

The

Issue 1

Ateker Reunion

Magazine

*A message from
the President of the
Republic of Uganda*

*A Message from
H.R.H. Paul Sande
Emolot,
Emorimor Papa Iteso*

*The Artificial
Separation (Apetaret) of
the Core Ateker People
by British Colonialists*

*The historical
roots of Ateker
People*

The Interconnections by the 'Core' and 'Peripheral' ATEKER

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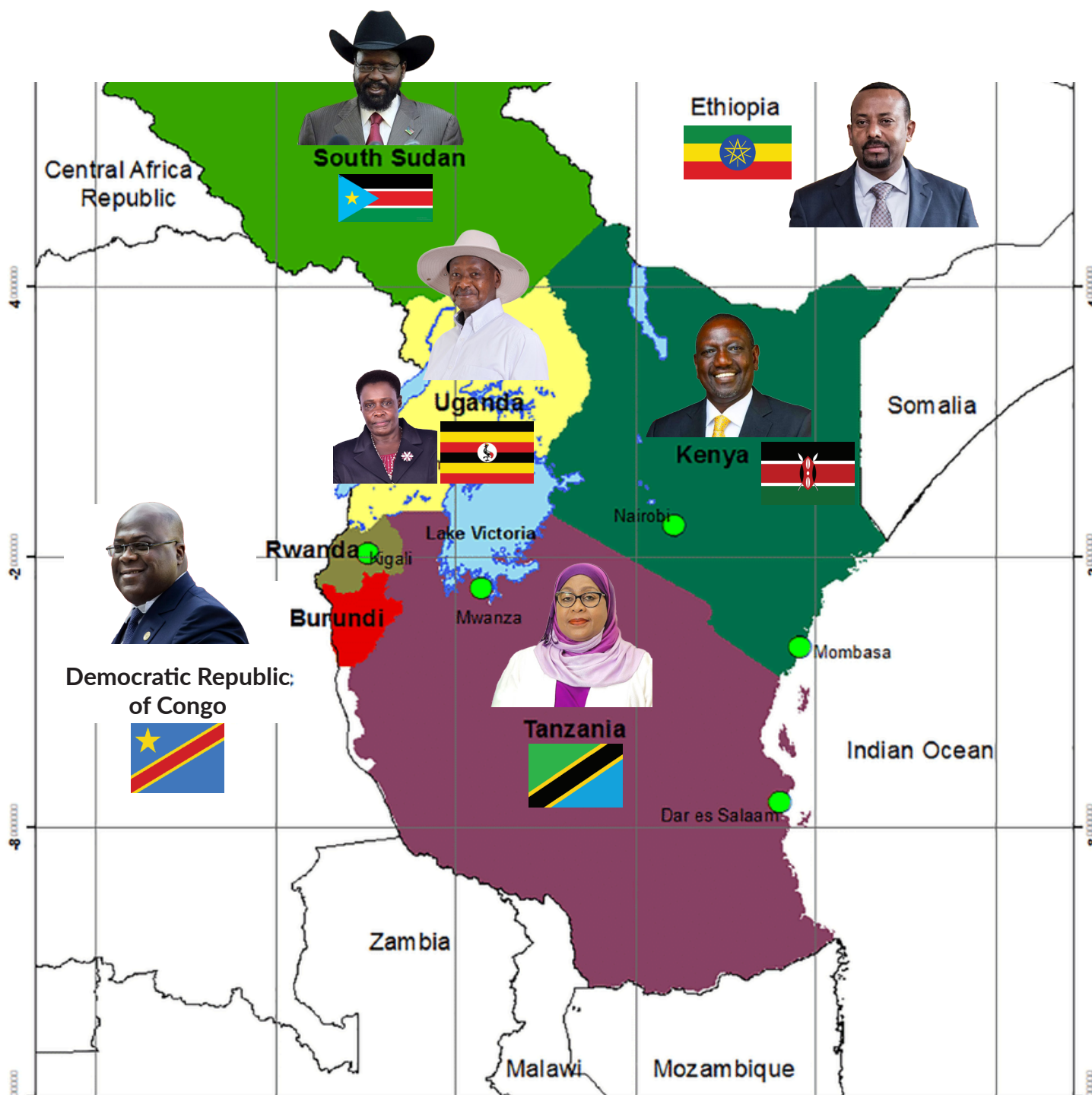
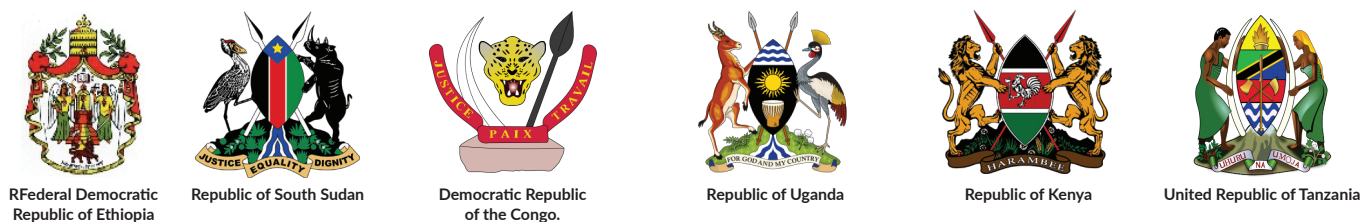
OPERATION
WEALTH
CREATION

Information
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Centre (IMC)

in conjunction with



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Contributing researchers:

Lead Researcher: Hon. David Pulkol

Hon. David Pulkol, is a respected as an elder statesman in Uganda. He is the Executive Director of the Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI). In addition, he serves as the Principal Advisor to General Caleb Akandwanabo Salim Saleh (rtd), the Chief Coordinator of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), and Special Presidential Advisor on Defence in the Office of the President, Republic of Uganda. Hon. Pulkol graduated from Makerere University and the London School of Economics (LSE), University of London. He is a former Member of Parliament for the Matheniko constituency in Karamoja. He has held various cabinet ministerial positions and actively participated in the constituent assembly that promulgated the 1995 Uganda National Constitution. He served twice as the Director General for External Security (ESO) in the national security architecture of the government of Uganda. He also had a distinguished career in the United Nations, where he served as the Deputy Regional Director for UNICEF in the East and Southern Africa regional office in Nairobi, Kenya, contributing significantly to the development and implementation of UNICEF's programs in the region. Pulkol is a multi-skilled professional and versatile thinker with an extensive career in public life that spans academia, university teaching, applied research, evidence-based public policy-making, and advocacy. Pulkol trained in the human rights approach to programming, a skill he uses to support development programs across sectors and capacity building for diverse groups. He is grounded in the art of legislative practice, social development, and human security and has been involved in numerous cross-border peace and development initiatives in the Horn and East Africa regions. Currently, Hon. Pulkol serves on several NGO boards, including as the Chairman of the Advisory Board for the Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU). He is currently a member of the Executive Committee of the Africa Security Sector Network (ASSN) in Ghana.

Dr. Daniel Lumonya

PhD (Cornell University, USA).

Dr Daniel Lumonya is Currently a Senior Research and Policy Associate at Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI) that provides Think Tank Advisory Support to the Government of Uganda through Operation Wealth Creation (OWC). Daniel's research interests revolve around small scale farming systems and agrarian transitions, globalization, and state, civil society relations with a focus on rural Uganda. He is keenly interested in the sociology of small-scale farms, raising issues that could feature more prominently in Uganda's policy debates. His passion for understanding the social dynamics related to small scale farming has led him towards research agendas that raise questions regarding the ownership and control of the means of production and how these change over time, and their impacts on agro-ecology and agro-biodiversity. He has developed a digital application with which community level data entrants gather real time data on various socio-economic parameters in ways that will link local dynamics to key duty bearers in local government. Together with Duke University they are on a forty-year longitudinal panel data set that is tracking the triggers, drivers and maintainers of poverty and prosperity in rural Uganda. He has lectured at Makerere University, led an NGO, worked with local governments on various rural development projects, with a private not-for-profit University in the USA. His teaching at Makerere University, Cornell University, UTAMU University, has included courses in rural development theory and practice, organizational theory and management, human resource management, qualitative, participatory and action research, Strategic Planning, and Project Leadership and Management

Dr Beatrice Mpora Odongkara

(MD, ESPE Fellow, PhD - University of Bergen, Norway and Makerere University)

Dr. Beatrice Mpora Odongkara is a highly skilled specialist in pediatrics and child health, diabetes, and hormonal diseases. She holds a PhD focused on tiny newborn babies and is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Pediatrics and Child Health at Gulu University. Currently, she is a senior research and policy associate at the Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI), where she is involved in research and policy development related to herbal medicine. Dr. Odongkara founded Wise Women Uganda, a community-based organization comprising traditional healers, and collaborates with AFLI in Indigenous cross-border communities in Karamoja on reforestation initiatives. These efforts utilize medicinal and native trees to promote sustainable herbalism and global environmental health. A passionate believer in health being made at home, Dr. Mpora, as an ATEKER Niece, advocates for practices that reduce the need for hospital visits. Her dedication extends to safeguarding indigenous technical knowledge in preventive and curative health. She aims to expand the Wise Women initiative to benefit the greater ATEKER community, focusing on researching, documenting, and preserving the medical and health knowledge passed down through generations. Additionally, she seeks to enhance the value of their products for diversified income and wealth creation, ultimately improving the livelihoods of those who uphold these Indigenous knowledge systems. In addition to being a respected clinician and researcher with extensive clinical care experience, Dr. Odongkara is involved in building the capacity of pre-service and in-service healthcare providers in low-resource settings. She participates in various global multi- and trans-disciplinary research groups, working on the development and implementation of evidence-based clinical and policy guidelines. Notably, she recently led a team that prepared and submitted an evidence synthesis for WHO guidelines on the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of hypoglycemia in severely ill children. She is also engaged in training front-line health workers caring for patients with diabetes, hormonal diseases, preterm infants, and other health concerns across the lifespan in resource-limited environments. Her research interests encompass multidisciplinary clinical and community-based studies on non-communicable diseases (NCDs), including diabetes, tiny newborn babies, neonatal blood sugar abnormalities (dysglycaemia), and jaundice. As an alumna of the Higher Education Resource Services - East Africa (HERS EA) Academy 2024, a leadership training institute for women leaders in higher education, Dr. Odongkara is collaborating with AFLI's young leaders' mentorship program, Makerere University, and Michigan State University to develop a multi-country and multi-institutional program aimed at leadership training for young girls and women, along with their male allies.

Dr Samuel Michael Etyang

Dr. Samuel Michael Etyang is a Graduate of Makerere University, writer, multi-skilled researcher, graphics designer, and an entrepreneur whose experience in publishing spans decades. Under his design and printing company - Some Graphics Limited, he has done a lot of work with leading organizations like Africa Leadership Institute (AFLI), among others.

