Role of women in peace-building in Kenya: Focusing on the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes

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Acknowledgements

Dedication

This research is dedicated to all women all over the world who are trying to create a mood of peace from which a system of peace can be built.

Contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADC	Agricultural Development Corporation
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
APP	African Peoples' Party
KPU	Kenya Peoples' Union
DP	Democratic Party
FORD	Forum for the Restoration of Democracy
NCCK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
CJPC	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
NGO	non-governmental organization
AACC	All African Conference of Churches
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
UN	United Nations
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
PC	Provincial Commissioner
DC	District Commissioner
DO	Divisional Officer
MP	Member of Parliament

Definitions of terms

Peace:	The term peace is used in this study in the context of human security.
Peace building:	Refers to a specific infrastructure within and among nations that removes causes of war and offers alternatives to war in situations where it might occur.
Majimbo:	This is a Kiswahili word for regionalism.
White Highlands:	This was an area occupied by colonial white settlers.
Outsiders:	Used to refer to people who were not Kalenjin by tribe.
Provincial Administration:	This is a department in the office of the president in charge of the general control and implementation of government policies.
Legetio:	A belt made from animal skin decorated with cowry shells and women use it to tie their belly to regain the shape of their stomach after giving birth.
Wananchi:	This is a Kiswahili word meaning citizen.

1 Introduction

Background

This study analyzes the role of women in peace building in Kenya focusing on the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes as a case study.

Throughout the world women's role in violent conflict and war has been seen as marginal in terms of ensuring that human security is upheld. Accounts of war through news reporting, government propaganda, novels, the cinema and other mediums tend to cast men as the peace builders and women as passive, innocent victims. In Africa, wars have been portrayed in almost the same way but the stories of the courage of men as fighters have tended to eclipse the active role women have played as peace builders during the war. It is this bias in neglecting or assuming women's role as peace builders alongside other actors in conflict situations, particularly during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes in Kenya, which informed this study.

During the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes, women and men were affected differently by the conflict, with women suffering most of the effects such as death, physical injuries and insufficient resources to take care of their children. Consequently, as women experienced the immediate consequences of the conflict, they were the first to work for peace as evidenced by the demonstrations they held at various chiefs' camps and divisional offices in the Rift-valley province.

Historical background to the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes

The Rift-valley province – the largest of Kenya's eight provinces which runs along the Great Rift Valley from the Kenya–Ethiopia border in the north to the Kenya–Tanzania border in the south – was, before colonialism, the home of mainly pastoral communities, among them, the Kalenjin tribes: the Maasai, the Samburu, the Ogiek, the Pokot and the Turkana.

Tribal clashes in the Rift-valley province started on 29 October 1991 at a farm known as Miteitei, situated in the heart of Tindaret Division in Nandi District, pitting the Nandi, a Kalenjin tribe, against the Kikuyu, the Kamba, the Luhya, the Kisii and the Luo. The clashes quickly spread to other farms in the area, among them, Owiro farm, which was wholly occupied by the Luo; and into Kipkelion Division in Kericho district, which had a multi-ethnic composition of people, among them the Kalenjin, the Kisii, and the Kikuyu. Later, in early 1992, the clashes spread to Molo, Olenguruone, Londiani, and other parts of Kericho, Trans Nzoia, Uashin Gishu and many other parts of the Rift-valley province. In 1993, the clashes spread to Enoosupukia, Naivasha, parts of Narok, and Trans Mara districts which together then formed the greater Narok before the Trans Mara district was hived out of it, and to Gucha district in Nyanza province. In these areas, the Kipsigis and the Maasai, were pitted against the Kikuyu, the Kisii, the Kamba and the Luhya, among other tribes. The clashes arrived in Laikipia and Njoro in 1998, pitting the Samburu and the Pokot against the Kikuyu in Laikipia and the Kalenjins mainly against the Kikuyu in Njoro.

The rift valley has some of the best arable land in Kenya. Indeed it formed the core of the former 'White Highlands' which were exclusively reserved for the colonial settlers before independence in 1963. The Rift-valley province covers an expansive area spanning 182,539 square kilometres or 40 per cent of Kenya's land-mass with a total population of 6,987,036. (1999 Population and Housing census, Volume 1).

Prior to colonialism, the Rift-valley province was the home of scattered pastoral communities, the main ones having been the Kalenjin, the Maasai, the Turkana, the Samburu, the Pokot and sections of the Luhya, which held land communally. The Ogiek (Dorobo) who were there before the colonial masters were not included in the history of the rift valley by the colonial masters because they considered them as wild animals that lived in the forest. Land was purely held for the sustenance of life and clan rights over land were limited to this use and to the transmission of those rights. The establishment of the White Highlands, around 21,368 square kilome-

tres, required sources of cheap labour to work the vast plantations and farms, and taxes were imposed aimed at getting Africans to work outside their traditional subsistence lifestyle (The Civil Service, Volume 1 Report of the Committee, London 1966–1969). Consequently, many people from other parts of Kenya who had experience in farming migrated to the farms in the rift valley to be squatters and workers in settlers' farms. These people came from Luo, Kisii, Luhya and Kikuyu communities (Africa Watch, 1993). During the multi-party compaign the Kalenjin politicians were determined to get 25 per cent of votes cast in the Rift-valley province as a requirement for their presidential candidate. It is an election requirement that the president must get at least 25 per cent of votes cast in at least five out of the eight provinces. So one way of ensuring that the then president got the votes from his province was to displace the non-Kalenjin so that they would not vote for the opposition. Thus the Kalenjin leaders portrayed the demands for political pluralism and multi-party system as an anti-Kalenjin movement and an affront to the Kalenjin presidency. Moreover, the Kalenjin had the perception that the major ethnic groups looked down upon them. Thus they felt justified in reclaiming the so-called lost land. As one old Kalenjin summed it up:

> *'At independence (former President) Jomo Kenyatta gave all the land to the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin got nothing, so now the Kalenjin must take land back'* (Africa Watch, 1993: 88).

> *As Beyart points out, in contemporary states, ethnicity exists mainly as an agent of accumulation of wealth and political power* (Beyart, 1993: 55).

The Kalenjin through propaganda had been made to believe that in the event of power going into the hands of non-Kalenjin, they would be isolated, persecuted, marginalized and victimized for imaginary crimes (Daily Nation, January 3, 1992: 14); this political indoctrination encompassed the inculcation of the belief that a single-party system was more protective to the Kalenjin than political pluralism. In that regard, if pluralism was to exist, then the Kalenjin hope was to be best served in the creation of a separatist state or federalism which would preserve Kalenjin's areas as semi-autonomous.

In each clash area, non-Kalenjin or non-Maasai, as the case may be, were suddenly attacked, their houses set on fire, their property looted and in certain instances, some of them were either killed or severely injured with traditional weapons like bows and arrows, spears, pangas, swords and clubs. The raiders were well organized and coordinated. Their attacks were generally under the cover of darkness and, where the attacks were in broad daylight, the raiders would smear their faces with clay to conceal their identities. The attackers targeted mainly the Kikuyu but also the Kisii, the luhya, and the Luo; other non-Kalenjin and non- Maasai communities were not spared. The attacks were barbaric, callous and calculated to drive out the targeted groups from their farms, to cripple them economically and to psychologically traumatize them. Many of the victims were forced to camp in schools, church compounds and shopping centres. There they lived in makeshift structures of polythene sheets, cardboard and similar materials. They had little food and belongings with them and lived in poor sanitary conditions with their children who could no longer go to school. There was also a general lack of concern by the provincial administration and the police force for their security and general welfare.

In general, the clashes started and ended suddenly, leaving a trail of destruction, suffering and disruption of life hitherto unknown in Kenya. The causes of the clashes have been given as conflict over land, cattle rustling, political differences and ecological reasons, among others.

Causes of the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes

The causes of the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes varied from one district to another and for the purposes of this study each district will be discussed separately.

Causes of the land clashes in Nakuru and Uashin Gishu districts:

- The *majimboism* (Kiswahili word for regionalism) rallies of September 1991 which were held in Nandi and Kericho districts, which propagated the theory that the Rift-valley was for the Kalenjin and those espousing political parties other than KANU should leave the province;

- Rivalry over the distribution of the administrative posts evident through utterances by leaders as exemplified by Wilson Leitich and councillors Maiywo at Kerisoi where they spoke vehemently against opposition parties and Njenga Mungai at Sondu River farm where he attended to address one section of his constituents (the Kikuyu), ignoring their cosmopolitan nature;

- The re-introduction of multi-parties without proper education of *wananchi*, which was misinterpreted by the Kalenjin as a direct attack on the presidency;

- To a lesser extent, rivalry over land ownership, as claimed in Kerisoi settlement scheme (in other settlement schemes the land issue was not a factor).

Causes of the general insecurity and ethnic clashes in West Pokot district:

- The repudiation of the traditional grazing zones set aside for specific ethnic groups;

- The unwillingness of some of the Kenyan ethnic communities with kith and kin in the neighbouring countries to cooperate with security and administration personnel in assisting to disarm the incoming refugees and or apprehend any persons who could possibly be a source of insecurity;

- The unlimited and uncontrolled inflow of guns and other dangerous weapons from neighboring countries;

- The rampant drought and famine in the Sahelian belt of Africa leading the inhabitants to engage in all sorts of activities to survive.

In this district I carried out the study in Kapenguria Town, Ortum, Chapereria and Sigor.

The perpetrators, instigators and fighters

From the stories told by the informants, the fighters were organized groups of youth, between 14 and 30 years, who were well armed with bows and arrows, in some cases their faces adorned with clay 'munyu'. The youths were invariably described by the informants as 'warriors'. Both the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu youths carried pangas, rungus and makeshift wooden or plastic shields as weapons. They were being ferried in lorries and other forms of transport to the clash areas by politicians with a special interest in the clashes. According to the information given, the perpetrators or instigators of the clashes, through public utterances and actions, were, among others, members of parliament, chiefs, priests, sub-chiefs and teachers.

Statement of the problem

During the 1992 Rift-valley clashes the perception of women as the victims obscured their role as peacemakers in the reconstruction and peace-building processes. However, grassroots women and women's organizations initiated dialogue and reconciliation within their villages and communities. But although women played important roles in forging for peace during the clashes in the family and the community, the government seemed to ignore the role they played as peace builders in the society and as a result very few resources were (and still are) allocated to their organizations. Also during the 1992 Rift-valley clashes, in peace talks between warring parties, women were (and still are) hardly involved, despite the fact that they were most affected by the conflict. Besides this, most of the state peace-building initiatives during the 1992 Rift-valley clashes took the top–down approach and since there are fewer women in the upper echelons of power, they were under-represented. This is in spite of the fact that women, as child bearers, seek conditions that enable people to live in peace by being counsellors and custodians of human values which is as a result of socializing the young ones in the family.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study include;

1   To ascertain and determine the role women play in peace building in Kenya focusing on the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes.

2   To formulate strategies to encourage the government to involve women in peace-building initiatives and decision-making processes.

3   To ascertain what legal measures should be considered to improve women's participation in peace-building processes.

Research assumptions

The assumptions which informed this study were as follows:

1   Women during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes in Kenya played the role of peacemakers within their families and communities using their nature as transmitters of a culture of peace through socio-cultural mechanisms.

2   Even though women played an important role in peace building during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes, they are still under-represented in decision-making processes with regard to conflict resolution, for example on the provincial and district security committees.

3   Religion played a role during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiatives because women used their religious beliefs as a foundation for their activities which helped to promote forgiveness and reconciliation.

4   Women who worked for peace during the 1992 Rift-valley clashes at the grassroots level did not gain national prominence because women's activities are often labelled social, voluntary and charitable even though these activities have a political impact.

5   Women encouraged inter-ethnic marriages as a way of building peace during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes.

6   There were other peace builders during and after the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes working alongside women peace builders.

Research questions

The questions emanating from these assumptions were as follows;

1   What methods did women use to achieve peace during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?

2   Are grassroots women peace builders under-represented in the government institutions for conflict resolution and management such as provincial, district and divisional security committees?

3   What role did religion play during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiative?

4   Have women who worked for peace during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes at the grassroots level gained national prominence? If not, why not?

5   What was the role of inter-ethnic marriages as a way of restoring peace during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?

6   Were there other peace builders apart from women during and after the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes? If yes, who were they? And what were their roles?

Significance of the study

This study seeks to expose the role women played during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes with a view to making suggestions to the relevant authorities to tap the hidden talents of women in peace building and where possible involve them during peace talks to incorporate their views.

I also hope that this study will motivate the government to strengthen the women's grassroots peace-building informal organizations in terms of giving them financial support to meet their operational needs so as to work hand in hand with the provincial administration.

Not much has been written about the land clashes which rocked the Rift-valley province in 1992. However, scholars, policy think-tanks, the Human Rights Watch and other people commissioned by the government have produced an impressive bank of micro-level studies to explain the seemingly inexplicable: how and why did this happen; the role of the provincial administration during the clashes; the role of the security personnel; the role of the religious bodies; and the role of local and international media. Yet these studies, most often based on ethnic and or global level analysis, tended to ignore the role women played as peace builders during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. It is this gap that this study seeks to address.

Above all, this study seeks to expose the gender disparity in the departments dealing with peace and security and I hope this study will help the government to use a gender lens during the formation of security committees.

Study population

This study targeted grassroots women peace builders to ascertain their roles as peace builders – what they exactly do, how they do it, their entry points and the problems they experience.

I also targeted women politicians simply because I wanted to establish how women fit in the harsh political environment and whether this affected their traditional role of peace building.

Included in my target group were women who hold religious positions and those who work with non-governmental organizations to ascertain what informed their choice to work for peace.

I also targeted women and men who work with the government, especially those working with the provincial administration and the Teachers' Service Commission. Provincial administration is concerned with the implementation of government policies and ensuring that people live peacefully wherever they are and they form the security committees in various regions they represent. I targeted teachers, especially female teachers, to establish what they impart to the pupils as regards peace.

Demarcation of the study

I conducted this study in the Rift-valley province in Kenya. The study targeted three districts in the Rift-valley province, namely Nakuru, Uasin Gishu and West Pokot districts.

