The Horn of Africa: A Paradox of War, Migration, and Intergovernmental Strife

Berihu Teweldebirhan Gebresilassie♠

Abstract

The Horn of Africa is a hotbed of human trafficking, human smuggling, and war. National and international dynamics are crucial for understanding contemporary Horn African trends, regarding war, human smugglers, and human trafficking. Because people are fleeing their homes and seeking refuge, there is a rise in human trafficking and smuggling. The war also causes displacement, as people flee their homes to escape the fighting. A holistic approach is needed that considers the region's political, economic, and social contexts. The Horn of Africa's conflicts and displacements, international organizations, and government agencies are also discussed. An overview of the background, rationale, analytical framework, and methodology is presented. Desk-based literature reviews were limited, so a Delphi evaluation process was implemented. War and mobility are examined systematically. War has a significant effect on mobility, according to the results.

KEYWORDS; Migration, Human Trafficking, Horn of Africa, War

I.   Introduction

Migration and war are not new. Migration and war have been part of human history since the beginning. As people flee their homes in search of safety, war imposes barriers to migration through increased border controls and hostility towards refugees, resulting in a paradox of war, migration, and strife. Even as refugee needs increase, countries may become less willing to accept migrants. It creates a cycle where those displaced by war face further challenges.

Currently, the Horn of Africa is experiencing conflict, political unrest, and large-scale migration. The paradox of war, migration, and intergovernmental strife has caused significant economic and social disruption in the region. Millions of people have also fled the region in search of refuge elsewhere. As a result, basic services, such as health care and education, are unavailable.

An article examines the connection between war and human trafficking in the Horn of Africa. In this article, we explore the complex relationship between conflict and displacement. Our focus will be on how war triggers migration and humanitarian crises. Developing effective policies to address displaced populations' needs requires understanding this link. Conflict creates

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♠ Berihu Teweldebirhan Gebresilassie holds an LL.M, LL. B, and MPA, and is a PhD candidate at Mekelle University's Institute of Population Studies and Centre for Population and Development. He has served as Vice President of the Ethiopian Federal High Court, Head of Legal Services at the Financial Intelligence Center, Advisor to the Minister of Litigation Affairs, Federal mattress prosecutor, and Director of Investigation and Prosecution in the Ethiopian Justice Ministry. As a legal advisor, he advises Tigray's government. Email: berihulay@gmail.com; X: @berihulay.

vulnerabilities that traffickers exploit, increasing victimization and exploitation. Developing effective interventions and policies requires understanding this nexus.

II.   Migration, human trafficking, and the context of war in the Horn of Africa

The Horn remains one of the most unstable, underdeveloped, and volatile regions in Africa. Human trafficking and war are linked, and the Horn of Africa is a geostrategic site of significant importance. Migrants and refugees use the region as a transit point, and its poverty and instability make it a crime hotspot (Yeboua and Cilliers, 2021). Scholars disagree on how to define the Horn of Africa. Located in the northeastern part of the African continent, it is connected to the Middle East, Europe, and Asia. For understanding US policy toward the region, the Arab-Israeli dispute may be as relevant as the wider Middle East policy context. Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia (including what is now Somaliland), Sudan, and Eritrea constitute 'the Horn'.

International political orderings have tested their limits in the Horn of Africa since the 19th century. The Horn of Africa is a rare region where boundaries have been redrawn in the last generation, a process that is unlikely to end anytime soon. Interestingly, the Horn has been shaped by substantively variable self-determination concepts, which intersect with political events to produce unpredictable outcomes. This nationalism is also contingent and transitory. Self-determination requires constant political processes (Alex de Waal and Nouwen, 2020). In the Horn of Africa, political actors challenge state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and regime legitimacy. The Horn of Africa is a region of conflict (Matshanda, 2022).

Conflicts are based on these common denominators regardless of nation, region, clan, or religion. A perennial state crisis in the Horn of Africa is attributed to ethnic strife, resource competition, weak political institutions, and inappropriate policies. (Markakis, 2022). Several violent conflicts, civil wars, and border disputes have plagued the Horn of Africa (HOA) since the colonial era. The Cold War changed the regional alliance map. Conflicts in the Horn of Africa have arisen from ethnic tensions, colonial legacies, and resource competition. In this region, recurrent violent conflicts and the lack of state monopolies of legitimate physical force have led to a proliferation of weapons (Hassan, 2021)

These historical factors have affected millions of lives, causing ongoing displacement and migration patterns. There have been prolonged conflicts in the Horn of Africa, including Somalia, Ethiopia, and Sudan. Somalia, Ethiopia, and South Sudan are currently experiencing civil wars and political instability. Due to these conflicts, people continue to flee their homes in search of safety and stability.

