive migration policies and the principle of “do no harm”

Key messages:

- Migration policies can impact negatively on peacebuilding and peace processes.
- Peacebuilding expertise is essential to ensure conflict-sensitive migration governance (i.e., policies and practices that do not increase tensions, escalate conflicts, or obstruct ongoing peace processes).
- Peacebuilding initiatives can enhance the positive impact of migration policies at different stages of a migration and/or conflict cycle.

Peacebuilders must engage with migration actors and policies to address the potential risks of migration policies leading to conflict. A conflict-sensitive approach is key to doing no harm and enhancing the positive impact of the implementation of policies. Hence, experts on conflict sensitivity can play an important role in supporting migration actors, at all levels. Further, actively implementing peacebuilding interventions along the migration cycle (before, during, and after migration) is key to conflict prevention and sustaining peace. The following examples from the context of Ethiopia illustrate this.

Translating policies into action

Ethiopia has been praised for its progressive refugee policies. However, while the adoption of such policies envisages more rights and better living conditions for migrants, the question is how it translates into concrete measures to improve the lives of people affected by migration. Policy changes must be understood in the context of wider developments in and beyond a country. Ethiopia, despite the strong commitment among Ethiopian leaders and the people to host refugees, is facing many challenges, including high rates of unemployment, particularly among youth, environmental disasters, considerable ethnic tension, and internal displacement. The implementation of policies, such as the CRRF and the Durable Solutions Initiative, as envisaged at a global level, requires an adaptation to the local context and recalibration of responsibilities among and between federal, regional and “woreda” authorities.¹²

Actors seeking to support the objectives of the CRRF in Ethiopia, for instance, face considerable challenges and obstacles, including the translation of a global and national policy vision into concrete measures and activities at the local level. While it is important to recognize the complexity of the policy change, there is a risk attached to the slow implementation of a presumably progressive policy such as the CRRF. It can create anxiety among actors, including governmental authorities, who are responsible

¹² Nigusie, A. A. & Carver, F. (2019) *The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. Progress in Ethiopia*. <https://www.odhpn.org/sites/odhpn.org.uk/files/resource-documents/12941.pdf>

for sensitive policy areas and are insecure about where accountability will lie. The lack of an overall accountability framework could potentially lead to a withdrawal from the agenda and a worsening of the conditions for refugees. In Ethiopia, the implementation of the CRRF has been slow. Its adoption in 2017 created high expectations, including among young Eritrean refugees. However, as the anticipated improvements in relation to their rights, especially the right to work, have not yet become a reality for them, there is a sense of heightened frustration and disillusionment. This feeling might lead to mistrust of the people and institutions that promoted the policy. In this context, expectation management is key.¹³

Similarly, Ethiopia has committed itself to the return of IDPs who fled from inter- and intra-communal violence, mainly in 2017 and 2018. In April 2019, the government began a return initiative. By June 2019, 816,813 IDPs, across 659 villages, had returned home.¹⁴ Although global migration policy debates focus strongly on return as one of three durable solutions, the Ethiopian government was criticized for pushing prematurely for a return.¹⁵ The return was considered problematic as many people returned to areas where they felt unsafe due to security risks and on-going conflicts, where resources were scarce, where relationships with neighbors were still difficult, or where they were no longer welcome because of demographic shifts that occurred in their absence. Thus, while some returns were successful, in many cases it led to negative consequences for returnees and the local communities. Some question whether the Ethiopian government's fear of losing its international image contributed to the decision to initiate the return of IDPs prematurely.¹⁶ At the same time, while humanitarian organizations have criticized the premature returns, they are also under pressure to remain on good terms with the government.

Building peace through migration governance

The previous examples indicate the importance of integrating a conflict-sensitive lens in migration governance. However, to build peace, 'do no harm' is only the first, foundational step. The following example shows the importance of actively contributing to peace.

What we passed through is not over; we fear the worst to come.¹⁷

Returning IDPs face many challenges upon return. In Moyale, one of the Oromo women returnees interviewed for this case study, sitting in front of the ruins of what used to be her house, began by saying: "We are still IDPs." For her, being an IDP has to do with her lived experiences and the inability to return to the life she had before she was displaced. Although she is officially considered a returnee, her life has not returned to the way it was prior to the outbreak of violence that led to her displacement. There is still tension between the conflict parties and many people live in fear of attacks