Nakuru distict

Nakuru district, an expansive, multi-ethnic district with its administrative headquarters which is also the headquarters of the Rift-valley province, was the hardest hit by the inter-tribal clashes of 1991–1998. The district is bounded by Narok district to the south, Nyandarua district to the east, Baringo and Koibatek districts to the north, and Kericho and Bomet districts to the west. Nakuru district was part of what used to be called the White Highlands. Its present residents moved there under different settlement programmes, some of which were started before independence. At independence, therefore, a very high percentage of the Kikuyu population was in Nakuru district, and their presence there, both before and after independence, was a constant source of problems not only with the settler population but also with other tribes who, like them, were resident in the district for various reasons.

West Pokot district

West Pokot district is situated along Kenya's western boundary with Uganda and has borders with Trans Nzoia and Marakwet districts to the south, and Baringo and Turkana districts to the east and north respectively. It is located between 34° 47' and 35° 49' north latitude. The district has an area of about 9,100 square kilometres and its headquarters in Papenguria. It comprises six administrative divisions namely: Kapenguria, Chepareria, Kacheliba, Sigor, Alale and Lelan. There are 36 locations and 112 sub-locations. It is mainly inhabited by the Pokot community.

In 1999, the district had a population of 308,086. Chapereria has a relatively higher population concentration followed by Kapenguria and Sigor (Republic of Kenya, 1997: 4). The average population density was 34 people per square kilometre in 1997.

Uasin Gishu district

Uashin Gishu district has a large population of former squatters and workers on European farms, who were settled there under the aegis of the commissioner for the squatters. They were more particularly settled on what is now referred to as Kondoo farms, numbered I to IX which were formally managed by the Central Agricultural Board. Ainabkoi division was the sampled area in the Uasin Gishu district and it is bisected in a north–south direction by the Eldoret Nairobi road which passes through Burnt Forest town, sometimes referred to as Olare, and Timboroa shopping centre. Ainabkoi division borders both Tinderet division, where Miteitei farm is, and Londiani division in Kericho district. The clashes in Burnt Forest where I conducted the research started on 13 December 1992, two or so weeks before the general elections of that year, and a year after the introduction of multi-partyism in Kenya.

2 Legal framework and literature review

The theoretical framework governing the study

This research was guided by a thorough scrutiny of both the national constitution of Kenya and the relevant international instruments. The Kenyan Constitution (1992) which is now under review does not explicitly address the issue of peace and peace making. Peace therefore is not a constitutional guarantee, perhaps because it is a recent phenomenon which came into world politics after the Vienna Convention in 1994. However, the Bill of Rights, chapter V, section 82 (2) addresses the issue of non-discrimination which this study partly seeks to address. Section 82 (2) states that:

> '*Subject of subsections (6), (8) and (9), no person shall be treated in a discriminatory manner by a person acting by virtue of any written law or in the performance of the functions of a public office or a public authority.*'

This section enabled me to problematize the gross under-representation of women in the provincial, district, divisional, locational and sub-locational security committees. It enabled me to question the criteria used in the formation of these committees and their legal basis. While the Kenyan constitution assumes that the word *person* includes everybody and therefore the issue of equal treatment is taken care of, Uganda's constitution is very explicit and specific in chapter 4 article 21(2) which states:

> '*Without prejudice to clause (1) of this article, a person shall not be discriminated against on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic origin, birth, creed or religion, or special, or economic standing, political opinion, or disability.*'

But it goes on to state in article 33(4) that:

> '*Women shall have the right to equal treatment with men and that that right shall include equal*

opportunities in political, economic and social activities.'

 The Kenyan government seems to see peace and security issues as falling within the docket of men, a belief which this research seeks to disprove.

Below are international instruments which were used as the guiding principles of this study.

Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

Article 7 states that:

> *'State parties shall take measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure the women, on equal terms with men, have the right:*
>
> *(b) to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.'*

Kenya being a signatory to CEDAW has not taken any practical steps to incorporate women in its security committees and this is due the age-old sex discrimination in education and employment. Besides this, the implementation of this provision depends upon the good will of the government in power and this means that the CEDAW committee has no power to enforce this provision.

The Protocol of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2001)

Article 10 (Right to peace):

> *'1 Women have the right to peaceful existence and the right to participate in the promotion and maintenance of peace.*
>
> *2 State parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the increased participation of women:*
>
> *a) in programmes of education for peace and a culture of peace.*
>
> *b) in the structures and processes for conflict prevention, management and resolution at local, national, regional, continental and international levels.'*

Even though by 1992, the above protocol was still a draft, the Kenyan government should have applied the principles to guide it thereby ensuring that women would be included in peace-building initiatives so as to incorporate their voices.

Kenya, though a signatory to the African Charter and duty bound to honour this protocol, has chosen to ignore it by failing to include women in the peace-making process. This protocol was useful during my study because it enabled me to investigate and interrogate the composition of the security committees at various levels of the provincial administration and to establish whether grassroots women peace-builders were incorporated in the peace-making process.

Beijing Declaration Platform of Action, 1995

Resolution 134 states that:

> *'In a world of continuing instability and violence, the implementation of cooperative approaches to peace and security is urgently needed. The equal access and full participation of women in*

power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security. Although women have begun to play an important role in conflict resolution, peace keeping and defence and foreign affairs mechanisms, they are still under-represented in decision-making positions. If women have to play an equal part in securing and maintaining peace, they must be empowered politically and represented adequately at all levels of decision making.'

This declaration underscores the need to have women represented in the peace process so as to include women's views and perception of peace, something that the government of Kenya seems to be silent about. The government of Kenya seems to marginalize women peace builders by failing to recognize the role they play in peace building thereby making them operate under the informal structures at the grassroots level with no or little recognition. The application of the declaration in this study was to enable me to establish if the government incorporates the grassroots peace builders during their peace-making initiatives.

Article 101 of the Charter of the United Nations

Strategic objective

'Requires state parties to increase the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and protect women living in situations of armed and other conflicts or under foreign occupation.'

The government, international and regional inter-governmental institutions should take action to promote equal participation of women and equal opportunities for women to participate in all forums and peace activities at all levels, particularly at the decision-making level, including the United Nations secretariat with due regard to equitable geographical distribution in accordance with Article 101 of the United Nations Charter. Kenya is a signatory to the United Nations and it is its obligation to implement the requirements therein but the reality of the situation reveals that it has chosen to ignore this obligation by neglecting to mainstream gender in its peace operations. Security issues are entirely left in the hands of men and this is partly because most of the institutions are male dominated in the false belief that only men can provide security.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000)

For the first time, the United Nation Security Council discussed the question of women, peace and security in New York on 24 and 25 October 2000. This event marked an historic step forward in the area of women and peace. The discussion addressed the needs of peace in all United Nations peace operations, as well as the broader issue of women's role in building and maintaining peace. During this discussion, an overwhelming number of speakers stressed the need to include women in every aspect of peace building, especially calling for their involvement in decision making.

On 31 October 2000, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security. The resolution called on all actors involved in negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective that would take into account the special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement, rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction. The adoption of this historic resolution was a major step towards recognizing women's role in conflict management, peace keeping and post-conflicts peace building. The resolution states:

'Member states are to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management and resolution of conflict.'

It encourages the Secretary General to implement his Strategic Plan for Action (A/49/587) calling for an in-

crease in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes.

The resolution further urges the Secretary General to seek to expand the role and the contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel.

It suggests that the Security Council expresses its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peace-keeping operations, and urges the Secretary General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component.

Even though this is a policy guideline, I found it useful in examining the country's position in incorporating a gender perspective into peace-building operations, more particularly in the provincial administration department.

The study seeks to establish the role women played as peace builders during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. Women during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes participated in peace building both at the family level as mothers and at community level as peace lovers but, as Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika, president of Federation of African Women's Peace Networks (FERFAP), stated:

> '*Women establish their credibility as peace makers at the grassroots level but they are marginalized from official negotiations. Making it from the grass mat to the peace table has nothing to do with their qualifications as peace makers. Once the foreign mediators come and the official negotiation starts you have to be able to sit at the table and speak their language. Often women are not trained or given the chance*' (Progress of the World's Women: 2002).

The report of the parliamentary select committee to investigate ethnic clashes in western and other parts of Kenya (1992) headed by Joseph K. Kiliku investigated the root causes of the ethnic clashes that have raged since 1991 and identified persons that may have perpetrated the clashes. The committee set out to examine the roles of the following:

- Politicians and political parties during the clashes;

- Organized groups such as churches and other religious, voluntary and professional organizations;

- The general public including individuals during the clashes;

- The provincial administration and the security personnel during the clashes;

- The local and international media.

And, finally, to make recommendations that would avert reoccurrence of similar clashes in the future.

The report dwelt much on exposing the causes of the land clashes and making recommendations on the way forward. Even though it tried to clearly bring out the role of security forces, the church and the media it categorically left out the role women played as peace builders during the land clashes. This report is a replica of the report of the Judicial Commission appointed to inquire into tribal clashes in Kenya under the chairmanship of the Justice A. M. Akiwumi on 31 July 1999.

Three issues currently dominate debates about conflicts in Kenya: ethnicity, violence and democracy. Each of these three issues is a vast area of research and academic scholarship. The Centre for Conflict Resolution conducted a study which attempted to highlight some of the relationships and the contradictions between ethnicity, violence and democracy by examining the unfolding levels of conflicts, ethnicity and democracy in Kenya's volatile violence-prone Rift-valley region during the last decade. In a general way, history has shown that to a large extent, insecurity in the region has been state sponsored and can therefore be induced or removed by the state in the region (Byamukama, 1995). In most of Africa, the transition to democracy has been abrupt

and the rulers are not adequately prepared to adopt wider popular political participation. Social violence, therefore, becomes politicized (Bary, 1991). This is evidenced by president Moi's statement that multi-partyism would lead to 'tribal conflicts' and unrest in the country (Cited in Frey, 1991: 253). In his view the Kenyan people had not developed sufficiently to appropriate the intricacies of multi-partyism (Furedi, 1983: 81).

Political repression and massive coercion have turned plural politics in Africa into warfare (Ake, 1990) and Kenya is no exception. The last decade of the 20th century in Kenya will be remembered for armed conflicts, massacres, displacements, uprisings, riots and demonstrations whose repercussions will continue to be felt in the next century.

Scholars have also discussed the effects of the 1992 Rift-valley clashes and indicated that violence affected the political space in Kenya. They clearly established that the political violence that has continued to rock Kenya since 1991 has had lasting effects which have altered Kenya's political and economic landscape.

The violence has created strong fear among the non-Kalenjin communities in Rift-valley province. This is due to the fact that it contributed to a situation of lawlessness which put many peoples' lives in jeopardy. It led to dislocation of many people from their farms. It is estimated that 400,000 people were displaced during the violence. Although some people have returned to their farms, about 200,000 are yet to be resettled. However, some of the farms have been illegally occupied by the Kalenjins, some of whom allegedly bought the land at low prices from destitute non-Kalenjins who could not re-occupy their farms. The Kalenjins are capitalizing on the current state of insecurity for their own political and economic advantage (Centre for Conflict Resolution, 2003:31).

The violence therefore has engendered a growing atmosphere of hatred and suspicion between communities that hitherto had lived together peacefully and even intermarried. Consequently, people's self reliant approach to life has been shattered and reduced to the level of destitution and helplessness.

The clashes caused deaths and injuries, internal displacement, destitution and extensive destruction of resources in the affected areas. Serious damage was inflicted on agriculture, and economic and social infrastructure, including education and healthcare. The destruction of farms and displacement of populations from a rich agricultural area contributed to serious food shortages in 1993. The Kenyan government therefore had to appeal to the international community for food aid (Daily Nation, 1993: 6). Up to now, agricultural production is yet to recover.

The displaced persons have been forced to live in harsh squalid conditions, unhygienic camps, in churches and trading centres without proper sanitation and shelter. The health of the victims has been compromised, especially for the children who suffer from malnutrition. Women and children have borne the brunt of the mayhem thereby comprising the bulk of the victims. As Ayot notes:

> *'Wars and conflicts often leave women in situations whereby they can hardly make ends meet.*
> *They have little or no resources at all against these acts of violence'* (Ayot,1995: 4).

Frey (1991) posits that political violence is a tactic used to gain control of a situation or to shift balance of power (1991:116). This is achieved through manipulation of target populations into compliance with demands they would otherwise reject in a more rational situation. Oyugi correctly argues that tribalism as an ideological tool is often used in economic competition and political conflicts (AJPS, 1997). This assertion seems to confirm what happened during the 1992 elections when the Kalenjin and their kinsmen opted to defend the status quo of privileges, against the possibility of deprivation by potential challengers. This marked the genesis of ethnic violence in Kenya.

Magubane (1969) and Nzongola Ntalaja (1998) correctly point out that the condition for ethnic conflicts in Africa was created historically through colonial and post-colonial government policies. The bone of contention in African ethnic conflicts is control of the state and national resources to which the state has access. Thus the state is both a contributor to and the manager of ethnic conflicts. Such conflicts tend to erupt because of the

activities of either the elite or groups who mobilize ethnic symbols in order to achieve access to social, political and material resources. Ethnicity, therefore, is instigated by scarce resources. This is exactly what transpired in the land clashes in the Rift-valley .

Similar views are held by Ibrahim and Pereira (1993) and Mafeje (1971) who point out that under colonial rule linguistic groups were categorized as tribes and the differences between them were emphasized. Thus stronger and more rigid ethnic relations became possible. However, with the multi-ethnic state of Africa, ethnic-based political mobilization constitutes a major threat to the stability of the state. In sum the entrenchment of a democratic culture is the panacea to ethnic conflicts because ethnic conflict can be linked to the failure of democracy to entrench itself. The state stands accused for its complicity in one way or another in the ethnic violence in Kenya. This is due to its acts of omission and commission.

From the very beginning the state's response to the violence was lukewarm. The government and the local administration attempted to play down the conflict by blaming the opposition and the mass media for sensational reporting. Initially the government had claimed that the violence was merely conflict over land (*Daily Nation*, 31 October 1991).