Human trafficking has existed as long as slavery, which spread across Mesopotamian (modern-day Iraq), Egyptian, and Greek history. People from Western Africa were taken by force or war by slave traders in the Americas and Caribbean (Behnke, 2014). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the ICCPR, ICESCR, CEDAW, the CRC, the European Convention on Human

Rights and Fundamental Freedom, and the African Charter of Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR) have a direct impact on human rights (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2014).

Migrant smuggling and human trafficking are interconnected. Human smuggling and trafficking were vague and overlapped before the Palermo protocols (Baird,2016). A trafficker recruits, transports, transfers, harbors, or receives people through force or coercion, as described in Protocol on Trafficking in Persons Art 3. *This includes abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, vulnerability, or payment or benefit. This is to obtain consent from a person in control of another individual. Prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs are all considered exploitation.*

Trafficking in human beings is a serious crime involving force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking is illegal in many countries and punishable severely. UN Protocol on Preventing, Suppressing, and Punishing Trafficking in Persons also coordinates global efforts. Moreover, law enforcement agencies collaborate across borders to dismantle trafficking networks. It thrives in war-torn regions where law enforcement is weak and social structures are disrupted.

Traffickers thrive in an environment ripe for displacement, economic hardship, and social instability caused by these wars. Migration trends in the Horn of Africa are affected by conflict. Violence often forces people to leave their homes, causing internal displacement or crossing borders to seek refuge in neighboring countries. Migration challenges are complex. Humanitarian crises result from conflict and displacement.

For trafficking to be addressed, these factors must be understood. War-affected regions often experience shifts in trafficking patterns. Recruitment into armed groups, forced labor, and sexual trafficking increased. It finances armed groups. Women and children are particularly vulnerable to conflict. Trafficking victims are more likely to be displaced, poor, and illiterate. Sexually exploited, forced to work, and used as child soldiers, they exploit vulnerable populations. The criminal justice efforts are complicated by this dual role. Through an analysis of these patterns, we can better understand how to counter trafficking.

III. Migratory impacts, national interests, and international involvement

Conflicts and security threats plague the Horn of Africa (HoA). There has been continual political instability and a volatile security landscape in the region for a long time, resulting in conflicts of all sorts (Hassan, 2021). A superpower's global ambitions, military capability, and political and economic influence make the Horn of Africa a pivotal region for geopolitics. Big powers sometimes participate in proxy wars. As superpowers often ignore local interests, these proxy wars can be devastating for the local population. Political instability, economic stagnation,

and armed conflicts can result. (Getahun, 2022) Insecurity in the Horn of Africa is systematically attributed to external factors (Ylönen, 2023).

Following the 1980s and 1990s of international marginalization, Africa's importance in international affairs has increased since the early 2000s. In the wake of the 11 September 2001 attacks on the US, the continent has been incorporated into international efforts to combat terrorism, initially embodied in the US 'Global War on Terror', thereby becoming more secure (Oliveira & Cardoso, 2021). Somalia, the North-South Sudanese civil war, and terrorism along the Red Sea and Somalian coasts were all areas where the US was a key player in the Cold War. A lack of a clear strategy and public opposition forced the US to withdraw from Somalia in 1993. Consequently, Al Qaeda emerged and Islamic extremist terrorism spread. In response, the US has refocused its efforts in Africa.

In contrast to the US, after describing the geostrategic importance of the Horn, Russia's role is explicit. Russian private security agencies play a crucial role in antipiracy efforts, military cooperation, arms trade, nuclear energy cooperation, and Moscow's re-engagement in the region amid stiff international competition (Mathew & Moolakkattu, 2022). The strategies include debt relief, vaccine diplomacy, oil exploration assistance, and scholarships. Russian ambitions in the Horn of Africa compete - to some extent - with those of Western countries, especially France and the United States, but also China (Generoso, 2022). Russia's main objective is to increase trade and economic ties with Horn of Africa countries, despite claims it is a proxy war.

As a major power with geopolitical, economic, and political interests in the region, China is involved in security matters. As feasible, China contributes to the fight against piracy in Somalia's coastal area, peacekeeping missions post-conflict peacebuilding in Somalia, and mediation in Sudan and South Sudan (Leake, 2020). China is also required to redouble its efforts in the same area because of the One Belt One Road initiative (Bharti, 2022).

Ethiopia and Sudan are currently engaged in internal wars These wars have caused displacement of thousands of people, resulting in a huge humanitarian crisis. The conflict has devastated local communities, destroyed infrastructure, and disrupted the local economy. It has also caused significant displacement, with many people fleeing their homes in search of safety. The influx of refugees has placed a tremendous strain on neighboring countries, overwhelming their resources and infrastructure. These countries are struggling to provide adequate shelter, food, and healthcare for the displaced populations. Additionally, the instability in the region poses a risk of spillover conflicts, threatening the security and stability of the entire area. The countries are both struggling to rebuild their economies and provide aid to those affected by the war.