13 Another issue with so-called 'progressive' refugee policies is that they can exacerbate tensions between refugees and local host communities, especially when latter perceive to be excluded from decision-making and access to services or rights allocated to the refugees only. In Ethiopia this happened for instance in Gambella, where refugee policies drove tensions between different groups who were affected in different ways by the policies in place. Read more about this case here: Genest (2018) *The impact of the United Nations Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework on Conflict Dynamics. The case of Gambella in Ethiopia*. ACCORD. <https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/the-impact-of-the-united-nations-comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-on-conflict-dynamics/>

14 IOM (2019) *IOM Ethiopia Publishes First Ever National Displacement Report*. <https://www.iom.int/news/iom-ethiopia-publishes-first-ever-national-displacement-report>

15 Yarnell, M. (2018) *Ethiopia: Abiy's Misstep on IDPs and how he can fix it*. Refugees International, Blog Post. <https://www.refugeesinternational.org/reports/2018/10/25/ethiopia-abiy-misstep-on-idps-and-how-he-can-fix-it>; Yarnell, M. (2018) *The crisis below the headlines: conflict displacement in Ethiopia*. Refugees

16 Collins, T. (2019) *International community overlooks Ethiopia's IDP crisis*. African Business. <https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/region/international-community-overlooks-ethiopias-idp-crisis-for-abiy-reforms/>

17 From a FGD with 10 Oromo men, Moyale, March 3, 2020.

by the other side. At the same time, people on both sides of the conflict are struggling to cope with trauma, address psychosocial needs of family and community members, and rebuild their houses and livelihoods. Given the scarce resources in the area, the latter is a further potential cause for conflict. In this situation, both sides of the conflict find it difficult to initiate a dialogue, let alone resolve the conflict. In fact, the internal displacement led to a further segregation, as both sides were in separate displacement camps, which limited their interaction. In these situations, it is likely that positions harden, decreasing the likelihood that either side will enter into an agreement to end the conflict or that group resentments will fade. Hence, internal displacement and premature return not only creates challenges for people's livelihood, but it also can impact negatively on conflict resolution and individual and community healing processes. Hence, return processes should happen alongside humanitarian aid, measures to secure livelihoods and peacebuilding initiatives (e.g., mediation, dialogue, trauma healing, psychosocial support, and truth and reconciliation processes).

Box 1: Durable Solutions Initiative

The Ethiopian government's support in the establishment of a DSI in Ethiopia shows an interest in alternative approaches to dealing with displacement in the country. Against the background of global commitments to comprehensive migration policies, this initiative is a good example of an effort to integrate humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding approaches into responses to displacement.

The DSI in Ethiopia takes political and conflict analysis as a starting point. It aims to address immediate needs, while tackling issues related to governance, development, and coexistence. Conflict sensitivity is mainstreamed in the DSI. In fact, peacebuilding is an overarching umbrella for the DSI. The initiative aims at understanding what kind of disputes are related to displacement (e.g., rural-urban, pastoralist, urban-urban, etc.) and identifying sources of conflict (e.g., lack of services or land issues upon return). It builds on knowledge about past conflicts and aims at preventing new conflicts. Further peacebuilding elements include community-based planning, participatory and inclusive approaches, reconciliation activities, and identifying peacebuilding gaps.¹⁸

3.2 Triple nexus: making peacebuilding work in migration crises

Key messages:

- Migration policies offer collaborative frameworks, including opportunities for peacebuilding.
- Peacebuilding in a migration crisis must be effective in the short and medium-term, while aiming for long-term transformation.
- Peacebuilding actors can complement and support humanitarian and development actors in humanitarian migration crises (e.g., by conducting integrated analyses of migration & conflict dynamics).

The discrepancies between, on the one hand, humanitarian principles, international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and on the other hand, the diverging political objectives of state and nonstate actors as well as other international stakeholders, can generate tensions that make a coordinated and comprehensive response to migration difficult. This dilemma generates a challenge

¹⁸ Based on a KII with a durable solutions expert, Addis Ababa, February 24, 2020.

for the triple nexus actors' articulation and work toward collective outcomes through joint approaches as there is a risk that this could politicize humanitarian action in a manner that undermines the humanitarian principles. In this context it has been argued that triple nexus actors are not responsible for solving the political crises that fuel protracted migration crises, which remains the responsibility of state actors. However, they can contribute to making conditions more conducive to the resolution of migration crises.¹⁹ Here, peacebuilding actors can play a key role by strategically aligning their peacebuilding work and peace processes in the country in question with the objectives of humanitarian and development actors. The following examples from Ethiopia illustrate this.