Consequently, little was done to deploy adequate security or provide any meaningful assistance or relief to the victims. Those sent to quell the clashes appear to have been partial and biased. In many instances, the few security forces were outnumbered by the 'Kalenjin warriors' hence their incapacitation. The policemen were reported as pleading with the attackers not to burn and loot rather than stopping them from carrying out their heinous acts. Available evidence shows that the police were acting under strict orders not to shoot at the warriors. Thus the warriors attacked with impunity even during daytime, regardless of the presence of the police. Furthermore, some policemen who had acted against the 'warriors' are said to have been interdicted or dismissed or charged in court. What an irony, in addition, the warriors appeared to have been familiar with the movement of the security and other administrative personnel and hence were able to strategically arrange attacks when security personnel were out of the area for other operations elsewhere (Kiliku Report, 1992). There appeared to have been evidence of cordial interaction between the warriors, security forces and administrative officers. The police, therefore, were reluctant to arrest the perpetrators of the mayhem. On the contrary, they tended to release without charge suspects who were handed over to them by the victims (Africa Watch, 1993). The government instead adopted a selective attitude in apprehending the 'warriors'. Very often non-Kalenjin were arrested and arraigned in court on charges of possessing illegal weapons which they had acquired for self defence.

To make it worse, police and administrative officers often ridiculed the victims with two-finger salutes saying, 'Let the FORD (Forum for the Restoration of Democracy) help you' (*Daily Nation*, 7 March 1992: 3). In general the local administration and the security personnel were largely Kalenjin who would conceivably be expected to side with their tribesmen. This seems to support Kumar's contention that frequently the police and the military exacerbate rather than resolve the conflicts in multi-ethnic societies (Kumar, 1989: 4).

The violence, therefore, can be seen as strong-arm tactics used by the state to intimidate recalcitrant opposition supporters. The violence seems to have benefited the ruling party and the government politically. For example, the government was able to polarize ethnic sentiments thereby ensuring that the Kalenjin community had no choice but to support the system. Moreover, the state used the violence to reward and empower its supporters by allowing them to alienate or buy land illegally in Rift-valley province (Africa Watch, 1993: 7).

In Africa, the state is the determinant in the production and distribution of material and social resources. Consequently, there is strong competition for political power since access to state apparatus is the key to the acquisition of material and political resources (Markakis, 1994: 220). In that connection, those who control the state would not hesitate to use state power to defend their privileged position. Kenya is no exception to this. The 1990s demands for political pluralism in Kenya engendered an environment of fear, anxiety and animosity. Kuria notes that:

'Kenya's majimboism is not federalism. The central theme that its advocates have pursued is power at any cost. They are disinterested in the democratic theory of federalism, which divides power between the centre and the regions. Indeed these advocates supported one-party rule and did not show interest in federalism until September 1991 when they realized that the impending pluralism threatened their hold on power' (1994: 2).

Six months after the onset of the violence the President Moi was reported to have described the clashes as 'mere acts of pure political thuggery' and warned that 'the government would not condone the use of force as a political weapon'(*Daily Nation*, 21 March 1991: 1). Despite this warning, the violence continued unabated. This seems to support Henry Ekstein's position that:

'…the state is neither an arbitrator nor neutral. It is itself a focal point of competition; an actor in the conflict' (cited in Kumar, 1989: 3).

Kenyan women peace builders are not different

Since the beginning of recorded history, women have been working for peace and picking up the pieces from the wars started by men. As Elsie Boulding says:

'The basic energies common to all human beings have been redirected so that men seek power and women protect men from the consequences of power seeking. At the close of every war, destroyed communities have been rebuilding, and much of the physical labour of rebuilding has been women's work. Another activity traditionally expected of women is conflict resolution, since it is troublesome to go to war all the time. The old practice of marrying the daughters of one village to sons of the next was a war-avoidance strategy' (Elise Boulding 1988: 228ff).

This indicates that women are being motivated to build peace because they are mothers, agonizing over their children's disappearance. This assertion seems to confirm that women in the Rift-valley were motivated to work for peace simply because they are mothers and partly because in the event of war they are the most vulnerable. This is because women have been used over the centuries as sexual weapons and objects of violence between warring factions, a reality brought to life in the experiences of Korean 'comfort women' in Japan during the Second World War and in the raping of women in the former Yugoslavia. A Haitian woman attending the Manila conference spoke poignantly on how the effect of war is close to the lives of women.

'I am afraid …. afraid because I have three daughters and I fear that one of them will be raped while I'm attending this meeting. The situation is desperate … there is no protection for Haitian women' (Gnanadason *et al.*, 1996).

Women in Europe and North America organized in an effort to prevent the outbreak of the First World War. In July 1914, the International Women Suffrage Alliance presented a petition for peace to the British Foreign Ministry signed on behalf of 12 million women in 26 countries. Once war broke out, the suffrage movement divided between those who supported their government's war efforts and those who continued to work for peace (Gnanadason *et. al*,1996:13). This is similar to what women in the Rift-valley province did during the land clashes. They held demonstrations at the divisional offices such as Keringet and Burnt Forest divisions demanding peace.

The International Congress of Women at the Hague in April 1915, presided over by Jane Addams, brought together over a thousand women and agreed to send envoys to the European and United States governments in a plea to stop the war. Although that effort did not succeed, the congress did create a basis for the women's peace movement. The women's International League for Peace and Freedom was born out of the Hague conference and the Women's Peace Crusade, formed in 1917/18 brought in grassroots movements. All these groups faced tremendous resistance in their own societies as they sought to mobilize anti-war sentiment (Gnanadason *et. al*, 1996:12). The Rural Women Peace Link in Kenya is no exception. According to its members, men pose

a very strong resistance to them, first as their husbands who feel they should not venture in the field long dominated by males and, secondly, through the cultural belief that it is men's duty to keep security and order.

In thousands of other communities, women have not only opposed war but also organized to resist the invasion of their countries. Vietnamese women played a vital role in the struggle for their country for centuries, beginning with the national uprising led by the two sisters Trung in AD 39 against the north (Aruna Gnanadasson *et. al*, 1996: 12).

> *'As women confronted with domestic, economic, political or military, social or cultural, ethnic or racial and religious violence respond … in ways as their settings and their resources, their strength comes from their commitment to life rather than death, to peace rather than war, to the future of their children, their families and the communities. Their strength also comes from linking with others, building strength from their vulnerability.'*

Women's efforts are often invisible, remaining hidden due to cultural constraints, yet some, especially in the north and west, are open and confident. Some efforts are composed solely of women who deliberately distance themselves from men and the social systems they represent. However women's perspectives on war and peace, on violence and struggle are beginning to be recognized as offering unique contributions to the great debates on the nature of the society and the international system.

In all societies, it is women who give birth and nurse babies. In these societies, women are the primary care-givers responsible for the children and for the family. The role of women in nurturing, building relationships and maintaining the family is central to their identity. This concern with relationships and people often means that women play the role of peacemakers within their families and their communities.

Carol Gilligan has shown that women perceive the world differently from men, that they see the world as a web of relationships in which individuals can be identified by their relationship with others (Gnanadason *et al*., 1996). Their concerns with relationships are the basis of their nurturing role, their passion for affirming life, their opposition to war, she observes that men tend to have what she calls an 'ethic of justice' which proceeds from the premise of equality that everyone should be treated the same. Women, on the other hand, are more likely to have an 'ethic of care', resting on the premise of non-violence – that no one should be hurt.

After generations of silence, women's stories of their struggles for social change and for peace are beginning to be told. There are thousands of stories of women in Northern Ireland protesting violence, of Palestinian and Israeli women trying to overcome barriers of distrust and enmity, of the mothers of the Plaza De Mayo in Argentina, of Japanese women protesting racism and nuclearism, of South African women whose long history of non-violent resistance has been central to the country's struggle, of Nigerian women taking over the market place, and so on (Gnanadason *et al*., 1996).

Motherhood is a powerful motivation for political action in all parts of the world. The mothers of Plaza de Mayo in Argentina were acting as mothers and not as political activists when they began to protest about lack of information about the disappearance of children.

> *'No mother is asked what her ideology is or what she does; neither do we ask what her children were doing. We do not defend ideologies; we defend life. Our great concern is not to be manipulated by any political party…Neither the government's threats nor their rifles are a match for the faith of a mother'* (Cited by Jane S. Jaquette, 1991: 188).

Women are motivated to work for peace and justice for many reasons. As early as 1913, Indian women in South Africa organized when the government said that only Christian marriages were legal. Sometimes women see their action as motivated by forces larger than their own self-interest. Maggie Lowry explains her presence at Greenham Common:

> *'I am not here just because I don't want my children to grow up threatened with nuclear holocaust,*

nor for the opportunity of sheltering from the flagrant sexism I used to confront in the streets of a busy city. I am here because my heart weeps over the glory of men planning for war throughout the ages' (Maggie Lowry, 1988:14).

It is a question that needs answering, for despite their peace-building efforts, women are rarely present at the peace table. It takes fierce determination and intense lobbying for them to be included as participants in transactional governments. Political parties that are building democracy rarely turn to them.

'Women are half of every community … are they therefore not also part of every solution?' (Dr Theo Ben Gurirabi, Namibian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who acted as President of the Security Council during October 2000 when Resolution 1325 was unanimously passed in 2000).

Efforts like those of the Women in Black as well as many other civil society groups created and run by women provide a visible alternative to violence and hatred. Women create campaigns and demonstrations, institute human rights reporting, lobbying for ceasefires and build networks to care for victims of war.

For Ruth building peace in her village outside of Freetown, Sierra Leone, meant taking in the children of neighbours, friends or family members who were killed in the war. For Tatiana in Kosoro, peace meant building damaged houses as well as friendships with former neighbours who had turned against her during the conflict. In Bosnia women have established mobile health clinics to provide gynecological and psychological care to women survivors of rape and assault, most of whom had never seen a doctor or counsellor. In Colombia, 20,000 women organized by the new National Movement of Women Against the War in a march to demand an end to a conflict that kills approximately 3,500 each year. Their protest, 'we do not want to give birth to more sons to send to war,' rang through the streets of Medellia. Mercedes Vargas, a teacher and union leader, travelled eight hours by bus from the provincial capital of Manizales to join the demonstration (Independent Experts' Assessment on Progress of the Worlds' Women Report, 2002). This shows how serious women are when demanding peace:

'The women have something in common – that is they want peace. They were demanding a negotiated end to this conflict.'

In some conflicts, women's social status becomes a basis for organizing. In Kosovo, as Sonia states:

'As widows, we share a lot in common; we struggle to claim our inheritance from our late husband's families and sometimes even the custody of our children. We want to know where our husbands are buried so we pressure the authorities to investigate their disappearance. And we turn to each other to help raise our children and the orphans who lost both parents to the war.'

VEGA, the association of Rwandan widows, originally met under a tree in Kigali and within a week of their first gathering, more than 50 women had joined. Like so many other self-help and humanitarian organizations created by women, the association provides psychological and social support and health services to its members. As one of the members said:

'We have always faced uncertainty, but had to carry on with our lives and take care of Rwanda's children. Otherwise, what would happen to the next generation? But widows of the genocide in Rwanda are discriminated against and blamed for the HIV epidemic. With little help from the government or local nation we try to heal the wounds ourselves' (http;//www.avega/org.rw/).

On 2 May 2000, 92 Somali women stood outside a huge military tent in the town of Arta, Djibouti. The Somali national peace conference was about to begin – the 14th attempt since 1991 to find a peaceful solution to the civil war.

The women had been chosen to be part of the delegations representing traditional clans, but their ultimate goals

were to break out of clan-based allegiances. Said one delegate:

> *'We knew that peace in our country would come from cross-clan reconciliation, not official negotiations among warlords and faction leaders, so we cared for the wounded and built schools in communities regardless of clan, ethnic and political affiliations.'*

But the women did not give up easily and ultimately helped create a National Charter that guaranteed women 25 seats in the 245 – member Transitional National Assembly and protected the human rights of women, children and minorities as well. Although the charter has yet to be implemented, as a document it 'ranks among the top in the region and the best in the Muslim World' said Hagi Elmi (http;//nes.bbc.co.uk, 4 January 2002).

As the Somali women's experience shows, it is not easy to translate women's activism into a presence at the peace table. Certainly not all women's groups want to be at the table if it involves negotiating with the warlords or tyrants who helped create the conflict, but most peace movements feel that women's presence is essential. Yet women are rarely included in formal negotiations, whether as members of political parties, civil society, or special interest groups. Their organizing efforts are ignored, as are their roles as combatants and political leaders in national liberation movements. In Colombia, despite the fact that as many as 30 per cent of the fighters of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) are women, only one woman, Marian Paez, was included among its representatives of official negotiations with the government (Jeremy McDermott, Colombia's Female Fighting Force, BBC News, 4 January 2002, http;//news.bbc.co.uk/).

When women are present, the nature of the dialogue changes. Women's concerns come not merely out of their own experiences but out of their rootedness in their communities. They represent different constituencies; those in need of education, of healthcare, of jobs and land. They have a different experience of war from male fighters and politicians (Progress of the World's Women 2002: 81).

Former United States Senator George Mitchell, who mediated the Northern Ireland peace talks, credits women with helping to achieve an agreement in the negotiations:

> *'The emergence of women as a political force was a significant factor in achieving the agreement. Women were among the first to express their weariness of the conflict. The two women that made it to the (negotiating) table had a tough time at first. They were treated quite wildly by some of the male politicians. Through their own perseverance and talent, by the end of the process they were valued contributors. When the agreement includes the creation of the new Northern Ireland Assembly women got elected there too. Overall in achieving the level of stability now enjoyed, women's involvement at all levels was a very important factor'* (Mitchell, 2000).

3 Methodology

Theoretical perspective

This study is based on the premise that no single methodology enabled me to collect the relevant data for this research; it was necessary to draw from a combination of sociological and legal theoretical perspectives in order to get a holistic picture of the position of women and the role they play in peace building in Kenya. I found out during the study that any one theoretical perspective used separately would not be adequate to explain the role of women in peace building and what informed their actions. I therefore engaged a socio-legal theoretical perspective and there was no rigid application of any single approach.

A highly interactive approach was devised and used in data collection. The methods were triangulated to bolster the data collection process. Triangulation is a marriage of the methods of data collection which reinforce each other and which finally yield rich data analysis.