Gulf states and their rivals have become major players in Horn of Africa politics after Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt blocked Qatar. Saudi Arabia's strategic competition with Iran, as well as the UAE's competition with Qatar and Turkey, are explored in this book. Additionally, Qatar and the UAE cooperate on antipiracy operations, counterterrorism,

security assistance, and base agreements (Mason and Mabon,2022). The UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Iran are also competing with Turkey, Iran, and Qatar. Iranian and Saudi Arabian tensions in the Horn of Africa, including regional rivalries and logistical requirements for Yemen's conflict (Mason, 2022).

Several Gulf state military bases have been established in the Horn of Africa, increasing militarization. The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden are strategically significant for Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates in Yemen (Cherkas and Novytska, 2022). In the Middle East, the Horn of Africa countries (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan) have been enmeshed in Yemeni politics. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have asserted regional security strategies since 2011, while Iran and Turkey have tried to expand their influence in the Horn of Africa (Alex de Waal, 2020). Using Ethiopia's imperial transport corridors, Djibouti's Red Sea ports, and the Greater Nile Oil Pipeline between South Sudan, Khartoum, and global markets as case studies, we show how infrastructure and sovereignty have been co-produced in regional politics for 150 years.

Although external security involvement in the Horn has increased - whether by Arab Gulf states or others - little consideration has been given to the agendas, interests, and motives of Horn states and their governments (Terrefe and Verhoeven, 2022). A crisis has erupted in the Red Sea. A wave of attacks on ships traversing a vital maritime strait has been unleashed by Yemen's Houthi rebels, purportedly to support Hamas. Both the Houthi gambit and Somali piracy, which peaked in 2010, are serious costs for global trade. In Yemen, the United States and some of its allies have bombed Houthi positions to suppress the threat. Despite this episode illustrating the difficulties of Red Sea security, the crisis extends far beyond Yemen. (Carson et al 2024))

As soon as the genocidal war in Tigrai, Ethiopia began in November 2020, it was obvious it posed a serious threat to regional stability and U.S. interests. Despite these interconnected, complex, and transregional dynamics, U.S. strategy has struggled to account for the region's increased relevance to U.S. interests. U.S. efforts to keep peace and secure the Horn of Africa through Ethiopia. (Carson; and Rondos, 2022)) The Senior Study Group warned in November 2020 that Ethiopia would collapse in fragments. The US gave Ethiopia over 3 billion dollars for reform and used the money for the genocidal Tigray war. At the Media Roundtable on Monday, January 25, 2021, U.S. Ambassador Michael A. Raynor explicitly said we've brought well over 3 billion dollars in U.S. government resources into Ethiopia during that time.

There have been reports claiming that Russia, China, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates are selling weaponized drones to the Ethiopian government. These countries may be motivated by economic interests, as selling military equipment can be a lucrative business. Additionally, they might seek to strengthen their political alliances and influence in the region. By providing military support, they could also be aiming to gain strategic leverage in future geopolitical negotiations. In its geopolitical competition with the US and China, Russia sought port access to the Red Sea. While on his first African tour since the war with Ukraine began, Russian foreign

minister Lavrov vowed Russia's 'firm support' for the GFDRE. A year later, Lavrov returned to the region, visiting Asmara. In addition to declaring Moscow's intention to use Massawa's airport and port for transit, he said Russia would use the port (Chatham House, https://www.chathamhouse.org).

An analysis of UAE investment and military intervention in the region focuses on its 'complex realism' (Young and Khan, 2022). The United Arab Emirates assisted the Ethiopian army with drones dispatched from an airbase in Eritrea. Assab in Eritrea served as a military base for the UAE, provoking considerable concern in Addis Ababa, and the UAE has invested heavily in ports throughout the region, including Somalia. During the Tigray genocide war, the UAE provided Ethiopia with military supplies, including drones. The UAE has supported its military extensively, training the Republican Guard, UAE-trained units protected GFDRE's highest-ranking public officials (Chatham House, https://www.chathamhouse.org).

Evidence emerged in January 2022 that Ethiopia had used a Turkish drone in an attack that killed 58 IDP civilians sheltering in a school in Dedebit in Tigray (Chatham House, https://www.chathamhouse.org). This marked the first time an African nation had used a Turkish drone in a military conflict. Turkey had previously sold drones to Libya and Qatar, but this was the first time it had provided military assistance to an African nation. The attack sparked outrage and condemnation from the international community, with the United Nations calling it a 'war crime'.

Since the Tigray genocidal war began, 58,045 people have fled northern Ethiopia into eastern Sudan and entered the Sudanese states of Kassala, Gedaref, and Blue Nile. About 31 percent of these refugees are children under 18, and 43 percent are women (UNHCR). According to a report from the International Organization for Migration, Um Rakouba, the largest camp, has reached its capacity and Tunaydbah, a second camp, has opened on 31 December 2020.