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni

President of the Republic of Uganda

Fellow Ugandans, distinguished delegates, and our brothers and sisters from the Ateker community, it is with great pride and joy that I extend my warmest greetings to all of you at the Ateker Cultural Festival. This is a historic occasion, as it marks the first time Uganda hosts this prestigious gathering of the Ateker people from Uganda, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania. It is a moment of unity, reflection and hope for a brighter shared future. Ateker people represent a vital link in Africa's cultural and linguistic history, being part of the Nilo-Saharan family. Despite the artificial borders imposed during the colonial era, these communities have preserved their shared identity, traditions and heritage. Today, as we gather here, we reaffirm the unbreakable ties that bind the Iteso, Karamojong, Turkana, Topoth, Bari Kakwa, Maasai,

and others into one vibrant family.

The festival is a celebration of our cultural heritage, and honour of the traditions that define us. It is also an opportunity to reflect on the challenges we face and to commit ourselves to a shared path of progress and transformation. Culture is not just about the past; it is the foundation upon which we build the future.

As Africans, we are tasked with three historic missions. The first is achieving prosperity for our people. By harnessing our resources, talent, and unity, we can eliminate poverty and create wealth for all. The second is ensuring strategic security for our communities, so we are protected from any external or internal threats.

The third is leveraging our cultural bonds to foster unity and achieve the first two goals. The Ateker Cultural Festival is a step forward in advancing these missions.

Good governance must also remain a cornerstone of our efforts, ensuring countability and integrity in leadership.

This gathering also reminds us of the importance of peace as a foundation for progress. Without peace, our dreams cannot take root. We must strengthen harmony among all Ateker communities and beyond. Infrastructure development, such as roads, railways, and energy, is equally critical to connecting us and driving economic growth. We cannot ignore the transformative power of education, healthcare, and economic empowerment, which are essential for unlocking the potential of our people.

Today, as we celebrate the rich traditions of the Ateker people—their dances, foods, languages, and values—let us also use this moment to strengthen our unity and commitment to integration. I urge the Ateker communities to play an active role in the broader struggle for African unity.

This festival is not just a celebration of our past; it is a call to action to build a future of peace, prosperity and cultural renaissance.

On behalf of the Government of Uganda, I extend my deepest gratitude to the Iteso Cultural Union, the organising committees, and all stakeholders who have worked tirelessly to make this event a success. I also warmly welcome our brothers and sisters from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, and Tanzania. Your presence is a testament to the enduring bonds of our shared heritage.

The Ateker Cultural Festival is a powerful reminder of what we can achieve when we come together as one people. Let this spirit of togetherness inspire us as we forge a united, prosperous, and secure Africa. Together, we can ensure that our cultural legacy remains a foundation for progress for generations to come.

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

*Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,
President of the Republic of Uganda*





Karimojong women preparing to perform a cultural song

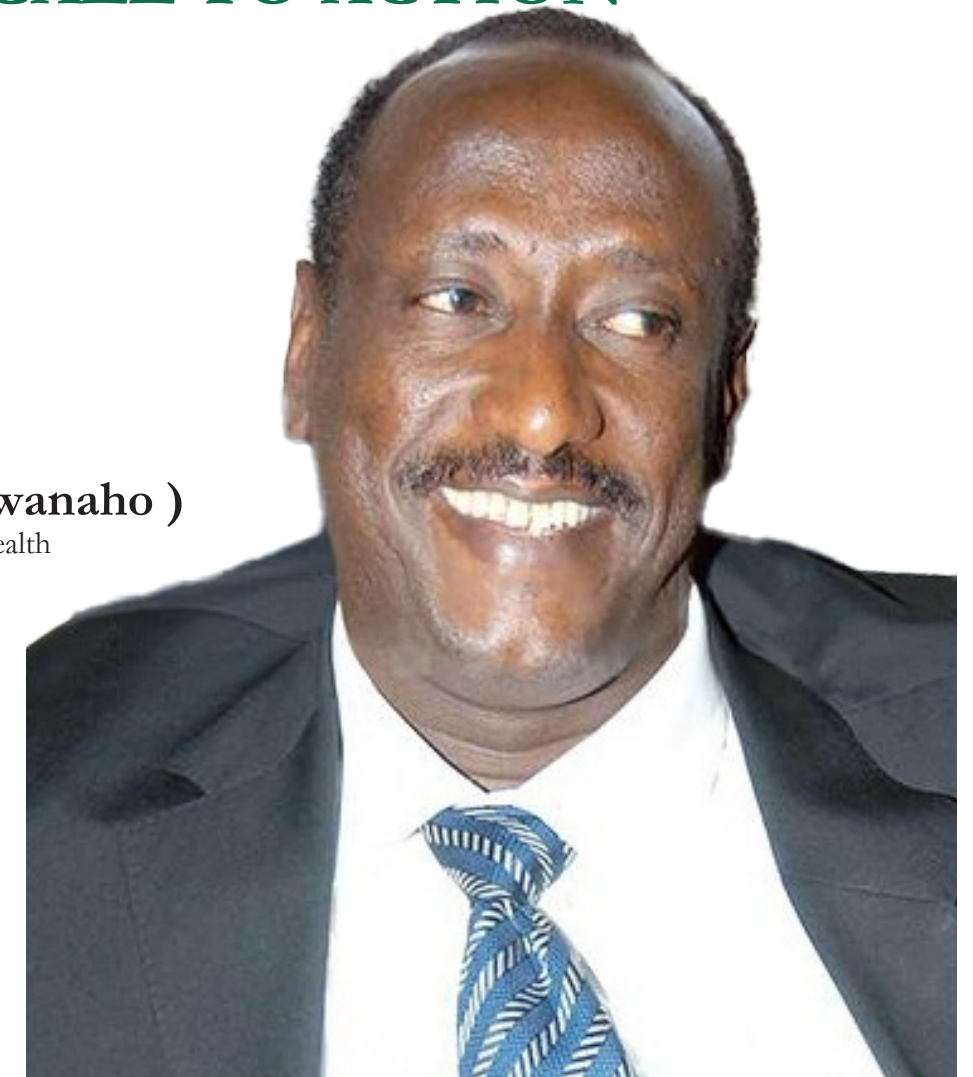


Turkana man resting on his ekicolong (Photo courtesy of Victor Englebert)

THE ATEKER REUNION FESTIVAL: A CALL TO ACTION

Gen Salim Saleh (born Caleb Akandwanaho)

Director General of Operation Wealth
Creation (Office of the President)



Your Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,
President of the Republic of Uganda,
Your Excellency Jessica Alupo, Vice President of
Uganda,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State, Distinguished lead-
ers of the Ateker community,

Guests of Honors and my dear brothers and sisters
from the Ateker family,

It is a great honor to stand before you today at this his-
toric Ateker Reunion Festival – celebrating our shared
heritage and a vision for a prosperous future. On be-
half of Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), I warmly

welcome you all and extend my gratitude to the or-
ganizers for this beautiful gathering, highlighting the
strength and unity of the Ateker people.

Today, I want to talk about the opportunities available
to us through OWC and the central role of citizens
as wealth creators. Together, we can build a brighter
future with peace and unity as the foundation of our
success.

The Ateker Reunion Festival is more than a celebration
of our shared culture and heritage; it is a chance for
every member of the Ateker community to come to-
gether and work towards a future of prosperity, peace,
and unity. It is a reminder that each of us has a role

in building strong families and thriving communities through hard work and collaboration.

Greatness lies within every Ateker household. Whether you are a farmer growing food for your family, an artisan crafting goods, a trader building a business or a parent raising the next generation, you are already contributing to the foundation of our economy and society. Farmers are especially important, as they provide the food we all rely on. Using better seeds, modern farming tools, and improved techniques, they can feed their families and sell surplus produce to earn an income.

Women, the heart of every family, play a crucial role in shaping our future. They are essential to cultural and economic development, whether creating crafts, running small businesses or guiding their children. Our youth, full of energy and new ideas, represents the hope for innovation and progress. They are the ones who will take us into the future by transforming industries and strengthening our communities.

At Operation Wealth Creation (OWC), we support these efforts by providing the tools and opportunities you need to succeed. For farmers, we offer access to better seeds, irrigation systems, and veterinary services to help improve productivity and increase income. These resources have been proven to significantly increase crop yields and income. For those preserving our culture, such as artisans and performers, we support cultural tourism initiatives, turning traditions like dances, music, and crafts into income opportunities. Our support has led to a significant increase in income for these groups.

We also focus on small businesses and cooperatives, encouraging people to work together to share ideas, pool resources, and grow stronger as a community. For women and youth, we offer training, access to funding, and programs that help develop skills and create new opportunities for economic growth.

However, none of this is possible without peace and unity. Peace is the foundation on which progress is built, and unity is the strength that binds us together. Without peace, our hard work is wasted. Without unity, our strength is divided. The Ateker people's shared heritage is our greatest asset, allowing us to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and lift one another up. When we work together, we can achieve more than we could alone. When one family thrives, the entire community benefits.

As you leave this festival, I encourage each of you

to reflect on how you can contribute to our people's progress. Farmers can explore new methods and plant more, artisans can look for new markets, parents can prioritize their children's education, and youth can embrace new skills and lead the way in innovation. Let us all commit to taking these steps and more to ensure a prosperous future for our community.

OWC is here to accompany you on this journey. We are not here to do the work for you but to equip you with the tools and knowledge to take charge of your future. Change begins with you; with the effort and

commitment you make each day. With OWC's support, we can look forward to a future filled with promises and opportunities.

This festival celebrates our identity and testaments our collective potential. Let us pledge to build a future where every Ateker family thrives, every child can succeed, and every community grows stronger. With our shared commitment and determination, we can turn our vision of a prosperous and united Ateker community into a reality.

With peace and unity as our foundation, we can create opportunities, achieve prosperity, and leave a legacy of success for future generations. Thank you

With peace and unity as our foundation, we can create opportunities, achieve prosperity, and leave a legacy of success for future generations.