The strategy was the development of an eclectic approach which allowed the generation, formulation and application of other theories during the analysis of the empirical data collected on the ground. This grounded approach enabled me to exploit new insights as they were uncovered in the field. This made my research plan an open-ended process which was flexible and could be changed if and when the need arose.

The legal aspect of the study of the role of women in peace building was explored using women's law methodology. The sociological aspect of the study of what informed women's participation in peace building was approached from the gender and feminist perspectives.

Since the study topic was sensitive and delicate as a researcher I had to seek permission from the government provincial administration department to permit me to conduct the research in different areas of the province. As a result I got introductory letters addressed to various provincial administrators such as the district commissioners, divisional officers, chiefs and assistant chiefs to assist me in reaching the targeted groups. This enabled me to create a zig-zag or leapfrog networks connecting me to various administrative points from the provincial commissioner's office to the assistant chief's office.

On many occasions I engaged a second person who was a member of the targeted community as the translator and to give the community an assurance that the information they gave was purely for academic purposes and not for victimization. This was crucial as it enabled me to hide my identity on some occasions since being a Luo by tribe – a tribe which was a victim of ethnic cleansing during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes – could have disadvantaged me as I could have been seen as a spy and an enemy. This may have made the community members refuse to give the relevant information for fear of victimization. By using one of their own tribe I was able to win their confidence and create a rapport with the respondents. It also enabled me to reach more respondents. To fit into the environment and put the respondents at ease, especially women, I willingly joined their welcoming songs and dances even though I did not understand what the songs were all about but I managed to maintain the rhythm and the tempo!

Sampling techniques

Given the sensitive nature of the study, I had to choose suitable study techniques to get unbiased relevant information. As a result I used the following sampling techniques:

Purposive sampling

This method enabled me to identify people who had the relevant information regarding the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes and the role of women in peace building especially during the clashes and after. This way I got first-hand information about the clashes and the activities of women peace builders in Rift-valley province. Much of the advice about who to visit for this information was got from the Christ the King Church in Nakuru, The Holy family Basilica in Nairobi, The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), All African Conference of Churches (AACC) and friends who knew those who had relevant knowledge of the study.

Chain sampling

In order to reach the targeted population I used chain sampling which tries to employ a referral system to locate members of the population to constitute a sample. I first made an attempt to identify and locate a few members of the target group who included provincial administration officials, religious leaders, women working with relevant non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, politicians and human rights activists in the Rift-valley province. I then used these people to identify other members who considered themselves as peace builders. I achieved this by requesting the interviewees whom I initially identified to help me in locating other people who had relevant information. The process continued in a chain until I obtained adequate data. Even though I used other sampling techniques besides this, chain sampling was the most popular method as the respondents kept on referring me to other people whom they believed had relevant information for the study. However, during various group discussions and workshops I attended, I found simple random sampling

to be the best method. It provided an equal chance to every population unit to be included in the sample and for this study both men and women were included and the population sample comprised people of different age groups. This enabled me to capture the views of both the young and the old regarding their role as peace builders and more particularly how they perceived the inter-tribal marriages as a war avoidance strategy and whether it was applied during the clashes. This sampling method was also useful in this research as it enabled me to get views from different people regarding the role of religion in peace building as the sample comprised people from different religious affiliations.

The sample size

During the study, a total of 158 people were interviewed and out of this 138 were women and 20 were men. The targeted group included government officers, especially from the provincial administration department (the provincial commissioner, district commissioners, divisional officers, chiefs, assistant chiefs and village elders), women working with non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, women church workers, human rights activists and ordinary citizens who considered themselves peace builders.

I targeted the provincial administration to try to understand the role they played in restoring order during the clashes and the composition of their security committees. This enabled me to use the gender lens to problematize the composition of the provincial security committee which clearly revealed the under-representation of women in these committees.

I was also interested in establishing whether the police coordinate or liaise with grassroots women peace builders during their operations so as to incorporate women's views on how to achieve a lasting peace.

I targeted women who worked with non-governmental organizations to establish what exactly they do and how they do it to ensure that peace prevails.

Methodological contributions

Grounded theory

The grounded theory method, according to Glaser and Strauss, refers to the discovery theory of data systematically obtained from social research and the use of comparative analysis as a strategy to develop new theories on specific issues (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The use of this theory enabled me to go to the field with an open mind and elicit information from the targeted groups depending on what they actually conceive to have been their role as peace builders with regard to the Rift-valley land clashes. In other words, it allowed the respondents to give the information as I recorded their responses and probed them. The grounded theory approach enabled me to explore new insights as they were uncovered from the field, for example, I got information about how the woman chief at Chapereria reconciles her role as an administrator and as a woman in a culturally-closed society and how she constitutes her village committees in a strictly patriarchal community. Grounded theory approaches proved useful in gathering information on the methods women peace builders used, especially the use of *legetio* among the Pokots, Turkana, Samburu and Marakwets and besides these it was useful in establishing women's entry points as peace builders in a male-dominated field. Due to the use of grounded theory, my research plan became an open-ended process which was flexible, for example, whenever I failed to find key informants, I quickly rescheduled the appointments and continued visiting other people whom I thought had relevant information. It had the advantage of enabling me to get information directly from the respondents and to understand the background to the clashes.

I adopted a qualitative research framework in that emphasis was placed on field visits to establish women's role in peace building. Qualitative methods are virtually always field research in which the investigator tries to study all elements present in a setting and people are the primary data-gathering instruments. It encourages the flexible use of other methods and practices derived from sociological and anthropological traditions. As an

approach to gathering data it is deemed to be the most efficient way of obtaining information on consequences, patterns and systems (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:18).

Women's law perspective

In this study I adopted the women's law approach. This methodology relies on empirical data collection on the ground which takes women's lived realities and experiences as the starting point for the analysis of their position in the law and in the society. This approach was important for the study because it enabled me to look at the Kenyan constitution through women's eyes. I discovered that the Constitution of Kenya does not address issues pertaining to peace building (conflict resolution) and, more particularly, the position of women with regard to peace-building initiatives. However chapter V, section 82 subsection 2 addresses the issue of discrimination which this study partly seeks to address.

It enabled me to look at the composition of the district security team committee through a gender lens. This enabled me to question the composition of the security team committees at the district levels and I found out that there were no women in the security team committee in the three districts where my study falls and this was because there is no legal framework put in place to explicitly guide the formation of security committees and their composition. The study attempted to analyze women's situation regarding their role in peace building in the light of international requirements such as the CEDAW provisions, especially article 7 which states that:

> 'State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right

> (b) To participate in the formation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.'

Another important contribution of women's law methodology to this study was that it sees the law and society as systematically responsible for the exclusion of women in the peace-building initiatives, besides hiring and posting women in peace-related areas. This methodology enabled me to focus on the unnoticed gender aspects of legal provisions and to explore the idea that there is need for the legal and social order to recognize the biological and cultural differences between women and men as a strength in peace building after I established that no woman was included in the security committees. Such an order must also effect equitable distribution of power, work and resources between men and women.

Liberal feminism

Aspects of feminist theoretical perspective were also used in this study because of the need to improve the position and participation of women in conflict resolution and management. This was so because of the recognition of the effectiveness of the hidden powers of women as peace builders and the approach offered an analysis and explanation of how gender imbalances could be challenged and transformed.

I engaged liberal feminism in investigating gender neutrality in involving women in decision-making processes with regard to peace-making and women's inclusion in the various peace-building and security committees.

I used this approach to investigate whether the government recognizes the role women play in peace building both at the grassroots and national level and how the government integrates women in the government peace-building initiatives. I used this approach because I agree with Helen Growlay and Susan Himmlweit's observation that:

> 'Human beings are not abstract individuals but people who have lived different histories, who have different social relations with each other, and who have different capacities and different needs' (Growlay and Himimlweit, 1992).

So then if women are included in decision-making bodies, they will be able to address their needs.

Gender theoretical perspective

In this study I also engaged a gender theoretical perspective. This theoretical approach embraces the experiences of both men and women. It was particularly useful to this study in highlighting the different roles and responsibilities which society ascribes to the sexes and which disadvantage women in the society as the roles ascribed to them push them into the private as opposed to the public arena. In addition to this, they are made to believe that some jobs are exclusively for men, for example, peace and security. More importantly, this approach addresses power relations and equality among family members which are a direct result of the cultural conception of male and female. I found it useful in understanding and explaining why most women had to seek permission from their husbands to be allowed to attend peace talks or participate in peace-building initiatives.

Semi-autonomous social fields

I used semi-autonomous social fields to analyze the respondents' views on peace building and reasons why they engage in peace-building activities.

Sally Falk Moore views semi-autonomous social fields as a tool that assists in describing and analyzing the rule generating and rule upholding process which affects the position of women and gender relations in a situation where a plurality of normative structures informs human interaction (Weis Bentzon, Hellum and Stewart *et al*., 1998). Religion in this context was identified as one of the semi-autonomous social fields because it came out clearly that religion influences the behaviour and the practice of the believers. Even though the Kenyan constitution does not implicitly or explicitly articulate the role of women in peace building, religion advocates for the virtue of love and peaceful co-existence with neighbours. The foundation of their virtue of love is the idea that they were commissioned by Jesus Christ to love their neighbours as they love themselves (Matthew 22:37-40). Culture also emerged as the foundation through which women find themselves involved in peace-making activities. They used their traditional beliefs as a way of engaging in peace building or promotion of conflict resolution.

Data collection methods

Qualitative research methods were used in the study. These methods were preferred because of their potential to elicit information and also for bringing out the voices of my interviewees.

The methodology applied here involved field surveys and interviews with government officials, law enforcement agencies, civil society and ordinary citizens. To address the main concerns of the study, I adopted various methods. Field survey techniques as well as the historical method of data collection were used. I undertook an in-depth analysis of relevant secondary data sources such as reports, journals and newspapers covering my topic of study. The aim was to collect relevant information to find answers to the central concern of the study. I undertook fieldwork in two districts in the Rift-valley province namely, Nakuru district and West Pokot district. These districts were chosen purposively, because it is here that ethnic violence and cattle rustling have been most pronounced.

Actual data was collected using both structured and unstructured questionnaires and discussions with people deemed to have useful ideas related to the study. I also used participant observation techniques such as attending inter-community peace meetings, government *baraza*, market days and community-based seminars and workshops.

Respondents were drawn from a number of key categories, including government officials in Kenya, church and civil society officials, senior security officials in the police force and provincial administration, professionals working within and outside the target research area such as teachers, community development workers and non-governmental organization personnel as well as ordinary *wananchi* (citizens). Care was taken to ensure age and gender balance.

In all a total of 158 respondents were interviewed for this study and were drawn from a sampling framework carefully derived from the categories listed above. Purposive, systematic and multi-stage sampling techniques were used with the aim of achieving adequate representation of all the categories targeted for the study. The primary and secondary services are elaborated further below.

Group discussion

During field visits I engaged in group discussions with various women's groups, church members and members of the Rural Women Peace Link organization. A total of ten discussions were held. Where time permitted more than one group was visited per day. Group discussion proved less threatening to individuals thus allowing easier flow of opinions. During the discussion individuals tended to be less inhibited most probably because views were put forward in a more general manner in a group. Also ideas coming from one member sparked views from other members which may have been left out in individual interviews. This method of data collection was a rich source of data.

Group discussions were not only an appropriate way of targeting the community but also accorded me the opportunity of a general view of the subject matter and collecting data on the assumption and goals informing people's values, beliefs and actions.

Besides this, it enabled me to verify the information received from the respondents and where anyone seemed to forget, she or he could be reminded by other participants.

It was like a routine in that before the discussion started, I was welcomed by songs and dances and I was to join in the songs and dances to identify with the group even if the song was in a language I did not understand. Prayer and introductions followed before the discussion started.

Focus groups were organized by liaising with the authorities in the areas I visited. These were the divisional officers, chiefs, assistant chiefs, councillors, and leaders of different women's groups.

Open individual interview

As part of inductive research in the development of grounded theory, I conducted individual interviews with women and men to establish their views on the role of women in peace building outside the group context.

I used a purposive and chain sampling method to select individual women and men who were involved in peace-building initiatives and whose roles were related to the subject of study. A total of 30 individuals were interviewed out of which 20 were women and 10 were men. I included men to get the male perspective of peace building with regard to who should participate and why and also to get the information about what instigated the clashes.

Purposive sampling for the purposes of this study refers to collecting data from the relevant people identified to know about the problem.

Chain sampling (the snowball method) is a sampling technique that employs a referral system to locate members of the population to constitute a sample. The researcher first attempts to identify and locate a few members of the target population, then using a referral system network the researcher identifies other members of that population. This is achieved by requesting the initially identified cases to help in locating other groups. The process continues in a chain until an adequate sample is obtained.

I used this sampling method in my study because I did not know the population well enough and the area of study involved a security issue and a delicate one not easily accessible. Those targeted were people who had direct experiences of the problem or area under investigation:

- They had a special knowledge about the research area that is unique in the target population;
- They had special roles or responsibilities, for example, government employees and security officials.

In total 20 women in different categories and 10 men were interviewed. Their age range was between 26 and over forty.

The less structured interview (interview guide) with open-ended questions as opposed to a standard question-naire was used as it allowed for a more intensive study of attitudes, perceptions and social contexts of beliefs and feelings and had the advantage that responses were spontaneous, specific and self revealing. Interviews generally lasted between 15 and 20 minutes.

During the interview it was very hard to speak to the interviewees alone. They were either in the company of their best friends or their work mates who also stayed on. Holding a completely private interview, more so in a public office, was therefore not always possible but this did not affect the expression of personal opinions regarding the interviewee's role in peace building or her or his experience of the role of others in peace building because it is not unusual to express views in the presence of other people.

Observation method

I applied both participatory and passive observation on four occasions, namely at Egerton university, Burnt Forest (Boror Primary School), Tete Farm (Keringet Division), and at Limut in West Pokot.

I used this method in situations where I was invited to attend a workshop, security meetings, locational *barazas*, and so on.

In some instances I used participant observation, for example I was invited to attend a workshop organized by Centre for Conflict Resolution at Egerton University. The workshop covered the subject of the role of youths in conflict resolution. Using this method I had the opportunity to directly participate in the activities conducted by the respondents. In this way I was able to observe directly what the peace builders do and feel. It gave me a better understanding of the respondent's perspectives.