Sudan's war causes the world's largest displacement crisis. Sudan is currently facing one of the fastest unfolding crises globally, with unprecedented needs. This is one year after war erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF). More than 12.9 million people have fled their homes in Sudan, 10.8 million of whom are internally displaced. 2.2 million Sudanese have fled. Sudan hosts almost 910,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, many of whom have been displaced multiple times. The conflict has not stopped people from seeking international protection in Sudan (UNHCR, 2024). Over 14 million children need humanitarian assistance and support. A total of 8.6 million people have been displaced by fighting in Sudan and neighboring countries. According to the International Organization for Migration Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM DTM), they shelter host communities in 7,076 locations across Sudan's 18 states. According to the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR), 1.8 million of the 2 million people who fled the country have sought refuge in neighboring countries, including Central African Republic, Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, and South Sudan.

Khartoum is home to 3.6 million internally displaced people (54 percent of all IDPs). Refugees mostly seek refuge in South Darfur, East Darfur, North Darfur, White Nile, Sennar, Gedaref, Central Darfur, Northern, Aj Jazirah, and other states – most of which saw high levels of violence recently. More than half a million civilians were forced to flee Aj Jazirah in December, many had previously been displaced from Khartoum (Sudan: One Year of Conflict - Key Facts and Figures, 2024). In pursuit of regional influence or economic gain, several credible allegations have been made that the governments of the UAE, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, and Russia have assisted or financed one side or another. Libya's eastern government, which is not internationally recognized, has also been accused of complicity (The Conversation Africa, 2024).

Politics and security in Somalia were uncertain. Türkiye's efforts to mediate the disputed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ethiopia and Somalia failed. NSAG attacks, clan conflicts, and armed conflict between Somali Security Forces and Al Shabaab contributed to Somalia's insecurity. Insecurity affected Bay, Banadir, and Lower Shabelle the most in September 2024. During September, 4,976 internal displacements occurred, 47% from conflict or insecurity, and 24% from climate change, according to the Protection and Returns Monitoring Network (PRMN) (UNHCR Somalia, 2024).

Eritreans have left their region under unique circumstances to seek a safer life elsewhere in the Horn of Africa. Those who emigrate often do so for political reasons, to escape poverty, or to escape conscription into the Eritrean military. Eritrea has one of the highest emigration rates in the world, with an estimated 1.5 million people leaving the country since 1991. It was a time of violence, insecurity, and uncertainty for all (Treiber, 2022). Conflict creates opportunities for criminal networks and armed groups. State fragility and shared social networks enable them to operate in convergent spaces. Trafficking and Smuggling of Human Beings (TSHB) between the Sahel and the Libyan shores contributes to terrorism, crime, and insecurity in the Sahel, West Africa, and Europe (Rizk, 2021).

IV.   Conclusion

War, migration, and internal and intergovernmental strife in the Horn of Africa are examined in this article. The paper begins with a critique of the statist literature that has largely misdiagnosed war, migration, and intergovernmental strife. Contemporary developments can be understood based on this literature. Different forms of power, authority, and legitimacy are dismissed as war, migration, and intergovernmental strife. This article does not dismiss the multiple and valid causes of the crisis. Conflict and displacement in the Horn of Africa are profoundly interconnected.

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive understanding of their interconnections and a commitment to collaborative solutions that prioritize the needs of affected individuals and communities. The nexus between war and human trafficking in the Horn of Africa is complex

and multifaceted. The Horn of Africa has implemented various responses to conflict-related displacement challenges. Bilateral agreements, refugee camps, and collaboration with international organizations help manage migration flows. Conflicts continue in the Horn of Africa. Conflicts evolve, and so do traffickers' tactics. New technologies and changing political landscapes pose ongoing challenges. Displacement issues will likely worsen due to climate change, economic instability, and ongoing violence. Future challenges require a commitment to collaboration and adaptability in strategies. Displacement challenges are increasingly being addressed by technology. Mobile applications and online platforms facilitate communication and provide essential information to refugees and displaced people, but traffickers may also take advantage.

Displaced populations in the Horn of Africa rely on international aid. UNHCR and the Red Cross provide essential services, but funding shortages and political obstacles often hinder their work. Trafficking is addressed by local organizations. Advocate for policy change, raise awareness, and support victims. Creating sustainable solutions to combat trafficking in the Horn of Africa requires strengthening these grassroots efforts. Prevention, protection, and partnerships are needed to address this issue. Only concerted efforts can mitigate conflict's effects on human trafficking. Conflict and displacement require long-term solutions. Rebuilding the lives of displaced individuals requires peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and sustainable development.

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