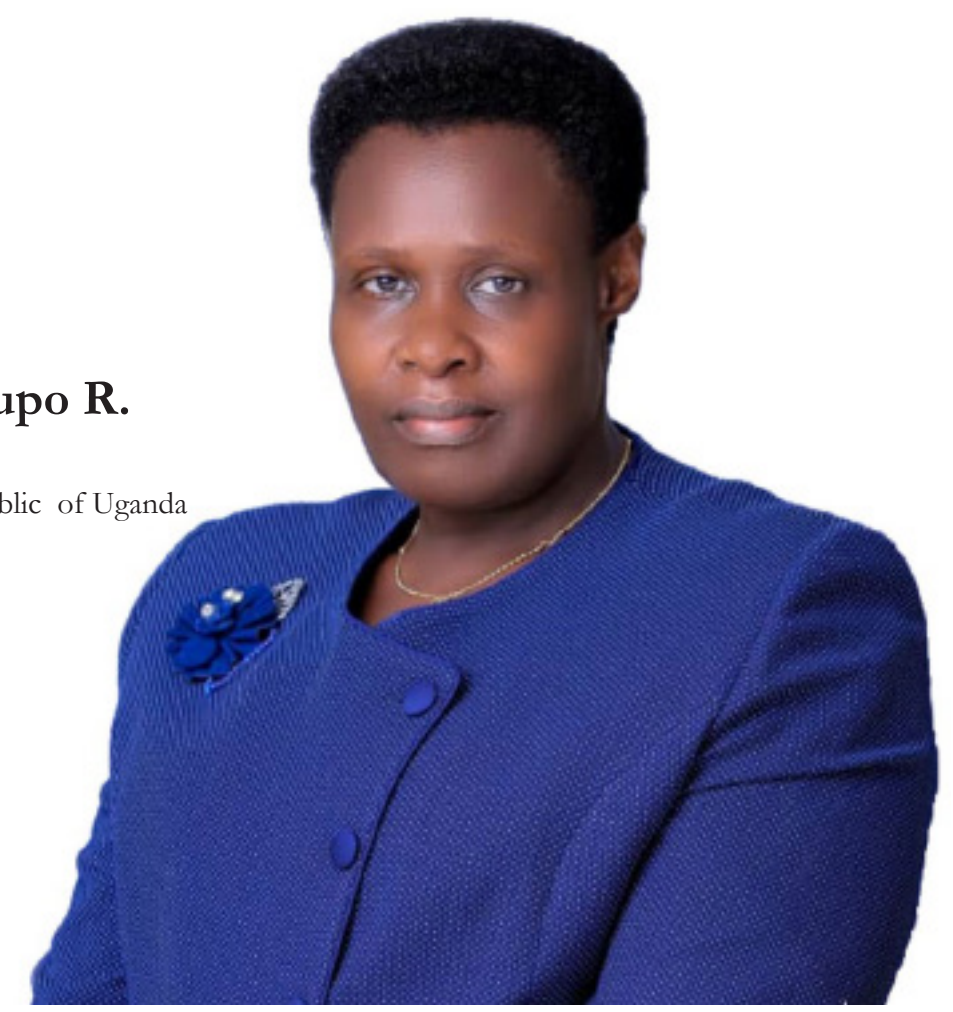
A Karimojong Shepherd at a livestock market



CELEBRATING SHARED HERITAGE AND UNITY IN SOROTI CITY

**H.E. Jessica Alupo R.
Epel**

Vice President of the Republic of Uganda



Protocol

Your Excellency Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda in Africa.

Your Excellency Haile Mariam Dessalegn, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and Patron of the Ateker people in Africa.

Rt. Honourable Amason Kingi, Speaker of the Senate of the Republic of Kenya representing H.E. William Ruto The President of the Republic of Kenya,

Rt. Hon. Anita Annet Among, Speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda,

Your Lordship the Chief Justice,
Hon. Deputy Speaker, NRM Vice Chairperson,
Royal Highness (HRH) Paul Sande Emolot, The of Uganda and Our Chief Guest, Emorimor, Papa Iteso, His Majesty, Musuzulu Ka-Zwelithini, King of the Zulu Nation,
Your Royal Highnesses Traditional and Cultural Leaders,
H.E. Tobeka Madiba, former First Lady of South Africa,
Rt. Honourable Prime Minister, Rt. Honourable Deputy Prime Ministers, Honourable Ministers and Ministers of State, Your Excellencies the Ambassadors and

High Commissioners, Honourable Members of Parliament, Governors, Religious Leaders, Country Delegations of the Ateker communities, The media fraternity, distinguished invited guests, ladies and gentlemen.

I am honoured and delighted on this momentous occasion to warmly welcome you all, distinguished delegates to Soroti City, Uganda, for the Ateker Cultural Festival celebrations. This is a celebration of unity, cultural heritage and shared dreams. I am humbled by the spirit of togetherness, demonstrated by your physical presence here today.

Purpose and Theme

The theme of this festival is “Celebrating Shared Heritage, Forging a Path Towards Peace, Prosperity and Cultural Renaissance.” Ateker Reunion Festival is an annual event that brings together Ateker speaking communities spanning across diverse ethnic groups from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda.

Consequently, this festival serves as a vibrant testament of the reunion of the communities after over 136 years of separation. Ateker people share linguistic and cultural ties, and the purpose of this festival is to celebrate and strengthen the bonds that tie us together as Africans. We are gathered here today and for the next three days to celebrate the inspiring traditions, heritage, shared customs, values and our shared future.

Uganda is extremely honoured to host this unique festival for the very first time. Previously, the Ateker reunion festivals have been hosted and celebrated in Ethiopia and Kenya for the last six years under different themes. Uganda has however been represented at those festivals by delegations from the Ateker communities of Karamoja and Teso led by your representative, your excellency. This time round the festival is being celebrated in Uganda under the leadership of Iteso Cultural Union (ICU) with official support from Government of the Republic of Uganda.

Background

Allow me to give you a brief background of how Uganda came to host the Ateker Reunion Festival 2024. Your Excellency, in February 2022, you delegated me to represent you at the African Union heads of state summit in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. While there, I was privileged to meet H.E. Haile Mariam, former Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, who is also the Patron of the Ateker people in Africa. We discussed many issues regarding the Ate-

ker Community especially how we can use this festival to foster peace and economic transformation of our region. I requested him as a Patron of Ateker people in Africa to give Uganda a chance to also host this important event. He told me that he would consult the elders and revert to me. Your Excellency, early this year H.E. Haile Mariam informed me about the good news that the elders had granted Uganda’s request to host the Ateker Reunion Festival 2024.

I delivered this good news to you at State House Entebbe in a meeting attended by the Ambassador of Ethiopia to Uganda and other leaders and Your Excellency welcomed the idea spontaneously with a clear intention to support the budget, invite your counterparts and also offer the wealth of wisdom on how to handle the festival. For this we say Eyalama noi, Alakara noooi (thank you so much).

Your Excellency, on this note, I would like to express my profound gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Haile Mariam for his patronage and stewardship in preserving our cultural heritage and fostering the sense of common identity of the African people.

In addition, I would like to thank the Ateker elders in Ethiopia for working together in harmony with the Patron to execute his mandate of preserving the sacred traditions of the Ateker people to last forever. Your Excellency, I thank you for your visionary leadership and support, you are indeed a strong advocate of African unity and integration. At the African Union, you are the champion of integration dedicated to eradicate the colonial legacy of irrational borders that separate African people. In fact, this festival reminds us of the unfinished agenda in unifying the African continent.

Your Excellency, on behalf of the Ateker Community here present, I would like to thank you most sincerely for accepting to grace this festival with your physical presence, welcoming our brothers from Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and South Sudan to Uganda and most importantly, shouldering all the budget that has enabled us organise this historic seamless festival.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, during this festival, the Ateker Community and key stakeholders, including the youth, women and elders, will be provided with a unique platform and arena to conduct dialogues under the spirit of Pan-Africanism to reflect on their achievements, lessons learnt, challenges, experiences and chart a way forward in the current world of socio-cultural and socio-economic trans-

formation with peaceful coexistence as a denominator. Let me reiterate the fact that as we celebrate our cultural union, we must remember our shared values of unity, cooperation and mutual respect for one another.

My appeal to you dear delegates is to strive to promote peace and understanding among our communities and beyond. Our main objective should remain to promote peace and unity and to foster regional integration, Pan-Africanism and hard work for socio-economic transformation.

It is my sincere hope that this festival will ultimately enhance cultural awareness and appreciation of the value of the shared heritage for the Ateker Community, unite, foster peace and empower Community with vast knowledge of the enormous the Ateker economic benefits through cultural tourism and entrepreneurship, strengthen social cohesion and cooperation among the Ateker people.

Your Excellency, with your focused and strategic leadership, Uganda continues to stand as a shining star in Africa with total peace and security across the country,

political stability, democracy and rule of law, economic stability, the best investment climate, the best tourism destination modern globally, infrastructure and effective social service delivery. It is against this background that all Ugandans have again invested all their hope in you as their only preferred presidential candidate. I call upon the Ateker people and all the people of Uganda to keep that promise come 2026.

I would like to salute our organisers, especially the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and your technical team of the National Organising Committee, HRH The Emorimor, Papa teso Paul Sande Emelet and your local organising team, all the traditional cultural leaders and mobilisation teams, the political leadership both at national local government levels, sponsors and volunteers: all of you who have worked tirelessly to make this festival meaningful. Special tribute goes to our esteemed country delegations from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania etc who have travelled from far to be part of this glamorous event of the Ateker Reunion Festival taking place in Uganda.



The tourism treasure of the Ateker people: The people and the culture, an elder tastes the millet brew before anyone else

A MILESTONE OF NOSTALGIC BONDING

Hon. Amongi Betty Ongom

Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development

It is with great joy and a profound sense of purpose that I join you all in celebrating the Ateker Reunion Cultural Festival here in Soroti City. This gathering represents a historic moment of unity, cultural pride and shared aspiration for the Ateker-speaking communities spanning Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Tanzania.

As the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, we are proud to play a pivotal role in supporting this monumental event, which not only celebrates the rich heritage of the Ateker people but also underscores the importance of inclusion, cohesion and sustainable development. The Ateker communities—connected by language, history and traditions—are a vibrant example of Africa's diversity and resilience. This festival arrives at a time when we are working collectively, as governments and communities to foster peace, stability and development across the region. The successful disarmament campaigns and ongoing peace initiatives have created an environment where gatherings like this can thrive. Let us use this platform to deepen the



bonds of unity, celebrate our achievements and chart a path towards a prosperous future for all Ateker communities.

This reunion holds particular significance for four key reasons:

First, it reinforces the emotional and cultural ties that bind us. After decades of separation, this festival is an opportunity to reconnect with long-lost brethren, share experiences and celebrate our collective identity.

Second, the festival provides a platform to address the socio-economic needs of the Ateker people. By promoting cultural tourism, entrepreneurship and trade, we can unlock economic opportunities that will uplift households and foster regional development. I encourage all attendees to take advantage of these prospects and showcase the wealth of talents and products from their communities.

Third, the reunion amplifies the Ateker people's voice on issues that matter most. The presence of heads of state and regional leaders gives us a chance to present the priorities of the Ateker people and advocate policies and investments that promote peace, social cohesion and sustainable livelihoods.

Finally, the festival exemplifies the enduring value of Pan-Africanism. By embracing our shared heritage and working towards unity, we not only strengthen the Ateker community but also contribute to the broader

vision of regional integration and cooperation across Africa.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for his unwavering support of this event and his commitment to fostering unity among the Ateker. I also appreciate the leadership and efforts of HRH Papa Paul Sande Emolot and the Iteso Cultural Union in organising this festival. Your dedication and vision have brought us to this milestone.

To all attendees, especially our brothers and sisters from neighbouring countries, I warmly welcome you to Uganda. Let us celebrate, share ideas, and build a foundation for a future where the Ateker people are united, empowered and at peace.

Hon. Betty Amongi Ongom

Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development



ATEKER HERITAGE, UNITY AND PRIDE

ATEKER HERITAGE, UNITY AND PRIDE

Hon. Peace Mutuuzo Regis

Minister of State for Gender and Culture Affairs



With great pride and heartfelt joy, I extend my warmest greetings to you as we come together to celebrate the vibrant heritage of the Ateker people. This cultural festival, first of its kind here in Uganda, is more than a gathering; it is a profound testament to our shared history, traditions, and the enduring spirit of our community.