Besides this I also used the disguised observation method. This is a method in which the subjects are observed without being aware of the presence of the researcher. The method enabled me to secure a more realistic picture of the women peace builders and whether they are given recognition during security meetings. I applied this method in Limut market, National Agriculture and Livestock Extension at Tete farm and at Burnt Forest Rural Women link meeting at Boror Primary School.

Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study included the following:

- Interviewing administrators at their offices was a problem. Phone calls and workers often disturbed us. Besides this, since it was believed that the Rift-valley land clashes were politically instigated, the provincial administration was reluctant to freely give some of the information regarding the role they played during and after the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. This was because the issue of the clashes has never been re-solved by the government of Kenya.

- Getting an appointment was also a problem because some of the respondents had a busy schedule, espe-cially the provincial administration such as the provincial commissioner, the district commissioner, the divisional officer, the chiefs and assistant chiefs, politicians such as members of parliament and area coun-cillors, religious leaders, officials of the relevant non-governmental organizations like Rural Women Peace Link and other key informants.

- Most interviewees could not be found because they were out on personal business so this forced me to reschedule the visits. This was common with women and men who regarded their peace-building role as voluntary and so it could only be done during their free time.

- On many occasions a language problem cropped up and I had to look for a translator who had to come from

the community and be known to them to avoid any suspicion that the study was meant to victimize them and assure them it was purely for academic purposes.

- Poor means of transport coupled with poor weather in some instances barred me from reaching the meeting point in time and this sometimes meant I had to postpone the field visits thereby creating room for mistrust and dampening the morale of the targeted groups.

4 Findings and data analysis

This chapter presents the key themes emanating from my assumptions as they were established from the field. The key themes highlighted include: women as socializing agents; the under-representation of women; discrimination against women in hiring, placement and promotion; sex preference in the provision of education; religion as a social control (belief in everlasting life, Christian model and social solidarity); role of inter-tribal marriages; and the role other actors played as peace builders during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes.

Women as socializing agents

During the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes and after, women, as mothers, acted as peace builders by teaching their children and talking to their husbands about learning to live peacefully with their neighbours.

They demonstrated this by helping children from the warring communities who needed refuge, food and clothing. This showed that their nurturing role is part of their natural duty and it makes them love peace so as to create an enabling environment to take care of their children well. Peace-making seems to be a traditional activity of women as evidenced by Ruth Kimani, the headmistress of Boror Primary School who is the secretary of Burnt Forest Rural Women Peace Link who had this to say:

> 'We as women, used storytelling, traditional songs and riddles to teach our children to love one another and to live peacefully with their neighbhours. As a teacher, I had to devise a method so as to enable the pupils to enter into a relationship based on the real harmony of interest and understanding. I had to involve them in games however difficult it was. I had to make sure that the pupils used friendly language so as not to hurt children from other communities and I encouraged the idea of sharing stationery and group visits.'

Women being the social cement of every society are taught as young children, most often by their mothers, their peace-making skills and the roles which they will have to perform after marriage, within the family and with their neighbours. This confirms what a woman chief at Chapereria had to say:

> 'We are often original and starking [sharply clear] in our creativity as peace builders because we have been trained by our mothers on how to bring peace right from childhood.'

This suggests that men and women have different styles of handling inter-personal conflicts. To some extent this is reflected in the differential socialization boys and girls are exposed to in the society. Girls are socialized to value relationships and maintain harmony while boys are socialized to value status and seek victory. This is thought to translate into women taking a cooperative stance in conflict situations while men are more competitive.

For example, after the Tot massacre of 23 October 23 1999, Pokot women mobilized and demonstrated at the chief's camp and the district office to condemn the killings of four Marakwet women and their four children, which was against the ground rules which states that in the event of war, the warriors are not supposed to kill women and children.

The Pokot women told their children and husbands that:

> *'Those Marakwet children whom you killed are our children too, and we feel the same pain as the Marakwet women whose children and fellow women you killed'* (narrated by Salina Korir of Eldoret Rural Women Peace Link).

This implies that women as mothers undergo similar labour pain and have the mother-child ties irrespective of the warring sides they belonged and this tie compels them to love peace rather than war to ensure that their children grow up in a peaceful environment.

At the household level, I found out that a Turkana woman in Laikipia openly told her son that:

> *'If I could have known that the food I am preparing is only going to energize you to shed blood, I wouldn't have prepared it.'*

This statement stopped her son from accompanying other warriors as they went to raid because, according to him, this was an open curse on him.

Women, especially the Kalenjin women, encouraged their children to go to stay with their distant relatives and friends as a way of building good relationships. This practice enabled these children to learn to live peacefully with other children as brothers and sisters.

From the findings, it came out very clearly from the respondents that women used reward and punishment as tools of instilling a culture of peace in their children. This is in support of theories that attempt to explain how socialization occurs like reinforcement and cognitive learning. As Kohlberg posits in his cognitive learning theory, children learn from their parents and reinforcement focuses on socialization that proceeds from reward and punishment rather than from observation alone (Stockard and Johnson, 1980: 180,189).

Mothers rewarded their children for good behaviour and aspirations and punished them for bad behaviour. Punishment included curses and witholding food, among other things.

One of the key informants said at a workshop at Boror Primary School that:

> *'A woman who fails to instil discipline and a culture of peace in her children has failed the test of being a real mother. I personally warned my sons not to bring stolen items in my house and whoever dared to go for raids would cease to be my son.'*

During their sex-role socialization women are taught to be nurturing, loving and supportive and to avoid confrontation and be softer. These are the fruits which women pass on to their children as they grow up.

Table 1.1. Categorization based on age

Women under 18	Women aged 19 -25	Women aged 26 - 40	Women aged 40+	Total
3	5	108	22	138

Most women rural peace builders are aged between 26 and over 40, as evidenced from the table 1.1 above. Very few fall between ages 18 to 25. This is partly because most of the women falling in the 26–40 age bracket have become mothers and they feel the pain strongly when they or others lose their children and husbands in conflicts.

Biologically, it is women who give birth and nurse babies. In most societies, women are the primary care givers responsible for the children and the family. The role of women in nurturing, building relationships and maintaining the family is central to their identity. As Gnanadason observes, women play the role of peacemakers within their families and their communities (Gnanadason *et al.*, 1996).

Under-representation of women

I found out that even though women worked as peace builders at the grassroots level they were grossly under-represented in the peace-making process.

A case in point is where Rural Women Peace Link, a grassroots organization with a network of 400 women peace builders with a membership of about 25–30 each in every conflict zone such as Tot, West Pikot, Southern Turkana, East Baringo, Nandi, Cheptais, Laikupa, Vashin Gishu, Gucha-Transmara, Mugori-Kuria Transnzoia and Kenjo, has never been recognized nationally or internationally. But after the women peace builders realized that their role was not recognized and that they were not represented in any peace decision making committees, they developed a slogan that:

> *'Since they will not come for us, we go for them.'*

So whenever they sensed a problem which could result in conflict or confrontation, they reported the matter immediately to the area chief, divisional office or to the police.

In the political field, before the 'Reflection 2002', women suffered from discriminatory cultural practices where women were regarded as children and were not allowed to speak before men. But due to hard work Selina Konir, J.B Sebei, Rose Barmasai and Linah Chebii Kilimo, launched a campaign for the inclusion of women in the peace-building process. They realized the need for women to learn to speak up and voice their concerns, and the need to involve women in the political issues of the country. They organized seminars through the help of National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK), Christian Community Services and African North Rift Education Service. The seminar was called 'Reflectioin 2002' as it was targeting the 2002 general election and the aims were:

- To ensure that justice was done for both men and women;

- To act as election violence monitors;

- To ensure that women voted one of their own to represent their interest.

This was done with the understanding that women are sometimes beaten or forced to vote for people not of their choice. The idea of addressing inter-ethnic conflict would not be achieved according to them if they did not begin from home.

Women have often taken the lead in mobilization efforts for peace at the grassroots level in situations of conflict both in terms of efforts initiated with the family and also the community at large, through peace marches, prayer vigils, showing solidarity with women on the other side, promoting reconciliation and mental healing of the war wounds within the family and the community, leading the societal rebuilding process and so on. This is propelled by women's determination to resist violence as an option for resolving conflicts (legitimate or otherwise) since they, more often than not, bear the brunt of the suffering that comes with this option.

But the limited access by women to political decision-making positions at the national level in Kenya, meant that during the periods of the land clashes, little opportunity existed for them to influence the processes which determined the kind of peace that was negotiated and what impact this may have had on the lives of the survivors and victims of the clashes.

Discrimination in hiring, placement and promotion

The under-representation of women in peace-making bodies, according to many findings, results from discrimination in hiring, placement and promotion. Discrimination by government, which is male-dominated overall, is acknowledged as a factor in job segregation by sex. 'Taste' discrimination, which refers to a preference for not hiring members of a particular group, emerged as an over-riding factor in explaining why women are under-represented in peace-making bodies like the government security committees which comprise the district com-

missioner, the district criminal investigation officer, district police officer and the area member of parliament who are mostly men.

Table 2 Categorization based on place of work

Women employed by the government	1
Women employed by non-governmental organizations (excl church)	26
Women working under the church	44
Women working with community based organizations	60
Women politicians (elected)	3
Women not working at all	5
Total	138

There are few women in the government working as grassroots peace builders as shown in table 2 above. Most of the women grassroots peace builders are working for community-based organizations or the church. There are very few women peace builders who are politicians.

The government has erroneously underestimated the potential powers of women in peace building, making it a domain of men and therefore failing to include women in the peace-making process. Besides this, the probable explanation of why women are under-represented in peace-making bodies is what may be called a collusion of individuals within those structures. The patriarchal norms seek to exclude women from good jobs by collusion among men as husbands, employers, legislators and workers. It is clear that such a 'cartel' or 'gentleman's agreement' benefits men as a group at the expense of women as a group. So when it came to the formation of peace-building committees, only men were available because the relevant departments were headed by their domain. As Cora Weiss, the vice-president of International Peace Bureau asserts, there have been many workshops on conflict resolution and to her knowledge, few, if any, women participate in the negotiating process either to prevent or resolve conflict. But women's participation in international peace and security processes is a prerequisite for achieving peace.

I refuse to register my support for the gentlemen's agreement because I tend to look at peace building as falling in the domain of women using the sex-role socialization perspective. The sex-role perspective predicts that men and women will negotiate differently because of the different behavioural expectations associated with their respective gender roles. Women in traditional culture are taught to be nurturing and supportive. Therefore, women are expected to avoid direct confrontation and to be softer, more accommodating negotiators than men. Men are taught to be tough and task oriented. Thus, they are expected to be harder more competitive negotiators than women.

Sex preference in the provision of education

I found out from the field that most of the grassroots rural women peace builders were semi-literate. This puts them at a disadvantage because those who organize seminars or workshops target professionals, academics, authorities in the field of peace and security, and those who have written a lot in the area of peace building. This technically shuts the rural women out because of their low literacy levels since they were probably compromised by their parents in terms of who should go to school.

As Selina Korir, one of the key informants observed:

> *'Those who organize peace seminars are only interested in those who have written a lot on peace and those who can speak English fluently, and their seminars are organized in cities and towns where conflicts did not occur. They knowingly ignore the voices of women who have the practical experience of the conflict and who participate in grassroots peace-building initiatives simply because they are little known and are semi-literate or illiterate.'*

Boys were often given the chance to go to school while girls were advised to look for potential husbands to marry them. Since peace building, as my findings reveals, is most effective if it begins from the grassroots level (bottom up approach) it is the rural women who do the groundwork but their work has never been recognized either nationally or internationally because there is nobody to expose their talent.

Table 3 Categorization based on levels of education

Lower primary	25
Upper primary	59
Secondary	40
High school (A-Level)	11
College/university	3
Total	138

Most of the grassroots peace builders have low education standards as reflected in table 3 above. Very few attended high school and had university education but most of them had upper primary education. This was partly because of gender bias in deciding who should go to school between boys and girls. Girls were disadvantaged as they were often forced to drop out of school to find husbands so as to bring a dowry to the family.

Religion as a social control

It was very clear during this study that religion played a major role in peace building during and after the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. Women Christian peace builders used the dos and don'ts of the Bible to condemn war and praise peace because they believed evil brings hatred, death, animosity and destruction of property. According to Bishop Korir of Eldoret, war negates Jesus' noble teachings of brotherly love and the golden rules of God. According to him, those who believe in Jesus can be voices of reason, sanity and understanding amid the voices of violence, hatred and emotion. So women could set a mood of peace out of which a system of peace could be built.

Table 4 Categorization based on religious beliefs

Christianity	122
Islam	11
African traditional religion	5
Others	–
Total	138

Most rural women peace builders are Christians as table 4 indicates. This is because Christians believe that one cannot be a true Christian if one flouts Jesus' teachings of brotherly love and the golden rule of love your neighbour as you love yourself.

Everlasting life

The research findings revealed that women conceive of things beyond death and are concerned with life after death which, according to their Christian belief, depends upon their contract in this world. So women are

motivated by rewards and punishments that will result from their behaviour during their period of mortality. The Bible commends them to love their neighbours as they love themselves and not to kill. Women peace builders during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes believed in the power of religion as Fredrick M. Davenport describes it:

> 'Primitive traits in religion, that religion has power to convert men from bad to good as has been demonstrated widely in the experience of evangelism where many hardened sinners have had their lives entirely transformed through dynamic influence of an evangelists message and have been made susceptible to means of control which were formerly ignored. Some have overcome habits which, without the power of religion, they could never have broken.'

The Christian model

Most of the respondents were of the view that they were following the footsteps of Jesus Christ. It therefore follows that the power of Christianity to control, both in the realm of religion and of morality, grows out of the fact that it provides a model after which behaviour may be patterned. Christ, according to the respondents, was a perfect model after which Christian followers could build character.

As Nandel (cited from Gold Thorpe, 1975) points out, religion is concerned with morals. Christianity and Islam – both heirs to the Judaic tradition – stand at one extreme in linking faith and morality very strongly. The Ten Commandments which are the basis of morality and can be elaborated into secular law are regarded as having been divinely handed down and there are beliefs about punishment for bad deeds and rewards for good ones in the life after death (Gold Thorpe, 1965). These were the foundations which women peace builders used to engage in peace building because they viewed Jesus as the prince of peace.