The triple nexus

The triple nexus seeks to capitalize on the comparative advantages of the humanitarian, development and peace sectors to reduce need, risk, and vulnerability, following the recommendations of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) and in accordance with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda.²⁰

A closer look at the challenges of migration in Ethiopia reveals the need for such a holistic approach. However, while there is growing consensus about the importance of development in humanitarian crises, how to implement the "sustainable peace" component in the triple nexus remains a challenge. At the heart of this lies the difficulty of defining and operationalizing the "peace-migration" nexus. In a humanitarian crisis everyone is focused on saving lives and providing basic needs while resources are scarce, and funding is limited. In this context, donors are hesitant to invest in peacebuilding. Yet, the situation of refugees and IDPs, and the impact of migration on conflict dynamics, in Ethiopia call for the consideration of peacebuilding as an essential element in responses to migration.

The question of timing is often at the center of triple nexus discussions in a humanitarian crisis. Contrary to the idea of a continuum or sequencing, conversations with peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian aid organizations in Ethiopia indicated the need to include a peacebuilding lens right from the start of the response to a crisis. In fact, integrated approaches and concurrent actions are required. However, what role can, and should, peacebuilding actors play in migration-affected contexts? Peacebuilding in humanitarian crises must be beneficial to local and regional authorities, host communities, and migrants in the short and medium term, while keeping in mind and addressing long-term transformation. Experiences in Ethiopia show that peacebuilding must be linked to technical operations and benefits for communities as part of the package of assistance.

Lessons from the DSI in Somalia show that the support of local authorities, as well as a political vision at the national level, is key for the successful implementation of initiatives that address migration through humanitarian aid, development, and peacebuilding.²¹ Political ownership by the government is essential for these kinds of initiatives to push beyond humanitarian solutions. However, if there is no political will at the highest level, triple nexus actors can work through city or regional levels to achieve collaborative outcomes. For instance, first activities of the DSI in Ethiopia focused on the Somali region because of the regional authorities' willingness to support the initiative.

Policy-frameworks encouraging the triple-nexus

19 Perret, L. (2019) *Operationalizing the Humanitarian–Development–Peace Nexus: Lessons learned from Colombia, Mali, Nigeria, Somalia and Turkey*. IOM, Geneva https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/operationalizing_hdpn.pdf

20 ICVA Humanitarian Learning (2018) *Learning Stream Navigating the Nexus. Topic 1: The "nexus" explained.* https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ICVA_Nexus_briefing_paper%20%28Low%20Res%29.pdf

21 United Nations Somalia (2019) *Somalia Durable Solutions Initiative. Factsheet.* <https://bit.ly/3p2NRui>

In Ethiopia, conflicts happen at intra-regional and interregional levels and between the regional and federal levels. Migration occurs at all these levels too. Hence, migration is a key element in any national strategy for peacebuilding. In fact, migration actors are involved in national peace structures in Ethiopia. Against this background, policy frameworks such as the CRRF and the DSI provide an entry point for peacebuilding and pave the way for active contributions to peace in migration. Yet, there are only few peacebuilding organizations directly involved in the implementation of the abovementioned policy frameworks. In this context, the UN Resident Coordinator Office's (RCO) work in Ethiopia contributes to shifting migration practice toward a strategic inclusion of peacebuilding. The UNRCO conducts conflict analysis and maps peacebuilding actors and activities in the country in the framework of the DSI, to capitalize on their experiences, potentially identify synergies, and initiate collaborations.

Our priority is peace, not relief.²²

Peacebuilding actors might be reluctant to get involved in migration responses as a strategic engagement might create challenges for broader peacebuilding goals in the country. However, the needs on the ground indicate the relevance and importance of peacebuilding interventions in migration contexts. The experiences and concerns of IDPs who have returned to their homes in Moyale, for instance, indicate the need for peacebuilding initiatives in their communities. The violent conflict and the displacement in this area has – to mention a few consequences – led to high levels of trauma, significant increase in drug abuse and drinking, as well as miscarriages among pregnant women. In addition, the people who have returned to their homes are afraid of new attacks from the other side. In this context, communities on both sides of the conflict emphasize the need for counseling and psychosocial support, as well as efforts to resolve the conflict at the intercommunity level.

Nobody is bringing both sides together.²³

While there is a clear desire for peace, community members find it difficult to resolve the conflict and initiate a reconciliation process by themselves. Hence, there is a need for external facilitation and support to enhance dialogue between the two communities and create spaces for the sharing of experiences, fears, and concerns. However, there is a sense of frustration about the role of INGOs as people feel that there is no improvement or change in their lives, despite their presence. Therefore, it is important that INGOs do a thorough conflict analysis and apply conflict sensitive programme management, and, most importantly, work with and through existing local and national peace structures and peacebuilding organizations.