As we immerse ourselves in the richness of the Ateker culture through tours around the different exhibitions, music performances, dance, art, and storytelling, let us remember the importance of preserving these traditions for future generations. Each song sung, each tale told, and every dance performed is a thread in the fabric of the Ateker identity—binding us to our past and guiding us into the future.

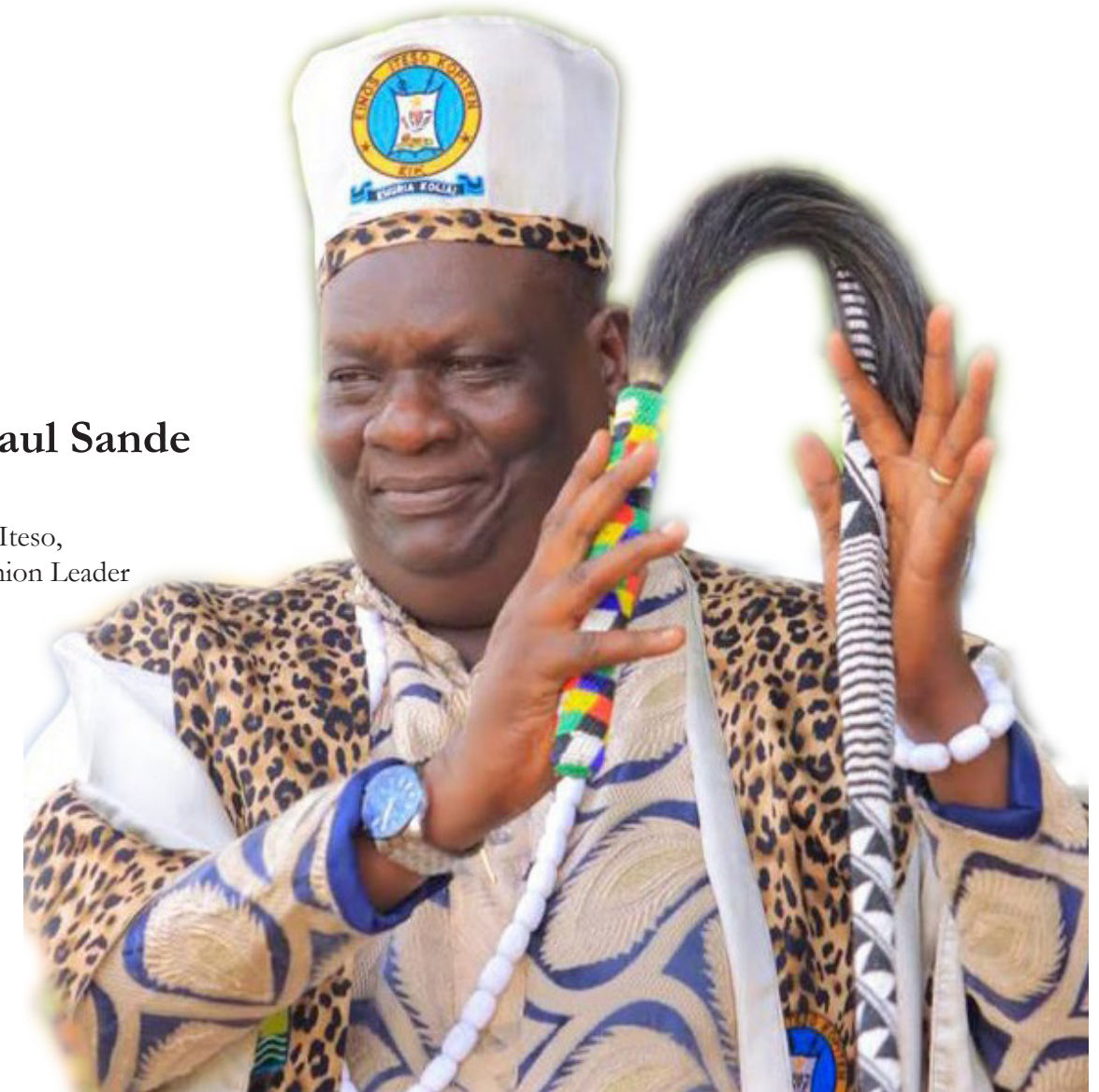
artists, and all participants who have worked tirelessly to make this event possible. Your dedication reminds us that culture is not merely inherited but actively cultivated, celebrated, and cherished. I also warmly welcome Ateker people who have travelled from other East African countries to come and celebrate their heritage with us here in person. I hope you have a phenomenal time here in Uganda.

May this cultural festival inspire unity, understanding, and pride among not only the Ateker but other cultural groups as well. Together, let us embrace the diversity that defines our nation and champion the values of harmony and respect that make us stronger. Thank you for being part of this remarkable celebration and may the Ateker Cultural Festival be a resounding success and a beacon of cultural pride for all.

H.R.H. Paul Sande

Emolot

Emorimor Papa Iteso,
Iteso Cultural Union Leader



Your Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda,
Your Excellency Jessica Alupo, Vice President of the Republic of Uganda and beloved daughter of Ateker soil,

Your Excellencies, Heads of State, distinguished leaders of the Ateker community, honored guests, and all our people,

With immense joy and deep gratitude, I welcome you to this historic occasion, the Ateker Reunion Festival. On behalf of the Iteso Cultural Union, the host of this significant event, I sincerely thank His Excellency President Museveni for his unwavering commitment and generosity in facilitating this remarkable gathering. I also express my heartfelt gratitude to Her Excellency

Vice President Jessica Alupo for her steadfast leadership and dedication, which were pivotal in bringing us together today. Allow me to recognize and commend the tireless efforts of the organizing committees—the National Organizing Committee, under the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, and the Local Organizing Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister of the Iteso Cultural Union. Your hard work has made this dream a reality.

This festival is more than a celebration; it is a reunion of kindred spirits, a reconnection of the Ateker people across borders and generations. Today, we gather as one family to honor our shared heritage, renew bonds, and envision a brighter future. Your presence here is deeply valued. I extend a loyal and heartfelt welcome to the leaders, communities,

and dignitaries of Ateker and beyond. You are home, and this moment signifies the unity and strength of our people.

As we celebrate, we also reflect on the challenges that have held us back. The Ateker community faces significant developmental gaps compared to others, and this festival is a clarion call for progress. Let us embrace unity as our strength and focus on addressing key priorities: enhancing border security, providing adequate housing, improving healthcare and education, and integrating into a modern economy. While we cherish our nomadic roots, we must adapt to secure a prosperous future for our people.

Over the next three days, we will engage in meaningful dialogue and cultural exchange. Together, we will ex-

plore strategies to uplift the Ateker people and ensure their rightful place among thriving communities. At the same time, let us celebrate our rich traditions—through songs, dances, stories, and sharing our traditional cuisines.

In closing, I warmly invite every member of the Ateker family, especially our brothers and sisters from Teso, to participate fully in this celebration. The Government of Uganda has graciously ensured that all meals for the festival are catered for, so come in large numbers. Let us determine how we can achieve lasting unity and decide the venue for next year's gathering.

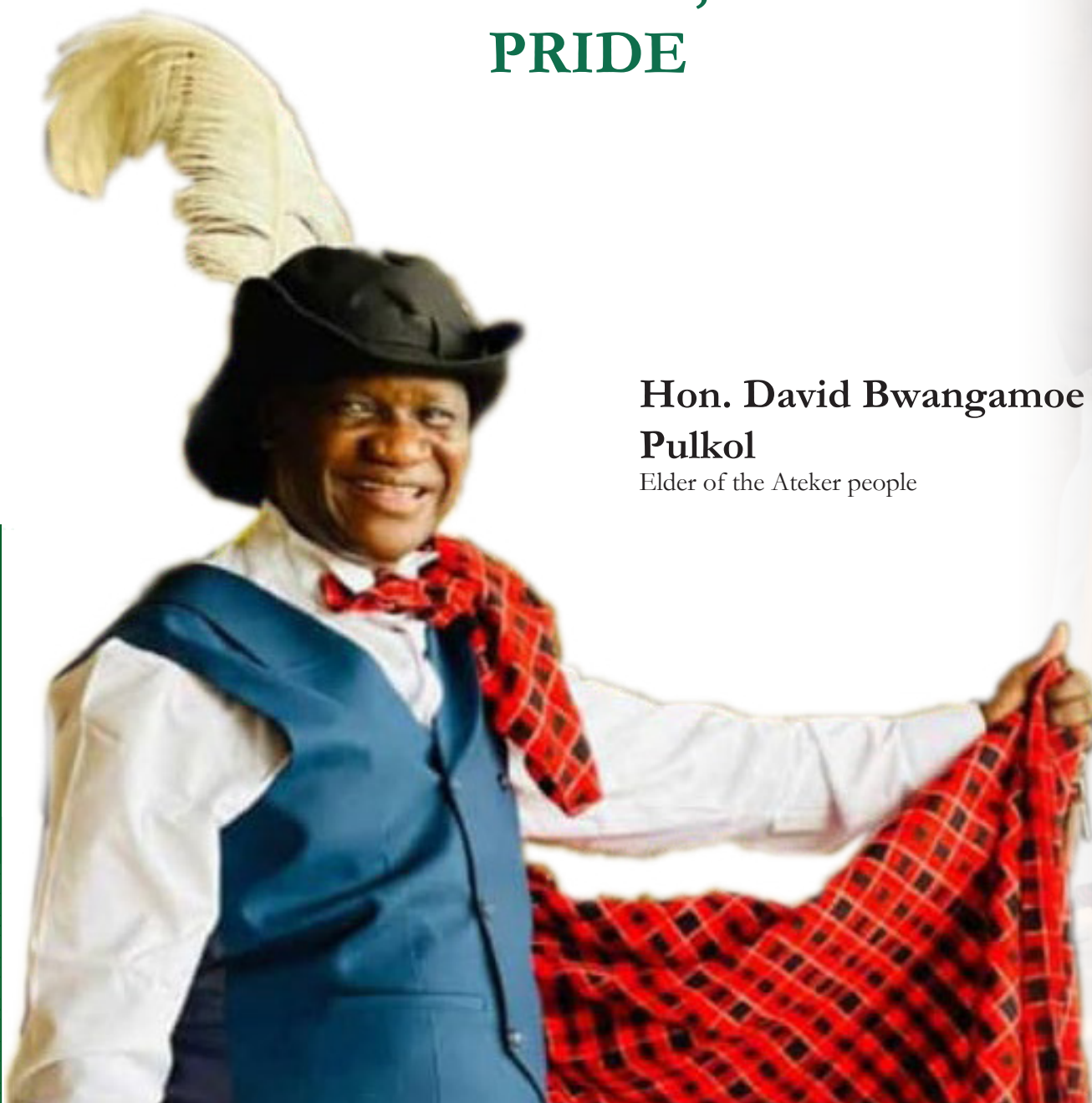
May this festival inspire hope, unity, and progress for the Ateker people. Thank you, and may God bless us all.