Social solidarity

Christianity, according to the respondents, broke the boundaries of ethnic identities. Women who were Christians look at others as sisters irrespective of their ethnic affiliation and this is what made them work together as peace builders during the clashes and thereafter.

Emile Durkheim in his profoundly important study, *Elementary forms of religious life,* concludes that the social function of religion is to engender and sustain social solidarity. Durkheim goes as far as to suggest that the God is the group and I tend to agree that when an assembled group are worshipping God, whom they think of as being beyond themselves, they are readily strengthening the bonds that link them to one another in a social group (Argyle, 1967:108). This bond is what kept women going during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes and this enabled them to assist the victims with food, clothes and, to some extent, accommodation.

Inter-tribal marriages

During the study, I found out that even though I did not include tribal marriages as a means for women to ensure that peace prevailed amongst them, some of the respondents were of the view that it was one of the ways they used to restore harmony. But further probing and investigation revealed that inter-tribal marriages existed long before the clashes began and they did not stop the clashes from occurring. Besides this those women who were involved in inter-tribal marriages said their engagement was purely based on love and not on the basis of peaceful co-existence.

The Pokot and Marakwets inter-marry; as do Samburus and Turkana, Saboats and Luhyas, Kukuyu and Kalenjins but this did not stop them from fighting. It therefore clearly indicates that the sense of belonging over-rides other factors so that when one's community is attacked, the members feel obliged to defend at all costs. History all over the world has revealed that inter-tribal marriages can never stop two communities from fighting. For

example in Rwanda, the Hutus and Tutsis inter-married and this did not stop ethnic cleansing. Taylor, in his book *Sacrifice as terror: The Rwandan Genocide of 1994* (1999:167-68), clearly discusses that in pre-colonial and early colonial days when ethnic identities were less static, wealthier Hutu could marry Tutsi women as a means of social advancement. This practice, according to Taylor, was referred to as *Kwihtura*, meaning to cease being Hutu and become Tutsi. Children could then be considered Tutsi. But this did not stop them from fighting each other.

5 Groups dealing with peace and their roles

Although it did not initially occur to me that, apart from women peace builders, there were other participants in peace building during the clashes, as I was conducting interviews the role of other players kept on arising and I had to include it in my assumptions.

The role of provincial administration during the clashes

The provincial administration system was inherited from the colonial era. This largely remains the order of things to date. As a department in the office of the president, the provincial administration is heavily relied upon for the general control and implementation of government policies. In addition, the provincial administration took over certain important responsibilities of the political party KANU such as the recruitment and registration of its members, the organization of KANU elections, the collection and custody of KANU funds and the issue of permits for public meetings. What is more, district commissioners conducted all general elections from 1963 until the 1992 multi-party elections, when they relinquished these responsibilities to the electoral commission of Kenya. The provincial administration has remained ubiquitous in various activities in the country while maintaining a prominent position. Some of the reasons for this are that the provincial administration is one of the oldest institutions in the country with entrenched practices and traditions. It consists of a network of officers at all levels with its own distinctive hierarchy and the chief government executive officer and carries the greatest responsibility and accountability in the eyes of the government and the public at large.

As the government's principle public relations officers, an important feature of the day-to-day functions of the provincial administration officers is the holding of *barasas*. Through this age-old forum of communication with the public, akin to a round-table conference, government makes known its intention and seeks to enlist support from the public. It also enables the public to register their views and reactions, including those affecting simmering problems and conflicts within and between communities. But the ineffectiveness of *barasas* in time of inter-tribal wars, was demonstrated during the tribal clashes. In some cases, members of rival tribes would obediently attend *barasas* as at which peaceful co-existence would be demanded by provincial administration officers, only to go back and continue their tribal clashes as if nothing had happened. Moreover, with time, more and more Kenyans had begun to feel free and not easily intimidated by the provincial administration officers.

What came out very clearly from the field regarding the role of the provincial administration was that women were not included in their peace operations and while the provincial administration used force, women peace builders preferred and opted for non-violent means of conflict resolution.

The role of the provincial administration with regard to internal security is of paramount importance. The provincial commissioners chair the provincial security committees and the provincial intelligence committees. At the district level, the district commissioners chair the district security committees and the district intelligence committees. The other members of these committees at the provincial and district levels are, respectively, the provincial heads of various departments of the police force and the district heads of similar institutions.

Sub-district security committees chaired by district officers and also similarly composed, exist at divisional level. The provincial administration thus clearly occupies a position of considerable power as the political agent of the executive.

In his closing speech at the meeting of the ministers and high officials of the ruling party, KANU, held at Nakuru on 27 July 1968, which was also attended by the then seven provincial commissioners and four deputy provincial commissioners, president Jomo Kenyatta summarized the historical significance for that meeting:

> *'This is how we should co-operate in nation building. I am convinced that no ruling party can effectively exist without the administration'* (Daily Nation, Monday 29 July1968).

While I was in the field, most of the respondents seemed to query the role played by the provincial administration during the clashes. The notable expectation, as always, was that the provincial administration right from the grassroots level, would have been the first to initiate definite measures to quell and contain the clashes. However, the balanced evidence from the respondents indicated an ambivalent position. Respondents narrated numerous accounts where officers were either inactive, facilitated in creating an atmosphere liable to spark off the clashes or did not act as expected.

The information available indicates that:

• Some officers in the provincial administration directly participated or encouraged the clashes;

• Response or reaction was poor or too slow, thereby precipitating the escalation of the clashes;

• Public utterances by some administrators were a contributory factor in inciting people to fight.

The role of security personnel

The information available from the field indicates that the *wananchi* (people) had fewer words of praise for the role performed by the security personnel comprising the Kenya police, administration police and the general service unit, during the clashes. The people's notable expectation was that definite and swift measures would have been instituted by the security team to quell and contain the situation and women peace builders thought they would be incorporated in giving workable strategies aimed at ending the clashes. Instead some officers compromised their expected role by either remaining inactive or disinterested, facilitating the activities of the fighters and instigators, or simply did not act as would have been expected of them. Invariably some of them are said to have acted well in spite of the odds facing them.

Information received from the field pointed out the following issues:

• The district security committees acted half- heartedly and did not forestall the clashes in time;

• Immediate release of arrested suspects before they were charged in court encouraged the fighting;

• Preferring lesser charges against those reported to be responsible for loss of life and destruction of property brought alarm and suspicion.

• There was failure to take firm and decisive action as dictated by police force orders such as using necessary force to stop the fighting.

• The security personnel, according to some respondents, were partisan in dealing with the clash situation and did not in any way involve the grassroots women peace builders in resolving the conflict.

Role of religious bodies

Since time immemorial the church has been associated with peace and churches are mostly dominated by women. With the negative impact of ethnicity persisting, the church had started to fight against tribalism with agency. Although the church is not supposed to get involved in politics directly, it will not sit back and watch

humanity perish (*Daily Nation*, 28 June 1998). The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) was really in the frontline in initiating peace during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. For example, the *Daily Nation* (7 July 1998) reported that the National Council of Churches of Kenya questioned the sincerity of the government in setting up a judicial commission to investigate causes of politically instigated clashes in the country including those that occurred in 1990–1991.

This implies that there was suspicion among Kenyans despite the fact that the government was setting up commissions to investigate causes of ethnic clashes in parts of the country. The National Council of Churches of Kenya had this to say:

> *'While we welcome the move that the government is setting up a judicial commission to investigate politically instigated clashes, it is not lost on us that this is happening seven years after the incidence of violence'* (General Assembly 17–22 June at Kikambalala, Kilifi District).

Generally, the church had done a lot to initiate peace, give hope and offer material assistance to the victims of ethnic clashes in Kenya. First, abundant prayers had been organized calling for peace in the country and more so in the ethnic clashes zones. A lot of faithfuls who were mostly women fasted so that peace could be restored in the ethnic clashes zones in Kenya.

The church played a major role in giving support to the clash victims. An example is the Catholic church in Nakuru, Christ the King Cathedral, and Lamdiac Catholic church in Njoro. The two churches offered accommodation to the victims both in 1990–91 and 1998. The two churches, among others, have continued to resettle the victims of the ethnic clashes. The church not only resettled the victims but struggled to ensure that they were comfortable. Thus, they issued them with clothing, blankets, utensils (*sufirias* and plates) and food whenever it was available. All these were from Christian wellwishers.

Clergy men and women always come out and comment on whatever affects their flock. Hence, the clergy's comments and fact-finding reports on the ethnic clashes were made out of that concern. Their involvement was to provide compassionate relief services to the victims. To a small extent the study reveals that the involvement of the clergy was in some places influenced by ethnic affinity of its ministers. In these cases some clergymen failed to remain impartial. The respondents therefore, observed that:

- *Some religious leaders took a partial role based on tribal lines at the lower levels instead of being arbitrators and at the higher level by issuing inflammatory statements;*

- *While noting the important role they played in clothing and feeding victims, it was also observed that in providing this assistance, they tended to discriminate against the Kalenjin community, Londiani was a case in point;*

- *Among the religious organizations which actively participated in restoring peace during the clashes was the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission which was established in 1988 to: develop programmes of education for justice; guide and coordinate pastoral activities in civic education; work for eradication of injustice for specific situations; and give support to various programmes involved in the promotion of justice.*

The role of the (local and international) mass media

Over the last decade the expansion of the media in Kenya has attained unparalleled proportions. This expansion has enabled Kenyans to have access to virtually any information whether on local or international matters with minimal effort. The local scene continues to be enriched through the interaction with the largest number of international correspondents based in any country on the African continent. On its own, local journalism has expanded immensely. Today many Kenyans own and manage commendable establishments with renowned publications.

The foregoing rapid expansion of the mass media has resulted in uninterrupted bombardment of the public with information emanating from sources that are invariably far apart. Coupled with the recent advance in information technology, Kenyans today find that they have almost unlimited access to information. The effect is such that unless people can sieve through so much information and discard the chaff, they could easily become needlessly excited and alarmed.

Nevertheless, the media did not in any way cover the activities of grassroots women peace builders, thereby failing to expose their peace-building activities. It was evident that most of the media adopted an approach that only served to fan rivalry and conflict between the multi-party and *majimbo* proponents and contributed to the clashes by:

- Exaggeration, for instance by highlighting untruths like the existence of imported arrows in the clash areas;
- Alarmist reports and sensationalism by giving inflated figures to build up a case (for example, the report that there were 28 Kalenjin district commissioners in the country which was not correct);
- Churning out unverified facts to the gullible reading public which has few or no facilities to verify the purported facts;
- Giving credence to erroneous reports appearing in the foreign media which were touted as the gospel truth;
- Government-controlled media (the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation and the Kenya Times) denying access to information which forced people to seek news from media outside the country.

Role of politicians

According to the respondents from the field, politicians contributed substantially to the clashes by their utterances which clearly indicated the following:

- They engaged in talks that amounted to rumour mongering;
- They publicly made inciting and inflammatory remarks and statements;
- They were biased in the conduct of their public duties, in several instances taking sides on tribal lines, instead of providing non-partisan leadership.

But politicians who were mostly from the opposition condemned the clashes and appealed for peace. The most vocal amongst them were women politicians like Professor Wangari Mathai, Martha Karua and Charity Ngilu.

6 Grassroots women peace builders entry points

During this study, the following emerged as the entry points for women peace builders.

Religion

Christianity and Islam provided the foundation which inspired women peace builders as the teachings of Jesus and Mohamed taught them to challenge the family, community and the society to live peacefully and practise the virtue of love.

Church conferences and meetings of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, All Anglican Mothers Conference and the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission provided a platform for women to speak for peace. As believers, they used the ten commandments as a mirror to redirect their families, community and the society and warn them against killing one another which is against the Bible and the Koran. They encouraged their children to develop virtues of love, humility and kindness and follow the footsteps of Jesus and Mohamed as peacemakers. Through religion, women peace builders gained the strength, courage and inspiration to work

harder than ever before because they believed that Jesus and Mohammed commissioned them to go into the world and preach peace. This enabled them to condemn the perpetrators of the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes in the strongest possible terms.

Workshops and conferences

Most of the grassroots women peace builders organized workshops and conferences urging communities to promote peace and support methods of conflict resolution and management.

In Nakuru district, the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) was formed in 1992 largely as a result of the problems during the land clashes and its aims were:

- To develop appropriate methods to resolve conflicts;

- To disseminate advocacy and training skills so people could develop their home-grown methods of resolving conflicts;

- To conduct civic education on certain issues related to conflicts in the society;

- To institutionalize peace building in the communities;

- To enable the grassroots people to arbitrate in conflict situations in their villages;

- To equip local people with the skills to detect and deal with imminent conflicts before they escalate and also to report to the various stakeholders;

- To build the capacity of other community members in conflict resolution and management.

On 17 October 2003 the centre conducted a workshop at Egerton University in Nokuru district which I attended. A total of 42 students attended and the aims of the workshop were as follows:

- To equip youths with the skills to detect imminent conflict and address it before it escalated;

- To build the capacity of the youths in the area of conflict resolution and management.

They chose the university because it comprises students from different communities which at one point confronted one another and Egerton University is at the centre of where major clashes took place.

At Burnt Forest, Rural Women Peace Link held workshops at Borrow Primary school from 2000 facilitated by Reformed Church of East Africa. The last one was in April 2003 and representatives from various women's groups from all the areas which were affected by the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes attended with a total of 96 participants of which 58 were women and 38 were men (minutes taken of Burnt Forest Rural Women Peace Link).

In the workshop they discussed how best they could ensure that peace prevailed, and exchanged views on how they were faring with regard to their roles as peace builders in their communities. They agreed to do the following:

- Stop wailing as a means of provoking men to fight and instead persuade men to engage in dialogue;

- Network with the police and administration by reporting matters which may result in fighting;

- Engage in income-generating activities and not blame men for failing to provide for the family which may have forced them to raid other people's cattle;

- Refuse to tie the 'legetio' (belt) so as to leave the warriors unprotected (explained below).

Methods women used to build peace

1 Traditional method

Rural women peace builders decided to adopt the traditional ways of building peace to enable them to talk a language the community understands. For instance, among the Kalenjin community, whenever women wanted their men to stop fighting, they would carry green grass or leaves. This signified that women were asking the men to stop fighting.