The only solution is negotiation among different groups.²⁴

22 From a FGD with 15 female members of the Oromo community in Moyale, March 2, 2020.

23 From a FGD with 10 male members of the Oromo community in Moyale, March 3, 2020.

24 From a FGD with 10 male members of the Oromo community in Moyale, March 3, 2020

3.3 Aligning peace and migration policies: peace for whom?

Key messages:

- An alignment of peace and migration policies offers opportunities for sustaining peace.
- Collaboration between migration and peace actors is essential to align policies and practice.

The following two examples from Ethiopia show the importance and relevance of a systematic integration of migration issues in peace processes and policies. It also points to the opportunities for sustainable peace that arise from a strategic and systematic aligning of peace and migration policies in a country.

Negative side effects of the peace deal between Eritrea and Ethiopia

In July 2018, a peace agreement was signed between Eritrea and Ethiopia, ending two decades of a frozen conflict. The peace deal with Eritrea had, and continues to have, an impact on the lives of Eritreans and Ethiopians living in the border area in northern Ethiopia. However, the deal has failed to translate into tangible and sustainable improvements for the people in the border area.²⁵ For some, it has created more insecurity and new vulnerabilities.²⁶ Despite Ethiopia's history of hosting and maintaining good relationships with Eritrean refugees, a closer look at the current situation of Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia suggests a gradual deterioration of their protection and safety following the peace agreement.

The peace agreement between Eritrea and Ethiopia had an indirect impact on movement as it resulted in a border opening in 2018, which lasted about two months. During this time, many people benefited from freedom of movement across the border, for personal and business purposes. However, the uncontrolled movement across border increased insecurity among Eritrean refugees in the camps in northern Ethiopia, particularly for those who had fled from the Eritrean government and feared that an opening of the border would allow Eritrean officials to enter the camps and that they would be forced to return to Eritrea.²⁷ This situation increased mistrust, a sense of helplessness, and fear. Further, the opening of the border led to a subsequent complete closure of the border from the Eritrean side. Today, legal border crossings are no longer possible. In addition, there are fewer spots along the border for Eritrean refugees to register themselves in Ethiopia than before.

Moreover, and counter to the overall trend toward more progressive policies, policies that were in place to protect Eritrean refugees are undergoing changes. There has been a shift in practice to no longer recognize Eritreans as *prima facie* refugees. Consequently, Eritreans must undergo individual refugee status determination. Further, there seems to be a faster process in place for Eritrean refugees to make use of the "Out of Camp Policy", which allows Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia to live outside of camps, if they have the financial means. Once they are living outside of a camp, they are no longer eligible for refugee assistance. While some refugees might welcome this as an opportunity to move on to other areas of Ethiopia soon after arrival, it must be understood within the broader context of the peace deal with Eritrea. Given Eritrea's interest in reducing the number of Eritrean refugees to Ethiopia,

25 Phelan, M. & Stigant, S. (2019). *A Year After the Ethiopia-Eritrea Peace Deal, What Is the Impact?* USIP Publications. <https://www.usip.org/publications/2019/08/year-after-ethiopia-eritrea-peace-deal-what-impact>.

26 Riggan, J. & Poole, A. (2018) "We can't go home": What does peace mean for Eritrea's refugees? *African Arguments*. <https://africanarguments.org/2018/08/01/cant-go-home-peace-eritrea-refugees/>

27 Riggan, J. & Poole, A. (2018) Fear dampens hope among Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia. *News Deeply*. <https://www.newsdeeply.com/refugees/community/2018/08/16/fear-dampens-hope-among-eritrea-refugees-in-ethiopia>; Roussi, A. (2018) Despite

the timing of the change in policy raises questions about the motivations behind the change in policy. Finally, in 2020, several Ethiopian and international organizations and media outlets announced the shutdown of a refugee camp in northern Ethiopia.²⁸

These recent developments have created insecurity and challenges for refugee protection. The change in approach toward Eritrean refugees in Ethiopia, following the peace deal, has created much frustration among refugees, particularly young Eritreans who are well informed and have high expectations about the pledges that Ethiopia made to allocate more rights to refugees. Thus, unmet expectations of refugees about the implementation of the pledges, combined with more restrictive policies for Eritrean refugees that are perceived to be aimed at preventing Eritreans from entering Ethiopia and/or from staying in the border area, could potentially increase frustration, mistrust, and lead to tensions between refugees, refugee protection agencies, and the national government. Moreover, Tigrayans in northern Ethiopia have historically welcomed Eritrean refugees warmly, mainly because they share the same ethnicity, culture, and language. In many cases, host and refugee communities have developed peaceful and mutually beneficial relationships. Therefore— and keeping in mind the already tense relationship between the region's main political party, the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front (TPLF), and both the Eritrean and Ethiopian government—it is worth thinking about the potential impact tensions between Eritrean refugees and the Ethiopian government would have on the relationship between the Tigrayans and the national government.