ATEKER HERITAGE, UNITY AND PRIDE

Hon. David Bwangamoe Pulkol

Elder of the Ateker people



immense significance for the Ateker for four key reasons: First, it is a sentimental reunion. The joy and attachment emotional of meeting our brethren after decades apart are unmatched. It is a time to share stories, celebrate, laugh and feast together as one big family. Second, it offers a vital business opportunity.

To my Teso community, let us seize this chance to showcase our talents, crafts and resources. This festival is a platform to connect and grow economically.

Third, this reunion amplifies our voice as the Ateker people. Unlike before when we spoke only among ourselves, today we have the ear of heads of state. Let us use this platform wisely, strategise and present a uni-

fied message about the needs and aspirations of our people.

Finally, it is an opportunity to unite and open up our region. Let us embrace connectivity and development, integrating our people into the cash economy and promoting the private sector to foster progress.

This is our moment to strengthen our identity, embrace peace and work towards a brighter future for the Ateker people. Let us celebrate this reunion with the dignity, unity and purpose it deserves.

Hon. DAVID Bwangamoe PULKOL

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency General Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda, for embracing and supporting the Ateker reunion. Since 1924 when the British held a meeting in Kitgum, that divided us, the Ateker people have been separated. Today, this historic gathering offers us a rare and beautiful opportunity to reunite, celebrate our culture and speak with one voice.

To my brothers and sisters of the Ateker people, I urge you to unite, support one another, intermarry and

trade as one family. Let us leave the border issues to the governments while we focus on building strong bonds and lasting connections. For a long time, many of our Ateker brothers and sisters faced hardships, including conflict and instability, leading to raids.

However, and division. following the successful disarmament thanks to the Government of Uganda, communities like the Karimojong, Masai and Nyangatom, among others, can now embrace peace, stability and development.. This reunion holds



Celebrating culture and promoting peace within Ateker communities



Elders of various Ateker communities celebrate after a recent Ateker - Tobongu Lore cross-border meeting in Turkana

Historical Roots, Migration, Settlement and Artificial Separation of The ATEKER People



Turkana women, very similar to other Ateker people along the historical migration routes

By Our Correspondent

The ‘Ateker’ people are the “Itung’a” speaking group of Plains Nilotes, whose history is traced to the Egyptian Nile Valley. Other accounts say that the people, similar to ATEKER people extracting blood from live cattle and mixing with milk, were, by early 1500 AD, sighted in Yemen (the Middle East) and later in the Ogden region of present-day Ethiopia. The historical accounts that place this group in the Egyptian Nile Valley state that

the ATEKER people migrated southwards, occupying the land at the intersection point of the two rivers: the Blue Nile and White Nile of present-day Sudan.

The two historical narratives, however, agree that the ATEKER people came to occupy their current locations in the five countries of Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) through Abyssinia in Ethiopia and Elemei Traingle (West of Lake Turkana).

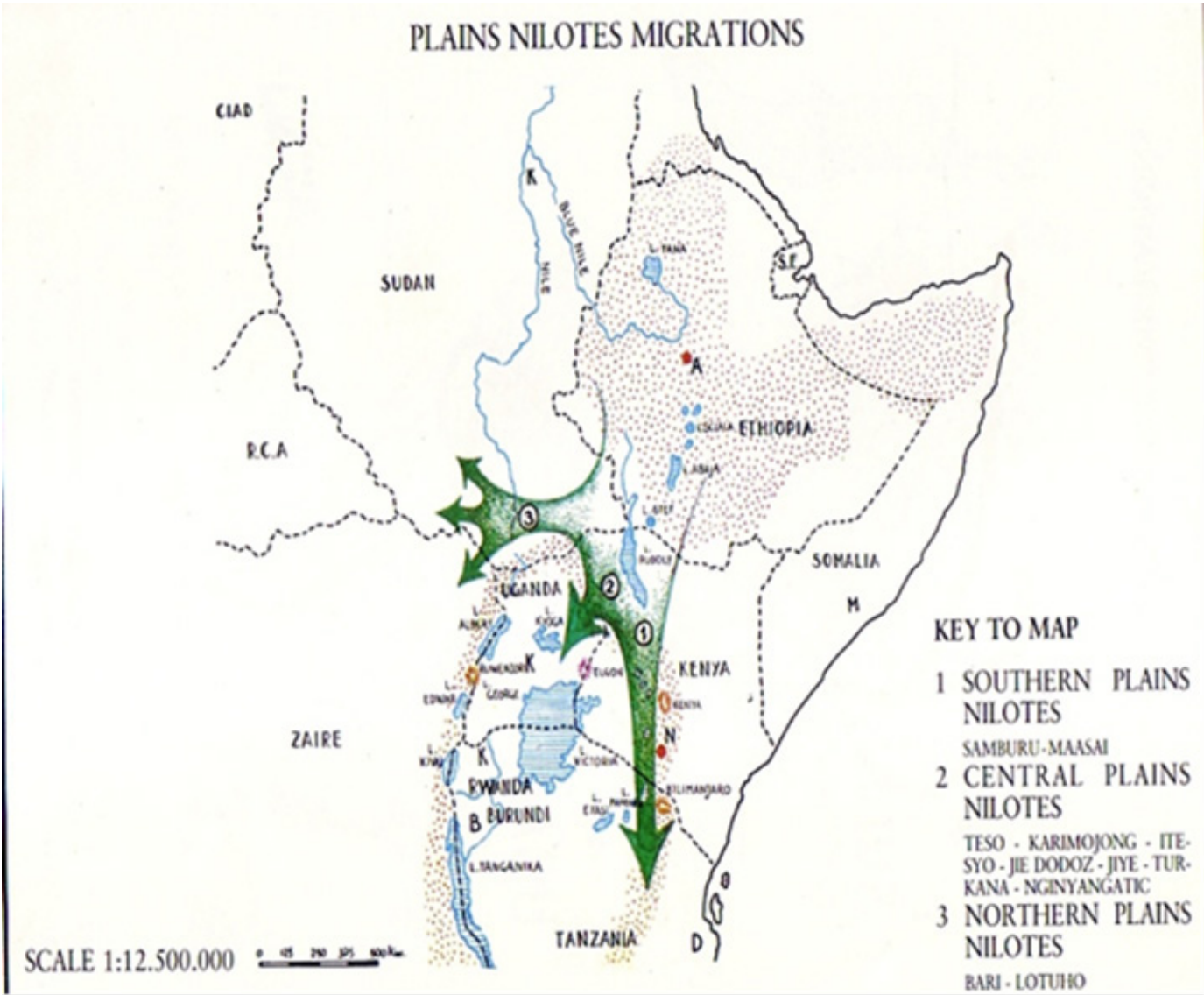


Figure 1 Migration of the Plains Nilotes

While the Luo (Nilotics) trekked southwards along the White Nile River, from their recorded cradle land in Barhel-Gazal to their respective current areas of settlements in the Eastern part of Africa, the ATEKER group walked eastwards along the Blue Nile to the Ethiopian Highlands. Descending further southwards, on the escarpment of the eastern arm of the East African rift valley, to a land west of the present-day Lake Turkana (Lake Rudolf). Therefore, all the ATEKER people are recorded as having arrived through Abyssinia (Ethiopia) with many livestock and settled in the Elemei Triangle¹ - a land straddling across the plains of Lotikipi. Kenya recently discovered a massive underground water aquifer (lake) that can take an entire

¹ The Elemei triangle is a land located West of Lake Turkana (Rudolf). It covers the area between the two tri-points where the countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, and South Sudan meet on the one hand and another where Uganda, Kenya, and South Sudan meet. Presently an area of contention among the governments of Ethiopia, South Sudan, and Kenya, the Elemei triangle is a place of excellent mineral wealth potential, currently abounding and teeming with wildlife and located closer to the Lotikipi area of substantial underground water discoveries

country 70 years to exhaust.

While at the Elemei triangle, both the livestock and human population grew. Droughts and famines intensified, coupled with a high disease burden. A debate arose on what we should do to secure a better place to guarantee a sustainable future. ‘Spies’ known in the Core ATEKER language as “Ngika’rebok” or “Ngi’rototin” (Arebok) were then dispatched in three different directions to “Are’bokin” or Arotun (to undertake long-range resource tracking and intelligence survey). This was to ascertain new places where water and pastures were plentiful. They were to locate some places that could sustain all the livestock and people of ATEKER. The first group went more southwards, following the eastern arm of the East African Rift Valley. Another went climbing the escarpment towards the Southwest into the present-day Karamoja region of Uganda. In contrast, the last group went westwards to the present-day border crossing point of Nadapal in present-day Southern Sudan.



Figure 3 Migration of the Central Nilotes

As shown in the Map, Figure 1 above, the first group that went Southwards is now what has come to be known as Southern Plains Nilotes. This group consists of the Samburu and Maasai-speaking communities of the larger ATEKER people. Motivated by a report of several lakes supported by a network of tributary river systems found along the Rift Valley, including one with rock salt for animal licks (Lake Magadi), thus making it an ideal place to occupy and an excellent direction to take. Today, the Maasai are settled in the Republics of Kenya and Tanzania, and the Samburu are only in Kenya.

The second group, called Central Plains Nilotes, are

those that climbed the escarpment into the northern part of the Apule River, Naitae, and Mogos-Kotein hills (Nakadanya) - a place well-watered by Nangolol Apolon river catchments of present-day Lotisan sub-county of Matheniko County, north-west Mt. Moroto - Uganda. They found the escarpment green and the Karamoja plateau with moderate temperatures modified by high altitude. This group, which today consists of the CORE-ATEKER, straddling across the two Tri-Junctions of the four countries of Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, and Uganda as shown, later dispersed from the Apule river catchment into their present-day locations shown by Figure 3 below.

The Jie moved westwards of Nangolol Apolon to the



Nyangatom women singing and dancing to promote peace in a recent peace caravan in Ethiopia. (Photo courtesy of Karatunga Tours). Ateker people have similarities in all the places they occupy

present areas of Kotido district, while the Dodoth moved northwards to their present areas of Kaabong and Karenga Districts. Other Jiye with Toposa and some Nyangatom, of South Sudan moved further northwards to their present locations. The Nyangatom continued and settled in the borderland areas of present-day South Sudan and Ethiopia, where they now neighbor and have, to a great extent, culturally influenced the Dassenach or Murle with whom they now inhabit the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples. Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. The Nyangatom also borders the Toposa and Jiye of South Sudan and Turkana of Kenya.

The rest of the Karimojong (Matheniko, Pian, Bokora, et al.) spread out to the South, Southeast, and Southwest of the Karamoja plateau. At the same time, the Iteso and the Lango people proceeded to the present-day marshland regions of Lakes Bisina, Opet, Awoja, and the Kyoga basin of Uganda.

Another group went East of Mt. Elgon and continued Southwards into what ATEKER oral traditions called Akare-Apa-Engura- meaning the water well of an old man called "Apa Engura"- now known as Kapenguria, spreading into areas of Kitale (neni etalere ngidwe) and spreading further south-westwards to the present

day Iteso areas of Kenya, Tororo, Busia and Palisa in Uganda². This group continues to this present day, speaking a version of the Ateso dialect that is closer to the original Nga'karimojong and/or Nga'turukana than the Ateso of Teso.