In the Pokot community, women use skin belts called *legetio* to stop their men from fighting. *Legetio* is a belt made from animal skins and women use it to tie around their belly after giving birth to reshape their stomach.

During war, it is used by mothers to protect or curse their children and husbands by either tying it or untying it.

It is also believed that it keeps the family united and therefore a woman must always tie it. It is made from a bull's skin and decorated with cowry shells and the bull must have been killed in a special ceremony. Pokot people believe that if a woman quarrels with her children, especially boys, and she unties it, the boy child will die.

How it is used to stop war:

Because of *legetio*, whenever warriors plan a raid, their mothers must know and must promise to tie the *legetio* until they come back for protection purposes. In the event that they do not support the raid, they can refuse to tie the *legetio* and the warriors will not go on the raid simply because they are not protected.

The warriors whose mothers have died are given cowrie shells taken from *legetio* and they are sure of protection. So if Pokot women know about a raid and refuse to tie the *legetio*, then their men will not go to raid.

After the Tot massacre, where Marakwet women and children were killed by Pokot warriors, Pokot women had had enough and they refused to tie *legetio* so their men did not go on another raid. *Legetio* is used by the Turkano, Somburu and Marakwets too.

Among the Maasai community it is believed that whenever women mix with men when the *morans* are fighting, the *morans* stop fighting because Maasai men believe that women are unclean because they menstruate and whenever they mix with them they bring a bad omen with them.

Women used this hidden power in them to stop fighting between the warring tribes by encouraging their fellow women not to tie *legetio* in case their sons and husbands planned for a raid and by mapping the routes of the warriors and dropping the *legetio* on those routes.

2 Mapping out the routes warriors follow

Women from Pokots, Sambunus, Marakwets and Turkanas, whenever they did not support the warriors, could map the routes the warriors use and drop the *legetio* on the route, thereby sending a signal to the warriors that their mothers no longer protected them. Whenever the warriors find *legetio* along their route they have to cancel their plans because they believe they have lost the support of the women.

3 Curses

Cursing is a strong tool women use to ensure that their children obey their orders. In all the war-torn areas in the Rift-valley, this was one of the tools women used to stop their children going to fight. This was a curse by which a son should not join the warriors on the raid. He had to explain to the warriors that his mother cursed him and therefore he could not go.

A key informant in Burnt Forest threatened to curse her children during the land clashes in the event that they wished to join the warriors and bring any stolen property into her house. The children consequently never joined the warriors and did not participate in the land clashes.

4   Solidarity visits

Different women's groups, especially those organized by Rural Women Peace Link, in all the affected areas conducted solidarity visits during and after the land clashes.

Rural Women Peace Link was formed in 1992 as part of the National Council of Churches of Kenya Project. The aim was to create a space for women to participate in peace building in various communities affected by the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes.

They engage in reconciling the warring tribes using traditional peace-making methods and exchange programmes.

Rural Women Peace link during the clashes visited Baringo and donated food to the victims; they also exchanged peace messages with their counterparts in East Baringo. During the visits, the Rural Peace Link East Baringo branch prepared the ground and invited youths, elders and fellow women to attend. After the visits, issues related to peace were written down during the discussion and were left with the chief of the area and divisional officer to take action. After a while they came back to monitor the progress and get the feedback.

The messages of peace they disseminated included:

- Challenging the parents as to why they allowed their sons to be used by politicians who use them as 'mere spoons' for selfish gains and dump them later on;

- Challenging the parents as to why their children wallowed in poverty while their masters were very rich. After attacking their neighbours and torching their houses, they were only paid five hundred Kenya shillings – was this just?

- Challenging the parents as to why their sons were either rotting in filthy, stinking jail cells or even being killed while the politicians' children are studying overseas: 'It is high time you said no to these irresponsible politicians.'

According to Selina Korir, of Eldoret Rural Peace Link, it was established that at Kupendo in Turkana and Cheluchgot in Pokot, women from Rural Women Peace Link conducted a solidarity visit in August 2001 after a fierce fight between the Pokot and Turkana people. A week after women had talked about the need for peaceful co-existence, an unknown man suspected to be from Pokot went to a bridge on a river separating the two communities and wrote:

> *'The Turkana you are our friends, come and draw water and we shall come to buy milk to end the fight.'*

Neither side could believe the message and there was fear and mistrust all over and both sides began asking how they could know the truth pertaining to that message. Leah Sepan, a Rural Peace Link leader in Pokot, told men who were doubtful that:

> *'I will sacrifice for the sake of peace, I will go to Kupendo Market (Turkana) and if I don't come back by 1 o'clock, then know that there is no problem you people should come to the market and if I am killed you will know that I am dead before 1 o'clock.'*

At one o'clock, Pokot men joined Leah Sepan at Kupendo market and the relationship began.

The solidarity meeting conducted between the Pokots and Marakwets entailed the following issues:

- *The need for peaceful co-existence;*

- *Kenya being a modernized state, everyone has a role to play in peace building;*

- *Women can be great leaders if the opportunity is given;*

- *If children can be taken to school they can become leaders of this great nation and they shall use dialogue instead of guns to resolve conflict;*

- *Death claims the lives of both men and women and this killing should stop;*

- *Allowing arms to be purchased at will and fired at whim should stop;*
- *Teaching our children that the hero is the one that masters the act of shooting and the techniques of killing and one who is successful in raids is not just and should stop.*

5 Organizing exchange programmes

Women peace builders at the grassroots level encouraged rural peace exchange programmes as a way of exchanging inter-communities cultural practices aimed at ensuring that peace prevailed and there was no misunderstanding between them. They introduced this method after they realized that there were certain cultural practices with different meanings to different communities.

The exchange programme involved different women from different communities visiting one another for learning purposes. For example, according to Selina Korir, women from Uashim Gishu visited Pokot women and during the visits they had a chance to talk of what war had done for them and how they managed to contain it as women.

6   Peace exhibitions

Women in the Rift-valley province at the grassroots level held village peace exhibitions where they exchanged views on the symbols of peace and analyzed security situations in the areas they visited during the clashes and after.

According to one key informant during the village peace exhibitions, people came along with peace symbols from different communities because it was believed that what might seem normal to one community may mean a totally different thing to another community.

During the peace exhibition women sang traditional peace songs, brought milk, gourds, spears, arrows, grass, babies, green leaves and explained how important they are used during war. For example, the Kalenjin women during war carry milk in a gourd as a sign that they are in search of peace. During a seminar in Burnt Forest, Kikuyu women said that they either carry green grass or they undress and when they do that it is a sign that they want the war to stop.

As for the Luo women, during the clashes between them and the Kalenjin, they participated in the reconciliation which was arranged with the rituals to solemnize the occasion. A makeshift obstacle consisting of tree branches would then be created along the border and the warriors would place their spears over it. A dog would then be slain and cut in half and its blood sprinkled along the border. The mothers would exchange babies with the enemy and suckle them. The warriors would also exchange spears with their opponents. The elders then offered prayers and a profound curse was pronounced to cause havoc to either side if the peace was violated.

Also, all these women from different communities carried along with them what they considered to be of use in terms of food, especially vegetables, and taught other women how to cook them. This was aimed at helping women from other communities learn to embrace other people's culture thereby dispelling animosity among them.

7 Sports

With the help of the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission and Eldoret Rural Women Peace Link, women introduced sporting activities as a means of building relationships among the youths from different ethnic groups. For example, according to respondents, Eldoret Rural Women Peace Link organized ball games in 1995 between Mt Elgon (Bukuru) and the Saboat:

> '*At the beginning this seemed tense because the players identified those who participated in the clashes but after the games they acknowledged that their feet had met together for the first time.*'

After the games a seminar titled 'Youth forum' was organized as a follow-up by Rural Women Peace Link to discuss and analyze the conflict situation and assigned the youth's roles. The rules drawn up included reporting

any matter that may create conflict between them, and reporting those who preach war instead of peace to the area chief and district officer for immediate action.

The Catholic Peace and Justice Commission organized both athletics and music festivals in the north Rift-valley on 31 August 2003 in Eldoret town where awards were given. They helped start football clubs like 'Big machine' and 'Turkana garage' to engage youths in sports.

8 Merry-go-round

Grassroots women peace builders adopted a 'merry-go-round' strategy to assist the victims of the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes. This was a strategy where women came together either weekly or monthly to contribute money or any other item of their choice to one of their members; it was rotational, depending on who picked the first number. During the occasion, the members engaged in prayer meetings and made contributions in the form of clothes, money and utensils, among other things. In the process they counselled their members and encouraged them to forget the past and build the future.

9 Women as witnesses in courts

During the study, I found out that women acted as witnesses in courts. In villages where there were land disputes regarding who bought where, who was not given land and why, women stood firm to tell the truth about why some members of the community never benefited from the resettlement schemes. A case in point was where an Ogiek human rights activist, Susan Kipkemei, went to court to give a living testimony on how 'politically correct' people benefited from the land which was meant to resettle the Ogiek community and how the counsellor and the chief of the area colluded and took hundreds of acres in their own names and in the names of their relatives while others got five acres or nothing.

Problems they encountered

Women peace builders faced the problem of lack of transport and finance to enable them to reach some areas affected by the clashes. Sometimes when they got vehicles from the National Council of Churches of Kenya, they failed to reach the intended places due to inaccessibility of these areas. Rural feeder roads during rainy seasons proved to be impassable and this made their work difficult.

Due to the lack of finance, they found it difficult to organize seminars and workshops or buy flip charts and provide the victims with the basic needs they required.

Since most of the affected communities adhere to rigid cultural beliefs which, among other things, do not allow women to venture into the public sphere, women found it very difficult to come out and openly speak for peace, firstly because they were regarded as children, and secondly because they feared they would be divorced for having gone against the prescription of culture of not being allowed to speak before men.

Other detractors, who were mostly men, thought that women peace builders had started another money-making project and began to rebuke them. This was because they thought women were challenging them by doing a job which, according to them, fell within their domain.

7 Policy questions and recommendations

Through my visits I met some women who had made it to the peace table through a combination of women organizing and support from the church. The national organizations that support women's activism realized that, as Federation of African Women's Peace Networks (FERFAP) President Inonge Mbikusita Lewanika indicates, women need training and preparation to open the doors that are consistently shut in their faces. Organizations such as Centre for Conflict Resolution in Nakuru Town, Catholic Peace and Justice Commission, National Council of Churches (Eldoret branch) through their Rural Women Peace Link department and many other groups have been providing training for women to develop negotiation skills and leadership. The training also focuses on the gender dimensions of constitutional, electoral and judicial reform, and conflict resolution and management.

Traditional cultural practices can present formidable obstacles to the inclusion of women in peace processes or post-war governance unless a formal mechanism is in place to support this. For example, in Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Kalenjin and Ogiek communities, women are still regarded as children. To date the use of quotas has been one of the most successful methods for guaranteeing a minimum percentage of women in official negotiations as well as government positions. Besides this the government should honour the Beijing Platform of Action which called for a 30 per cent minimum representation of women in decision-making bodies, and Security Council Resolution 1325 urges the appointment of women in decision-making bodies and peace processes. The government must begin to see quotas as a temporary solution to increase gender balance. They are a first step towards gender equality and both a practical and symbolic measure to support women's leadership. Lobbying and advocacy regarding the role of women in peace-building and its legal backing should be launched to conscientize women about their role as peace builders. Women need financial and operational support from donors and assurance that national government will promote gender issues at all levels.

Since rural women peace builders operate in male-dominated societies and institutions I would suggest that the government strengthen the informal structures women operate under so as not to be influenced by men's views on peace. This should be through the provision of the necessary resources such as finance and transport, amongst others, to enable women to operate fully. This would help reduce the extent to which men might diminish women's power within the male-dominated structure.

During the peace negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction the government must do more than focus on ending warfare as they have done over the years through the deployment of the general service unit and the police who sometimes brutally beat both the perpetrators and the innocent victims. The security personnel deviated from the usual expectation of taking firm, definite and swift measures to quell and contain the situation. Instead various witnesses recounted instances where some of these officers compromised their expected role by either remaining inactive, disinterested, facilitating the activities of the fighters and instigators, or simply did not act as would have been expected. One key informant told me that at Saosa security personnel gave a Kalenjin warrior back his gun that was used to kill a Kikuyu business man.

The nation-building process that is mandated by any peace agreement should include the revision of key laws in order to recognize women's contributions, build gender equality and protect women. Failing to establish a firm foundation built on law increases the danger of chronic instability and collapse into violent confrontation all over again. Support for the rule of law, multi-party systems and elections have become the benchmarks of peace building. Without these, women cannot live in safety. In many places I visited in the Rift-valley, women's ability to work for peace was reduced by threats of eviction from other communities, threats from prominent politicians or aspects of culture. The government should therefore ensure the protection and safety of women building peace. For example, in Samburu, Samburu men forced their women to take the stolen donkeys and cattle to their homesteads. In Keringet division, Susan Chepkemei Tonui from Ogiek community has been receiving threats from prominent politicians from the last KANU regime because of her firm stand that the

Ogiek community must be given back their land and given title deeds.

No matter how many women are included in peace negotiations or reforms that may ensue, it is up to all participants – women and men – to ensure that gender issues are addressed at all levels. Gender equality should be enshrined in a nation's constitution and be specified in all relevant clauses, including those setting up the parliament, the executive and the judiciary. This is in tandem with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) which is the core international document for women's rights, but a full range of guarantees are set out in other treaties and consensus documents. This is so because most women at the grassroots level have been brought up to believe peace building is in the domain of men and are reluctant to take the lead. In all committees, the number of men exceeded the number of women and their leaders were all men simply because men still insist on maintaining hegemonic masculinity.

Constitutional and political reform must ensure women's citizenship and their right to vote and stand for public office without intimidation. Quotas and proportional representation on ballots can help elect women into office. Proportional representation encourages voters to focus on parties and their policies, rather than on particular individuals, so women candidates are less likely to be defeated by bias and negative stereotypes. This is the only sure way of having women in decision-making positions and giving them the mandate to sit at peace negotiating tables. As the research has revealed in most of the elective positions, there are hardly any women, for example in Nakuru Municipal Council there are 18 men and two nominated women and in Keringet division all political leaders are men.