State of emergency in Borana

Another example is the state of emergency in Borana, which was imposed by the Ethiopian government in 2018 as a measure to end the violence between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups in the area. The state of emergency was supposed to be a temporary solution, and as such was welcomed by the conflict parties. Yet, it has now been in place for almost two years, although it was effective in achieving a ceasefire. The state of emergency law bans any firearms within a 25-kilometer radius. However, there were no negotiations at the community level and therefore it has, in effect, created a situation of "negative peace." The state of emergency also has a direct effect on the mobility and livelihoods of the people living in the area. Community members report the presence of military in the communities, "asking negative questions" and imposing curfews at night, restrictions on the reconstruction of houses, traveling and the ability to gather in groups. This situation has led to increased frustration among IDPs – many of whom are pastoralists - who have returned to their place of origin as part of the governmental policy of return, and who need to rebuild their lives and make their own living as they did prior to their displacement because they no longer can benefit from humanitarian aid in the displacement camps. In this context, relationships between community members, the military, and governmental authorities are deteriorating. Against the background of broader political tensions in the country, this situation is worrying.

[The state of emergency] is only good for banning of fire arms. ... How the military solves things is different from elders and civil servants.²⁹

28 De Vries, D. (2020) News highlights: Hitsats camp shutdown announced in Ethiopia, Attempt to resuscitate EU-Turkey deal, UNHCR bolsters COVID-19 measures. <https://www.eepa.be/?p=3676>;

29 C From a FGD with 10 male members of the Oromo community in Moyale, March 3, 2020.

4. Entry points and opportunities for peacebuilding

4.1 Integrated conflict and migration analysis

An integrated analysis of migration and conflict is useful to assess risks and opportunities of migration for peacebuilding. This knowledge can inform the design and implementation of migration policies. For example, different interests and priorities of local, national, and international governmental and nongovernmental actors shape different migration policies, including on internal displacement. It is therefore important to consider how international and national politics influence the allocation of resources and define when, where, and by whom migration policies are implemented. Moreover, policies must be translated from global to the regional, national, or local context, depending on the operational level of the implementation. This requires a good understanding of the migration and conflict context. Contextualization of migration policies, including so-called 'progressive' policies, is key to avoiding a "one size fits all" solution that disregards the potential negative or positive impact of that policy on its environment. Hence, an awareness of local dynamics and how the intervention ties into broader political processes helps to inform the design of local and national migration policies. An integrated analysis is required to avoid exacerbating existing or creating new conflicts, and to build on the positive potential of migration for peacebuilding.

4.2 Participatory and inclusive processes

Acknowledging the agency of migrants and host communities is essential to sustain peace. Therefore, ensuring their meaningful participation in decision-making processes at different levels is important (including people with different gender, age, abilities, socioeconomic or ethnic background). Consultations with affected communities and local civil society actors can strengthen the implementation of migration policies and pave the way for solutions that address their needs and contribute to preventing future escalations of violent conflict. Peacebuilding actors can play an important role in facilitating such processes by ensuring broad representation and meaningful participation, bringing people together, creating safer spaces, and building trust. Moreover, migration governance provides opportunities for peacebuilding actors to engage with different actors involved in decision-making and implementation of humanitarian responses to migration, as well as actors shaping or regulating migration, and people who are affected by migration. A better understanding of the actors involved in migration governance is interesting for peacebuilding actors as it might help to identify synergies or stakeholders to include in a peace process, thus creating more inclusion. Finally, through the interaction with migration actors, peacebuilding actors can get a better understanding of the migration dynamics and patterns shaping the conflict context.

4.3 Conflict sensitivity, and beyond

A conflict-sensitive approach to migration that takes into account the risks and opportunities of migration policies for peace can strengthen peacebuilding and contribute to conflict prevention. Peacebuilding interventions, such as truth and reconciliation processes, psychosocial support, mediation or

dialogue, can support the positive impact of migration policies on people and communities. To ensure the quality of the intervention and to avoid negative consequences for humanitarian actors' access to people in need, it is important to ensure that the implementing organization has the necessary resources, skills and capacities to operate in a conflict-sensitive way. In addition, in humanitarian crises, peacebuilding should be linked to technical operations (e.g., water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) projects) whenever possible to get the support of local authorities and ensure that the people affected by the crisis receive the short-term support that is needed.