Although previous scholars and administrators have advanced other conflict-ridden theories to explain and justify the long-lasting conflict between Iteso and the Karimojong, other positive explanations resonating within the ATEKER oral traditions and supported by Figure 3 above exist. The ATEKER Oral traditions assert that the Itesyo ancestors, while approaching Lake Turkana, were able to see Lakes Kyoga, Opet, and Bisina systems and the surrounding marshland of present-day Teso, Uganda, where they are reported to have said "Itesyo angina" - meaning, "We are seeing or eyeing there". The Lake Kyoga basin is finally where most of the Itesyo people settled and became known as Teso.

The Lango also spread south-westwards into the center of the Lake Kyoga basin, straddling areas serviced

² My Oral interview with the Late Hon Joshua Akol, quoting from his oral interactions with several prominent Karimojong elders when he was growing up, including Ekasikout the late Zephania Akamu—a renowned Karimojong church worker of the Church Missionary Society (CMS).

by well water discharge rivers: Moroto, Aswa, and Arocha river catchment. Today, Uganda's Iteso and Lango people possess identical names of clans, names of people, and many words in speech with similar or nearer meanings to the rest of the core ATEKER groups. Of the two, the Iteso are more of the Core ATEKER while the Lango have intermarried with the Acholi (Luo) in the relative peripheral ATEKER groups.

Then lastly came the third group, referred to as **North-ern Plains Nilotes** -who, at the Elemi triangle, were told there was a big river further to the West that could manage to water and sustain all their livestock. That river as we know it today is the White Nile (in present-day Juba). This group now includes, among oth-

ers: the Baari-speaking groups in ATEKER language, known as Ngi'baari - meaning the wealthiest. The Ngi'baari include Baari, Pojulu, Kuku, Nyangwara, and the Kakwa in present-day Central Equatoria in South Sudan. The Kakwa people are also settled in the West Nile region of Uganda and the North Eastern corner of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Lotukho people are settled on Imatong Mountain ranges Southwest of Torit while the Lango occupy Tertenya area to the south-Eastern slopes of the Imatong Mountains, stretching to the Tri-point east of the Madiopai border-crossing between the Acholi of Kitgum-Uganda, Chukdum county of South Sudan and Karenga District of north Karamoja in Uganda. Others in this group include the Lopit people, who settled in Ngangala, an area between Torit and Juba in South Sudan.



A Dance Group exhibiting Kakwa traditional dance on Saturday at Nyakuron Cultural Centre. Photo by Akol Madut Ngong



Masai women in Tanzania



President William Ruto of the Republic of Kenya attends the 8th Tobong'u Lore cultural and tourism festival 2024 event in full Turkana elder's regalia while the Resident District Commissioner Moroto Jane Frances Amongin Okili, cheerfully ululates

The Interconnections, Relationships and Persistent Challenges faced by the 'Core' and 'Peripheral' ATEKER

By Our Correspondent

The Core ATEKER group currently inhabits borderland areas, straddling four countries: South Sudan, Kenya, and Uganda, in the Eastern and Horn of Africa region. On the one hand, the CORE ATEKER Groups include the Toposa, Jiye, and Nyanga'atom of South Sudan. On the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia, they include the Nyang'atom. In the Republic of Kenya, they include the Ngi'turukana and Iteso, and finally, the Ngi'kari-mojong and Iteso of Uganda.

Among these Core Ateker groups of Itung'a-speaking Plains Nilotes, "Ateker" is a common word used to mean a clan. Most names of major clans among the CORE ATEKER groups are identical and cut across international borders and geographic territories. Usually, no linguistic translations are required for people of the Core ATEKER groups to communicate. Only

slight variations exist in intonations and specific meanings.

The ATEKER people share a common origin, decent, and ethnolinguistic ties. They practice nomadic pastoralism and, in some cases, Agro-pastoralism as their main economic livelihood activity. Some have adopted other non-traditional economic complementary activities like fishing, rice and other crop growing, etc., besides keeping livestock.

On the other hand, others now referred hereto as 'PERIPHERAL (BROADER) ATEKER' people, consist of people with the same ATEKER origin, culture, and decent, sharing similar ethnolinguistic ties with the Core ATEKER BUT are remotely located into more interland of their nation states in Ethiopia, South Sudan, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). These include the the

Northern Plains Nilotes consisting among others: the Baari speaking groups (the Baari, Pojulu, Kuku, Mundari, Nyangwara, and the Kakwa in present-day Central Equatoria)³. The Lotukho, Lango, Lopit, Murile, and, to some extent, the Didinga in the Eastern Equatoria, together with the Samburu and Masaai of Kenya and Tanzania, are referred to as Southern Plains Nilotes. They also include the Kakwa in the DRC and the Masaai of Tanzania.

These peripheral groups, have encountered, integrated, and intermarried with people of other languages and cultures in the course of their outward migration. They have varyingly managed to retain only between approximately 30-50% of the ATEKER people's language, customs, and oral traditions. Whereas they have retained the essential ATEKER root words, the interconnecting words that join the root words in their speech differ. These have been acquired from other linguistic groups with whom they have inter-married or interacted. Therefore, to many among the core ATEKER groups, the peripheral ATEKER people sound like a familiar language. However, it is only understood when those from the peripheral group speak slowly or with some limited translation. The Core ATEKER groups are linked to the 'PERIPHERAL ATEKER' groups by the common ATEKER language, which constitutes the root words, with only variations in the interconnecting or joining words they seem to have picked from other ethnic groups with whom they must have come into contact or intermarried.

These groups of Core-ATEKER communities have for so long remained at the epicenter of conflict characterized by lawlessness, poverty, and marginalization. They have very low human development indices compared to other communities in their respective nation-states. They have remained minorities and live at the geographical peripheries of their national government politics and economy, as well as suffer glaring gaps in social service delivery.

Within the Core ATEKER communities, different accounts explain why specific names were acquired to identify each community⁴. We understand that the Nyanga'tom of Ethiopia were initially great hunters

and were more known as Nginyamatom-a name derived from eating Elephants (Etom or Ngitome-words for Elephants), not the current attempts to link them to great expertise in the use and brandishing of yellowish guns-"Atom"-Nginyangatom. The acquisition of guns was more recent among the ATEKER people than the existence of these communities.

The Dodos-Karimojong of the Kaabong district of Uganda, on the other hand, are said to have not been very good at keeping livestock and were mainly hunters and gatherers who were known for eating birds and the yok of their eggs-"Edos"-the egg-yok. So, they acquired the name of Ngidoso and are now called the Dodos or the Dodoth. This theory says that the Dodos(th) acquisition of so many cattle is a more recent development than their existence after the dispersal from Apule.

The Turkana of Kenya, on the other hand, is said to be ATEKER people who are the offsprings of Ekasikout Lokolimoe and his sons who withdrew from the cradle land in Apule, in Karamoja back to the Caves at the mighty Loyima ranges or Moru Apolon. The Oral Traditions further say Mama Nayeche (the great-great-grandmother who produced the modern-day Turkana nation) was a Jie girl who escaped forced early marriage or Gender-based violence in Napelimoru villages and ran into Turkana. She is said to have been cursed by Jie elders to suffer with her offspring until they return to the Jie elders to make peace, seek reconciliation, and perform rituals to cleanse the land and bless the people. The Turkana were known for living in caves or hiding in caves (ATURUKAN). These caves are common in the mountain ranges of Moru-apolon and other mountain ranges like Loyima and other parts of the Turkana escarpment.

Within the Core ATEKER communities, different accounts explain why specific names were acquired to identify each community

The Artificial Separation (*Apetaret*) of the Core Ateker People by British Colonialism

By Our Correspondent

For British colonialism to take control and monopoly of trade and establish a competition-free environment of unfettered resource exploitation and plunder, Karamoja, South Sudan Turkana, and the Ngangatom of Ethiopia regions of the core ATEKER cluster were declared and militarily administered as closed districts. But first, the British colonial administration had to out-manuever other imperial European colonial competitors - the French and Belgians in the scramble to control the entire Nile watershed from Egypt to the source in Uganda and Tanganyika.

What really happened during the colonial contest, and how was it carried out? What broader colonial interests were involved? What specific decisions and actions were taken, and by whom, that led to the separation of the larger ATEKER communities, as well as the enslavement, marginalization, and impoverishment of the core ATEKER people who now reside across the three tri-junctions of Uganda, Kenya, South Sudan, and Ethiopia?

This Scramble for ATEKER peoples' lands in the Horn, East, and Great Lakes region of Africa took center stage on February 28th, 1895, as a pricey jewel in the contest among European Britain, Belgium, and France, when the leading colonial proponent of France, Francois Deloncle rose in the chamber of deputies (parliament) to boldly declare that the British must be forced to settle the paramount Egyptian Question. Asserting that if Britain would not keep the promise of 1882 to evacuate Egypt once the internal order was restored, then France would take Britain in the rear⁵ by marching across Africa from the Atlantic into Bahr el Gazal and Upper Nile in the present South Sudan to force its rival-Britain, to the negotiating table.

However, one month later, Sir Edward Grey, the British under-secretary for Foreign Affairs, surprised most peers in the House of Commons with even more provocative declarations: "that from its mouth in Egyptian Delta to its source in Uganda-Tanganyika, the entire Nile watershed was British" and that any advance by French expedition into the Nile watershed would be an unfriendly act. With these counter proclamations in Paris and London, Fashoda, including the areas of most ATEKER communities, became the flash point in Africa's greatest imperial gamble and rivalry.⁶

The specific objective of France's 1896 Congo Nile expedition was to panic Britain into negotiating over Egypt, either by sharing it with France or, more likely, by sanctioning and supporting France's annexation of Morocco. The alarming threat the British perceived was the discomfort of having a string of French military outposts from West Africa to East Africa through the Nile Basin to Djibuti on the Red Sea. This would be a deadly achievement by France, bisecting the grand plan of British Empire architects of an uninterrupted rail and telegraph connection to run from the Cape of South Africa to Cairo in Egypt.⁷

The Fashoda scheme France and Britain were pushing for was openly ambitious and hypercritical in the colonization of ATEKER ZONE. This was, for certain, a brilliant ploy to determine the final European boundaries not only in Sub-Saharan Africa but also in Morocco and Egypt. The French even went to great lengths to secure success in their ambitious mission by calling upon the ruler of Ethiopia, whom they gave arms shipments, to help them allow another French expedition from Djibouti via Ethiopia to reinforce their planned hold on Fashoda in Upper Nile.

Unfortunately for France, however, almost everything went wrong due to some critical nine-month delay in their expedition's deployment in 1896. After the briefest wait for Major Marchand's expedition in 1898, which suffered a three-month delay in setting off the Western coast of Africa and another nine-month delay in cresting the Sue River in the last leg of that expedition, Ethiopian allies who had taken the arms gifts of

³ The Kakwa people are today settled in land areas straddling Yei County in South Sudan, the West Nile region of Uganda, and the North Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Pojulu live to the north West of Juba, while the Baari live in and around Juba. The Kuku people live in the Kajokeji area to the southern part of Central Equatoria and border Moyo and Adjumani districts of Northern Uganda.