The government should adopt a system enabling it to automatically ratify the international norms to enable women seeking post-war justice and new national standards for their legal protection to draw upon the precedents set by international courts as well as on international customary law and even on non-binding tribunals. War crimes trials in national courts can play an important role in judicial reform by helping to rebuild the judiciary and the criminal justice system. Lawyers and judges may be put in place that know and respect international humanitarian law, and open court proceedings can become a model for the future. It is also essential for the government to monitor human rights in the immediate post-war-phase so that the highest possible standard of law is enforced. This will help rectify the poor national judicial systems in post-conflict societies which have rarely delivered for women.

The government should learn more about the gendering of peace-building capacities to give them the potential for expanding women's capabilities by developing alternative approaches that can be used as a basis for policy making and training programmes.

The needs of women peace builders

Women's participation in peace processes and new governments, and their efforts to rebuild judicial and civil infrastructure, cannot be achieved unless their efforts to organize are supported. The women organizers I met needed four things to contribute to peace processes and decision making about security: safety, resources, political space and access to decision makers.

Safety

In conflict situations, political activists and their organizations frequently face security threats; many have been killed and many more abducted, beaten and tortured. Women are particularly vulnerable, first because they are subject to sexual attacks in addition to the other dangers, and second because they are often seen as stepping outside their traditional role, which gives cultural justification for 'teaching them a lesson'. Without adequate protection, women are frequently compelled to abandon activism. An enabling environment that allows organizations and individuals to express their opinions in safety and security would sustain current activities and encourage more women to become active.

Resources

Almost all women I visited, were coping with post-conflict reconstruction, and had significant unmet needs. A much larger pool of funds is needed to maximize the potential of women's organizing efforts. In many places I visited the financial outlay necessary to keep an organization was enormous. One respondent commented that a computer or cell phone, or even some paper and books would make a major difference in their work. There is often fierce competition for humanitarian and development resources, which does not enhance collaboration between groups.

Political space

Sometimes ensuring that women play a role in building peace requires carving out space and time for women-only gatherings. As has been demonstrated by other groups, such as Inter-Congolese Dialogue, Femine Afrique Solidarite and Women as Partners for Peace in Africa – Democratic Republic of Congo, that created space for women to find a common ground. These cross-party meetings gave women an opportunity to develop a joint declaration and plan of action that offered a gender perspective to the dialogue.

Access to decision making

While activists and non-governmental organizations are often viewed as a source of innovative ideas and information, governments and international organizations sometimes regard them as a nuisance or even a threat to their interests. Activists who have had an opportunity to meet with decision makers at the national or international level told me how crucial it was to share information and to build relationships. As Secretary General Kofi Annan has called non-governmental organizations 'the conscience', the voices of women's organizations must be heard and heeded by governance structures in which they are fully and consistently represented. Kofi Annan understood this when he said at the 2000 meeting to evaluate progress made in implementing the Beijing platform for Action:

> *'Five years ago, you went to Beijing with a simple statement; "we are not guests on this planet: we belong here"; Five years on, I would venture that we all know this is an understatement… not only do women belong on this planet but the future of this planet depends on women.'*

8 Conclusion

The Rift-valley land clashes that characterized the Kenyan political and social scene seem to have been the result of deliberate manipulations and instigation of the state. The immediate causes of the violence were political rather than ethnic. Indeed, other causes advanced such as land disputes and cattle rustling seemed far-fetched and merely served as a camouflage to sustain the conflict.

The study contends that the upsurge of violence provides a real challenge to the process of democratization and governance. It is worth noting that ethnic consciousness seems to have become more pronounced since the advent of political pluralism. Consequently, Kenyan politics is primarily hinged on ethnicity and not ideology. This tends to support Bayart's contention of the so-called 'politics of the belly'. During the 1992 general elections in Kenya, people voted along ethnic lines with a hope that if one of their members won the elections then it would be their turn to eat. Thus the major cause of the clashes was the struggle by different ethnic groups for the control of the state apparatus and the power accruing from it. Leaders therefore tried to use ethnicity to divide and perpetuate their rule.

The study confirmed that the clashes caused deaths and injuries, internal displacement, destitution and exten-

sive destruction of resources in the affected areas. The displaced persons were forced to live in harsh conditions in unhygienic camps, churches and trading centres without proper sanitation and shelter. The health of the victims was poor; children suffered from malnutrition. Women and children bore the brunt of the mayhem, comprising the bulk of the victims. It is for this reason that women were encouraged to search for lasting peace and denounce a war whose aim they claim they did not understand and which left over 2,500 people dead.

Table 5 Conflict statistics

Districts	Deaths	Injured	Arrested	Charged	Finalized	Displaced
Nakuru	114	100	290	*	*	13000
Uashin Gishu	159	138	53	50	6	4000
Total	373	238	343	50	6	17000

Source: Information available from the provincial administration and witnesses.

Women, therefore, organized through their informal and formal structures to build peace and restore harmony in the Rift-valley province. They used the church (religion), workshops, conferences and their nature as mothers as the entry points to promote a culture of peace.

The study reveals that during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes and after, women used various methods to help restore peace in the Rift-valley province. For example, among the Pokots, the use of the *legetio* was prominent. Elsewhere women used curses, solidarity visits, and exchange of peace messages, among other strategies, to build peace.

The study also revealed that mothering was a very strong motivating factor which informed women's choice to participate in peace building during the clashes. This was due to their sex-role socialization as mothers whose responsibility is to nurture their children thereby inculcating into them a culture of peace.

The study posits that even though women participated in peace building during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes they were (and still are) under-represented in peace-making initiatives. The informing factors included, among others, discrimination in job placement, hiring and promotion in the relevant positions due to the erroneous belief that women cannot execute peace and security duties. Besides this, the study established that there is sex discrimination in the provision of education limiting the chances of girls to gain access to higher education which is the gateway to good jobs and positions. Parents seemed to often encourage boys to go to school while girls were encouraged to look for husbands. As a result in the upper echelon of power there are few women.

Religion was an influencing factor and women used their religious beliefs to challenge the fighting groups to be true Christians and not flout Jesus' teaching of brotherly love and the golden rules. They challenged the warriors to love their neighbours as they love themselves and be good to their enemies. All in all, the study concluded that although women participated in peace building during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes, their role as peace builders has not been recognized by either the government or the international community and therefore, these women desperately need political space, resources and safety.

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Appendix I

DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION BY PROVINCE: 1989 CENSUS

PROVINCE	POPULATION
Nairobi	2,143,254
Central	3,724,159
Coast	2,487,264
Eastern	4,631,779
North Eastern	962,143
Nyanza	4,392,196
Rift Valley	6,987,036
Western	3,358,776
KENYA	**28,686,607**

POPULATION BY TRIBE

1.	Embu	256,623
2.	Kamba	2,448,302
3.	Kikiyu	4,455,865
4.	Mbere	101,007
5.	Meru	1,087,778
6.	Tharaka	92,528
7.	Kisii	1,318,409
8.	Kuria	112,236
9.	Luhya	3,083,273
10.	Bajun	55,187
11.	Boni-Sanye	10,891
12.	Mijikenda	1,007,371
13.	Pokomo	58,645
14.	Taita	203,389
15.	Taveta	14,358
16.	Swahili-Shirazi	13,920
17.	Basuba	107,819
18.	Luo	2,653,932
19.	Dorobo	24,363
20.	Elmolo	3,600
21.	Kalenjin	2,458,123

22. Maasai	377,089
23. Njemps	15,872
24. Samburu	106,897
25. Teso	178,455
26. Turkana	283,750
27. Boran	80,160
28. Garba	35,726
29. Bulji	5,975
30. Dasnachi	418
31. Orma	45,562
32. Rendile	26,536
33. Sakuye	10,678
34. Ajuran	26,916
35. Degodia	100,400
36. Gosha	2,081
37. Gurreh	80,004
38. Hawiyah	27,244
39. Ogaden	139,597
40. Somali (so stated)	45,098
41. Kenyan European	3,184
43. Kenyan Arabs	33,714

Source: Kenya Population Census, 1989 Volume 1, Office of the President and Ministry of Planning and National Development.

Appendix II

GENERAL INTERVIEW GUIDE:

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………..

Status:…………………………………………………………………………………….

Area of operation: ……………………………………………….……….……

Date of registration …………………………………………………………….

Date of operation: ………………………………………………………………….

Location:……………………………………………………………………..

1. What are some of the major objectives of your organization?

2. What are the key issues your organization strives to address and how do you address them?

3. Was this organization specifically established to address the effects of the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes? If no, then when was it established and why?

4. What is the minimum educational qualification needed for one to secure a job in this organization?

5. How many women are employed by this organization and what posts do they hold?

6. Did you involve the grassroots women in your peace-building activities during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes and after? If yes how and in which specific activities? What were (are) your entry points during the peace-building initiatives?

7. What criteria do you use when inviting participants to attend your peace seminars and workshops?

8. In your view do you see women as endowed with special talents which, if used, can help restore peace in the Rift-valley ? If yes, which talents and how can they be tapped?

Appendix III

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Identification:

Name of the church……………………..

Name of the respondent………………….

Respondent's position in the church………………..

Demographic and socio-economic data.

1. How old are you?

2. How many children do you have?

3. What does the word peace mean to you?

4. What role did your church and church members play as peace builders during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?

5. Did your church involve women in peace-building process during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?

6. If the answer to question 5 above is yes, then what exact roles did they perform as peace builders during the 1992 rift- Valley land clashes?

7. What informed their choice to participate in peacebuilding initiatives?

8. Did women from your church participate in peace-building process individually or in groups during the 1992 Rift- Valley land clashes?……………

9. What were there entry points as religious leaders or members of the church in the peace-building exercise during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?……………….

10. Did the government co-opt some members of your church in their peace-building committees and commissions?

    If yes, which committees and commissions? If not why not?

11. How many were co-opted?

    And how many were women?

12. What were their roles in those committees if any?

13. What problems did they encounter and how did they solve them?

14. What do you suggest as the way forward?

Appendix IV

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER/ DISTRICT COMMISSIONER/CHIEF:

-Identification:

The name of the respondent…………………………………

The respondent's occupation…………………………………

The respondent's responsibilities……………………………….

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT IN THE 1992 RIFT-VALLEY LAND CLASHES PEACE-BUILDING PROCESS.

1. What specific role did the government play in the 1992 Rift Valley land clashes peace-building process?………………..

2. During the 1992 Rift-valley peace-building initiative who were your target groups and why?…………………………

3. Did you involve grassroots women in your peace-building initiatives? .. If yes, which class of women?…If not, why not?…………………..

4. Did your officers network with other grassroots based organization during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiatives…If yes, Which organizations…If not, Why not?……………………

2. Did the government form any peace-building committee or commission to help solve the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes…If yes, which committee or commission?……………….

3. What were its roles and what were the criteria for the choice of its members?……………………………..

4. How many women were incorporated?……………………….

5. Did the government offer any trainings or workshops to grassroots women aimed at equipping them with peace-building skills?……………

6. If yes, what was your mode of selection?……………

7. During the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiative what was the government's main area of focus?………………..

8. And how did the government achieve it?……………….

9. Are there any specific laws or government policy which explicitly address the inclusion of women in peace building or conflict resolution initiatives?…………….

10. What challenges did the government encounter during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiatives?…and

14. How did you solve them?…………………………

15 Do you see women as having any special talent which if tapped by the government could help in achieving a lasting solution to security problems? If yes, what efforts do you make to tap these hidden talents?

Appendix V

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUAL WOMEN PEACEBUILDERS

Identification:

Name of the respondent…………………………………..

Demographic and Socio-economic data:

1   How old are you? ………………………….

2   What is your marital status? ………………….

3   How many children do you have? ……………….

4   What is your level of education? ……………………..

5   What does the word peace mean to you? …………….

6   Do you have any training in peace building or conflict resolution? ………………

7   If the answer to question six above is yes, then from where? ……………………

8   Which denomination do you belong to? ……………………………………

9   Do you transmit a culture of peace into your children? …………………… If yes, how?

10   What role did you exactly play as a peace builder during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?………….

11   Under which organization were you working if any, during the 1992Rift-valley land clashes?………….

12   Was peace-building exercise a voluntary work for you or you were being paid?…………………….

13 As a peace builder what are the specific services which you offered during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?………..

14 Did you receive any assistance from the government?…………….

 If yes, what type of assistance were you offered by the government?……………………

15   If the answer to question 14 above is yes, then how did the government identify you as a peacebuilder?………………..

16 Does the government still recognize you as a peace builder?………………………… If yes, how?

17 What problems did you encounter during the peace-building exercise during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?

18 How did you solve those problems?

19 Did the problems encountered affect your role as a peace builder?……………….If yes, how?……………..

20 During the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes, were you involved in any peace-building committee?…………….if yes, which committee ?………………

   if not, why not?…………………

21. How did men perceive your work as a peace builder during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?

22 Given the sensitive nature and the violent environment you were exposed to, what methods did you use in peacebuilding and what were your entry points?

23 How did you cope with the unfriendly support from men?

24. Do you consider yourself as having a special peacebuilding talent which makes you suitable to participate in peacebuilding? If yes, what are these talents?

Appendix VII

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR MEMBERS OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

Identification**.**

Name of the organization**……………………………**

Background information about the organization:

1. When was the organization formed?…………..
2. What are its objectives?……………………….
3. 3.What is the composition of its officials?…………….

The role the organization played during the 1992 Rift- Valley land clashes.

4. What role did the organization play during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building exercise?
5. During the peace-building initiative, who were your target groups and why?
6. Did your organization network with other grassroots based organizations during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiative? If yes, which organizations?
7. Did your organization coordinate with the government during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiative? If yes, how and if not, why not?
8. Was your organization involved in any peace-building committee/commission aimed at ending the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes? If yes, which committee/commission?
9. Do you offer any training workshops to the grassroots women aimed at equipping them with peace-building skills? If yes, how many training have you so far conducted and who are your target groups?
10. What was your area of focus in the peace-building initiatives during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes?. and why?
11. What challenges did you encounter during the 1992 Rift-valley land clashes peace-building initiatives?…And how did you solve them?………..
12. Does your organization have a peace-building programme which specifically target women as peace build-ers?