⁴ Oral interviews with Ekasikout, the late Apathecha from present-day Abim District, Nyakwae Sub-county, Pupu-Kamuya parish quoting other Karimojong senior Elders who prepared him for the Karimojong traditional ritual of initiation or "Athapan" during Ekaru Angisomal in 1935.

⁵ Lewis, David Levering (1988, page 5). The Race to Fashoda. Suffolk: St. Edmundsbury Press Ltd

⁶ Oyai Deng Ajak (Winter 2016). Self Determination and Territorial Integrity: The Case for Pre-emptive Diplomacy in the Ilemi Triangle of Eastern Africa. Commonwealth Open University.

⁷ Lewis, David Levering (opcit, 1988 page 7-8)



Turkana elders at a recent Ateker cross-border meeting in Turkana County

the French and Russians, retreated to the highlands, with their army.

Besides, two weeks before the French Congo Nile expedition reached Fashoda, King Menelik of Ethiopia secretly agreed to aid France and quietly signed a treaty with the British, committing himself and Ethiopian forces to neutrality. At the same time, he clandestinely negotiated an alliance with the Khalifa of the Sudan. Furthermore, France's public opinion was decidedly lukewarm on going to war over Fashoda - there then, the Nile policy had become progressively unrealistic. The political defeat was staring France in the face.

However, with these odds, the French expedition under the command of Major Jean-Baptist Marchand, which was dispatched from the Atlantic into the heart of Africa with a force of eight French officers and 120 black soldiers from Niger district/Senegalese, possessing three steel boats fitted for sail or oars, and small steam launch - the adhere arrived to Fashoda on July 1898 and planted the tricolor flag of France, upon the upper Nile.

While this happened, Anglo-Ethiopian forces of thirty thousand led by Kitchener Herbert took Karari on 1/9/1898 and Omdurman on 7/9/1898. With this victory achieved, a light force of 500 men on two steamers -Tewfikia and Sofia of the Arab dervish, on Khalifa's orders, were sent up to the White Nile to collect grain. On approaching the old garrison station of Fashoda, they came under intense fire from unknown forces and lost 40 combat men (a specific European power was on the upper Nile). After getting the telegraph wire, on 8/9/1898, the Sirdar Herbert Kitchener started up the

White Nile for Fashoda with five steamers, the X1th and X11th battalions of Sudanese, two companies of the Cameron Highlanders, Peake's battery of artillery, and four maxim guns. They approached Fashoda on 18/9/1898 and then moored to the bank of the river for some hours to allow the message that Sirdar had sent to the mysterious European power to reach the station.

On the morning of September 19, 1898, French Major Marchand sent a message to the Sirdar, announcing the French occupation of Fashoda and welcoming the Anglo-Egyptian forces into the area in the name of France. In response, the British officers arrived, disembarked, politely disregarded the French flag, and raised the British and Egyptian flags without interfering with the French expedition. Following this, the Anglo-Egyptian forces were placed under the command of Colonel Jackson, who was appointed as the civil and military commander of the Fashoda district. On the same day, Sirdar Herbert Kitchener, leading the same forces, proceeded to the mouth of the Sabot River, which is sixty-two miles from Fashoda, and once again hoisted the Anglo-Egyptian flag. Sirdar Kitchener then returned north after stopping to subdue the small French unit stationed there.

Back home in the UK, the British were united in their agreement that "the French should evacuate Fashoda, or else all the might, majesty, dominion, and power of everything that could, by any stretch of the imagination, be called 'British' should be employed to make them go"⁸. (Churchill, p. 318). While diplomatic discussions took place between London and Paris, British

⁸ Churchill p318



Toposa women at the recent Ateker cross-border meeting in Turkana County

and French troops lived in Fashoda for three months, maintaining a polite but tense rivalry.

The Fashoda incident led to the final partition of Sub-Saharan Africa-it was the next-to-last African partition before the powers ceded Morocco as a French sphere of influence- but it also led to the end of Europe established at the Congress of Vienna, the wrecking of the so-called Pax Britannica, and the demise of the European world hegemony.⁹

On 11th December 1898, the French officer received a telegram from their authorities instructing them to evacuate, lower their flag, and leave Fashoda through Abyssinia to the coast of Djibouti and return to their homeland that they had served so diligently¹⁰. The international disputes between France and England concerning the upper Nile region in Southern Sudan were finally resolved with an agreement signed in London on March 21, 1899, by Lord Salisbury and M. Cambon. At that time, Major Marchand and his men were still en route between Gore and Addis Ababa¹¹.

The addition to Article IV of the 1898 Niger Convention, characterized as harmless, effectively transferred the Nile Valley to British control. This settled the sixteen-year dispute over Egypt's occupation and clearly defined the border of Sudan with Chad, the Central African Republic (CAR), and Congo—except for the Lado enclave—which remains unchanged today.

When Major Marchand and Kitchener were heading

⁹ Opcit Lewis, David Levering (1988) page 229

¹⁰ Ibid Lewis p323.

¹¹ Balamoan, G Ayoub (1981). The people and economics in the Sudan 1884-1956, Cambridge: Harvard University Center for population studies p.432.

toward a confrontation in Fashoda, King Leopold II of Belgium was preparing his country to claim much of Sudan and the Red Sea littoral. He aimed to position himself advantageously between the British and the French, who sought to use Leopold in the Congo to hinder the other's expansion. Under pressure from Paris, Leopold II agreed to collaborate with France in its pursuits across Africa with the Congo-French convention of August 1894. However, he remained determined to play both powers against each other, maintaining his influence over Central and East Africa.

Meanwhile, a Belgian expedition - the largest European-commanded force to cross Central Africa - left its base in Northern Congo to advance toward the upper Nile before the British or French could send troops. On February 14 or 15, 1897, Belgian troops under Captain Leroi revolted at Dirfi village near the Yei River¹². Internal rebellion complicated the situation in Belgium. After twenty-one years, King Leopold II was finally pushed out of the scramble for Africa by Africans themselves. From 1902 to 1906, fruitless negotiations took place between the British Foreign Office and representatives of King Leopold II, sovereign of the Congo Free State.

Finally, in 1906, the dispute was amicably resolved with the Anglo-Congolese agreement. King Leopold II relinquished his claims to southern Sudan in exchange for certain commercial concessions, guaranteed interest in a railway loan, and the retention of the Lado enclave under Belgian control for his reign.

Regrettably for Belgian interests in the Lado enclave—

¹² Opcit Levis-p95,

now comprising present-day West Nile in Uganda, Yei-Yambio in South Sudan, and northern Congo—King Leopold II died on December 17, 1909. Within a month, the Belgian Minister in London notified British authorities that the Belgian government was prepared to finalize the 1906 Anglo-Congolese agreement. A joint commission was established to facilitate the transfer, and on June 16, 1910, the Lado enclave was officially handed over to the Sudanese government¹³.

Sir Samuel Baker claimed Equatoria for Egypt in 1871, and in 1872, Baker annexed the kingdom of Bunyoro. In July 1878, after Gordon was appointed governor of Sudan/Khartoum, he appointed Emin, his emissary, to the Kabaka Mutesa of Buganda, who was holding captive troops sent into Buganda to expand the khedival sphere. While in Equatorial, Emin devoted the next few years to suppressing the slave traffic and founding a chain of Nile stations from Lado to Lake Albert, mapping the region for Sudan.¹⁴ This stretch of land remained part of Sudan until it was bartered with the Ilemi Triangle in 1914.

British influence in Sudan was established between 1896 and 1899, and both France and Belgium recognized the boundaries of Sudan in relation to their territories in 1898-1899 and 1894, respectively. The British established the Uganda Protectorate in 1894, while Sudan was jointly administered by the British and Egypt. In 1913, the Sudan-Uganda Boundary Commission was formed by the Governor-General of Sudan, Wingate. He appointed Captain Kelly, while the Governor of Uganda, F.J. Jackson, appointed Captain Tufnell.

The commission convened in Nimule on January 15, 1913, to begin its work. Significant consideration had been given to adjusting the Sudan-Uganda boundary months prior to the commission's establishment. The first detailed proposal was made by the Governor-General of Sudan to Viscount Kitchener in October 1911. This proposal involved transferring the Lado Enclave to Uganda and large tracts of northern Uganda, south of latitude 5°N, to Sudan. Several reasons were put forward for this adjustment, including the desire to reunite the Bari tribe, which was divided by the existing border, and to keep the Turkana tribe exclusively within Uganda. The Colonial Office agreed

that the proposals from the Sudan government were acceptable, and the basis for the boundary delimitation between the Nile and Lake Rudolf/Turkana was as described by Wingate in October 1911 and reiterated in his letter to Kitchener dated November 5, 1912.

The Sudan government should take over that portion of Uganda lying between the present boundary (5 north latitude) and a line commencing at the junction of the river Unyama with the Nile south of Nimule, thence proceeding up the river Unyama to the point on the right bank 10 miles from its mouth, from that point running in a north-north easterly direction until it cuts four north latitudes, thence roughly following four latitudes taking the Dodinga and the Dabosa county, and finally turning up north-east to a point on the Sanderson gulf on lake Rudolf approximately where the shore of the gulf cuts 4 40 north latitude.

(fo 407/177f.48758)-kelly note (pxx)

In March 1912, the Ugandan governor responded by advocating for the inclusion of the Madi and Latuka tribes within Uganda, east of the Nile River, and the Kuku tribe within Uganda, west of the Nile. This proposal would have established a boundary along the Sanga River to the west of the Nile and along the Uma and upper Gomorro Rivers to the east. Notably, this adjustment would have kept Nimule and the navigable stretch of the Nile under Ugandan control. In addition to the boundary advantages highlighted by the Karhoum Governor, Mr. Wingate, the Governor of Uganda, Mr. Jackson, believed that Sudan's occupation of part of the shores of Lake Rudolf (now Lake Turkana) would help prevent the smuggling of large quantities of rifles from Abyssinia. However, Wingate firmly responded to Jackson's proposal, emphasizing that "unless Sudan had access to the navigable stretch of the Nile from Nimule to Lake Albert (which meant possession of Nimule), the territorial transfer would not proceed" (plate number 1/177F, 5th June 1912).

On 17th February 1913, both Tufnell and Kelly convened at Madial/Teretenya to compile their recommendations on the boundary after covering 120 miles out of the 400-mile stretch. Approximately 30% of the Sudan-Uganda border was surveyed by the joint commission, while the remaining 25% was covered by Kelly alone, stretching all the way up to Jabel Mogila, not far from the red line. The boundary commission did not reach Lake Rudolf, which was the final segment of



Karimojong children watch over and interact with their cattle. Throughout Ateker communities cattle are highly valued.

their joint mission. From Jabel Mogila back to Nimule, Kelly felt confident about the boundary line; however, from Mogila to Lake Rudolf/Turkana, he recommended that "this should remain for further consideration when the limits of the Turkana and Toposa grazing grounds are accurately known." Additionally, west of the Nile, the Commission indicated that "their recommendations will require modifications and adjustments on the spot."

On 17th September 1926, at the order of the Secretary of State, a relatively small area of the Tertenya foothills was transferred from Sudan to Uganda to promote tribal unity and to facilitate the control of sleeping sickness. In the same year, the Rudolf (Turkana) province was transferred from Uganda to Kenya, which meant that a large area north of the Turkwell River went to Kenya, while approximately 140 miles of the boundary recommended in 1913 remained as the Sudan-Uganda border. Despite Kelly's warning that the proposed line from Jabel Harogo to Lake Rudolf/Turkana needed further examination of the grazing grounds, two critical mistakes occurred. First, the transfer of Turkana District to Kenya happened before a study of tribal

grazing areas was conducted. Second, the council order inaccurately described the line starting from Jabel Mogila instead of Jabel Harogo, leaving the customary grazing grounds of the Turkana tribe in Uganda. The border remains unchanged at the lake, but the Turkana grazing areas were not identified. Consequently, the Sudan-Uganda boundary is about 270 miles (435 kilometers), while the Sudan-Kenya boundary is 140 miles (225 kilometers) long.

A more realistic make-up of the region is captured by Collins (2004):

British imperial officials had little interest in the "light soil" of Ilemi, mainly using it to further their territorial ambitions through arbitrary map lines. For the wandering Ateker, however, the area's wells and dry season pastures were crucial for survival. The nomadic Turkana live in the heart of Ilemi, moving between Sudan and Uganda. Surrounding them are the Didinga and Toposa from Sudan, who graze their livestock in Ilemi, as well as the Nyangatom from Sudan and Ethiopia, and the Dassanetch from Ethiopia, which had no im-

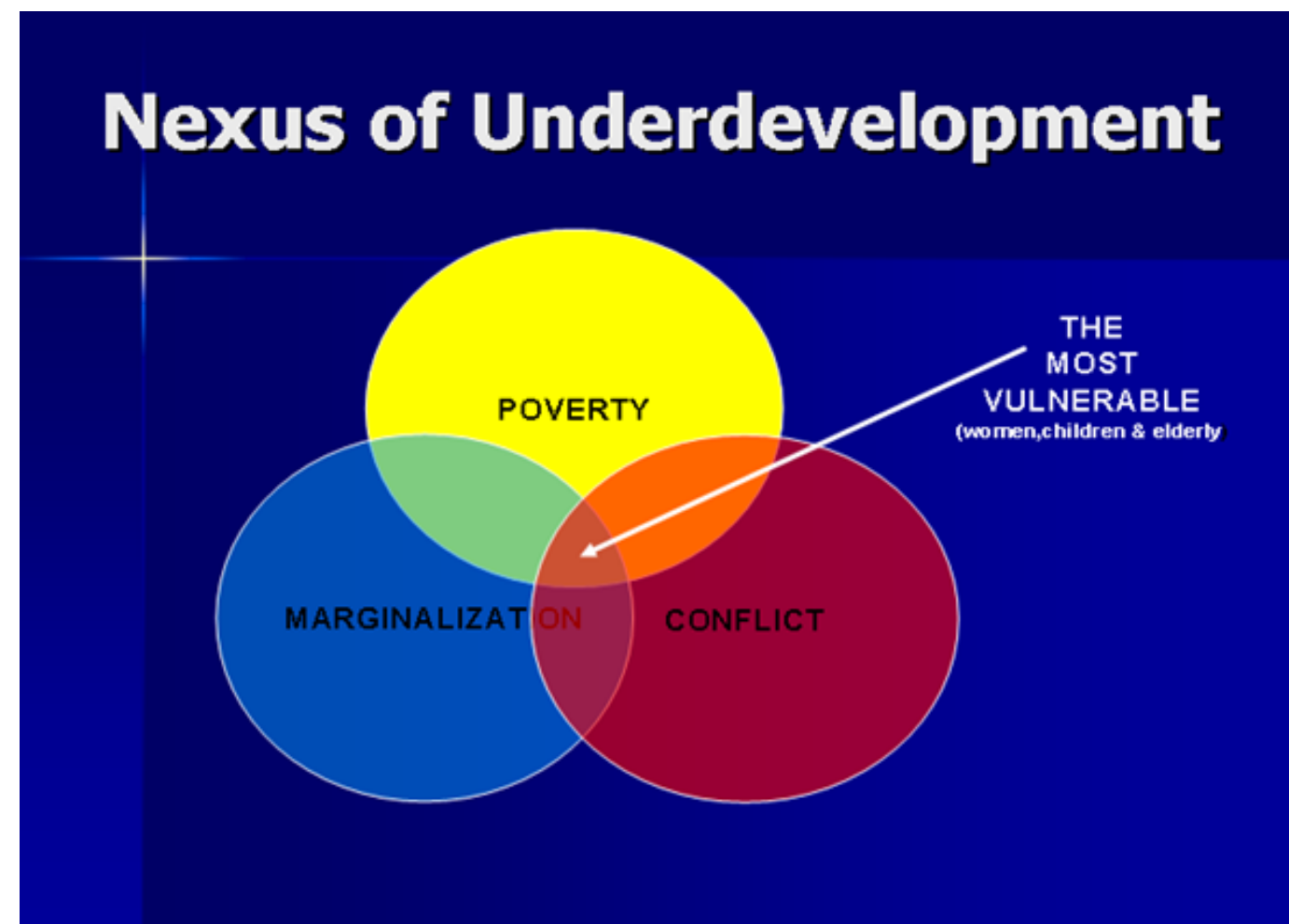
¹³ Collins Robert and Richard Herzag, (1961). Journal of African History Volume 2 No.1, p119-135.

¹⁴ Opcit Lewis p42



The Nexus of Insecurity, Marginalization and Poverty among the Core Ateker Communities:

The Strategic Significance and Opportunities on the Best way forward under the 'Ateker Reunion and Transformation Initiative'.



By Our Correspondent

The Strategic Significance and Opportunities on the Best way forward under the 'Ateker Reunion and Transformation Initiative'. To unpack the nexus, we need to understand the underlying causes of conflicts and its relationship to under-development and poverty among the Core ATEKER communities and its implications for wider regional security and development, (Figure 5).

Figure 5 The interrelationship of insecurity, marginalization and poverty

The Problematic: The Core ATEKER communities, inhabit arid and semi-arid regions of the Horn and East of Africa sub-regions. These areas are usually

where armed pastoralists live and are the most insecure and underdeveloped in each of the nation states. These cross-border communities have in particular had a history of marginalization and poverty. These sub-regions have over the years, become highly prone to conflict, primarily due to resource-based and ethnic identity disputes. The persistent insecurity and lawlessness coupled with the negative role of some customary and local leaders perpetuating these conflicts by sanctioning and blessing organized raids, and destruction of lives and property, constitute a governance and development challenge. These states of affairs have further aggravated proliferation of illicit small arms, extreme poverty, chronic food insecurity, environmental degradation, restricted access to range-land for livestock grazing and contributed to limited access to essential



Warriors carrying rifles, watch over their precious cattle to ward off any potential cattle raiders. In all Ateker lands, guns remain a problem and often cause insecurity. Through Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), various governments in East Africa have attempted disarmament to improve security in these communities

services such as water, education, and healthcare. Furthermore, the chronic insecurity particularly across borders of nation states has pushed the Core Ateker people to the periphery of state governance, with resultant lack infrastructure, such as roads, bulk water storage facilities (Dams and Valley Tanks), telecommunications, and electricity. This has led to inadequate presence of law enforcement agencies, poor service delivery in-terms of education, healthcare, trade and other socioeconomic development. This has led to a vicious cycle of criminality, illiteracy, disease, and poverty that must be tackled.

In the communities of Core ATEKER, two distinct authority structures exist: one guided by customary elders (informal leaders) and the other comprising formal government structures at both local, county and central government levels. The traditional leadership system has shown remarkable resilience and greatly influences governance levels. Engaging these elders constructively and sustainably is crucial in addressing matters of peace and security. While local, county and central government structures are more effective in urban and settlements settings along major roads, but their presence in distant rural villages and kraals in grazing areas, should be more strengthened by establishing a workable early warning and early response mechanism linked to the informal and influential kraal and village leaders.

The traditional institutions, such as councils of elders, mobile kraals (ADAKAR and ALOMAR) leaders, and the cultural age-set system, which historically played a vital role in organizing significant community activities, have evolved to become more passive observers in the current efforts to promote peace and security in much of the Ateker regions. Some of these, play a negative role. It is essential to revitalize and strengthen these customary institutions along the former and current active cattle raiding routes or conflict-corridors. This effort should emphasize collaborative initiatives designed to enhance peace and security through an integrated approach aimed at transforming these conflict-affected zones into spaces for peace, increased productivity, trade, development, and mutual coexistence.

International influences have also notably impacted the challenges faced in the Ateker sub-regions. The legacy of colonialism remains a significant factor in these issues, as colonial powers established boundaries that did not respect the traditional communal range-land management systems critical for nomadic and agro-pastoralists shared heritage. Moreover, arbitrary alienation of pastoral lands for wildlife and forestry conservation, without prior consultations and appropriate arrangements for benefit sharing with local communities, has further limited resource availability for nomadic or Agro-pastoral Ateker groups.

Unfortunately, the lack of established mechanisms and institutional procedures for fostering peaceful coexistence and regulating the sharing of common property resources - such as water, pasture, salt licks, and social services - has increased tensions and criminality as community mobility has intensified. The ongoing challenges of environmental degradation and global climate change menace, contributing to variability in range-land resources, are likely to perpetuate resource-based conflicts. Therefore, the governments of member states are encouraged to lead the way in initiating bilateral agreements such as memorandum of understanding (MoUs) that ensure equitable resource access and orderly, safe and coordinated resources sharing agreements (RSAs), particularly in response to the current drought affecting the Core ATEKER communities.

The thriving trade in small arms across the Greater Horn of Africa, particularly from Sudan into Karamoja-Uganda and Turkana and West Pokot-Kenya, underscores the necessity for enhanced security arrangements by the governments of member states individually or collectively. It is vital for the military and law enforcement teams in member states, along with civilian populations and development partners, to work in harmony to address the interconnected issues

of demand and supply associated with the small arms trade through a comprehensive approach that prioritizes both peace, disarmament and sustainable development.

These different aspects of the nexus have highlighted the ineffective nation state presence, weak governance and ongoing challenges in maintaining security, law, and order among remote border zones of the Core Ateker communities.

In response, several peace initiatives are being implemented at national and decentralized county and local government levels, aiming to foster cooperation between governments, non-government actors and community leaders for peace and stability across international borders. In addition, present and future government policies and programs still need to establish functional government authority, particularly along cross-border areas of member states.

Recognizing that sustainable peace and security cannot exist without development and vice versa, the ATEKER people and their leaders should positively collaborate with central, local/and or county governments, civil society organizations, private sector actors, and development partners.



Maj. John Logiel shares biscuits with locals in Karamoja. Through Civil-Military Cooperation (CIMIC), the UPDF is engaging Ateker communities to promote peace