Comparative District Conflict and Security Assessment Report for Las Anod District 2013/2015
Introduction

Since its establishment in 2009 the Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention\(^1\) (OCVP) has worked with local and international stakeholders to measure and evaluate progress in peace-building and state-building in all regions of Somaliland and Somalia. In an effort aimed at supporting evidence-led policy formulation and programming, the OCVP regularly undertakes district level data collection efforts for research publications. The District Conflict and Security Assessment (DCSA) Reports are OCVP’s flagship publications.

The DCSA is designed to serve as a tool to regularly gather and analyse community perceptions on the providers and delivery of services related to security, justice and governance; as well as examining the drivers of local conflict in the district. These types of regular assessments are critical, not only to the development and implementation of new evidence-based programmes and sound policies, but also in providing an important tool for the continued monitoring and evaluation of the relative success or failure of existing efforts at the district level.

While the continual assessment of issues regarding justice, governance and security is critical for the formulation of sound policies and interventions - equally important is the generation of data that compares year-over-year trends in order to shed light on what may be working, and what may not be working, in a particular target district. Through the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for Somalia and later the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID) as well, the OCVP was able to conduct district level assessments in Las Anod District during the years of 2013 (wave 1) and 2015 (wave 2). The purpose of this report is to compare key results of the assessments conducted during the two periods.

District Profile

Las Anod is the regional capital of the disputed region of Sool, between Somaliland and Puntland. As early as the late 19th century, the area was the setting for an anti-colonial struggle known as the Dervish resistance. On 15\(^{th}\) October 1969, Las Anod was thrust into the limelight when the then president of Somalia, President Abdirashid Ali Shermarke was shot dead by one of his own bodyguards while on a visit to the town. On 21\(^{st}\) October 1969, a day after the funeral, Major General Siad Barre led a military coup d’état and took control of the country without experiencing any opposition. In the 1970s and 1980s, Siad Barre’s divide-and-rule policy revived intra- and inter-clan tensions. In 1991, the region was incorporated into the new state of Somaliland, but Puntland took over stewardship of the area from 2002 to 2007. Deteriorating security led allegiances to shift once again, however, and Somaliland regained control of the area in 2007. In 2009, the Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) militia was created, which was a precursor to the declaration of Khatumo State of Somalia in 2012. The Khatumo State also claims Las Anod as part of its territory and declared it the administrative capital in August 2014 although it has not managed to wrest control from Somaliland.

Methodology and Possible Limitations

The wave 1 and wave 2 assessments for Las Anod were conducted in 2013 and 2015 respectively. The two assessments employed a mixed method research approach that included both quantitative (household surveys) and qualitative (focus group discussions and key informant interviews) means to

\(^1\) Website: [www.ocvp.org](http://www.ocvp.org)
collect public perception on the state of security, justice, governance as well as general stability of the
district. However, it should be noted that the wave 2 assessment was carried out with the additional
use of a number of improved research tools and techniques that included:

a) Use of a sampling formula to determine a representative sample size for the district in the
2015 Assessment; hence, a total of 160 respondents were surveyed. During the research
activity for the 2013 report, no such scientific sampling formula was employed. Instead, the
research team randomly surveyed 80 respondents.

b) Updated questionnaires that avoided some of the ambiguity and vague questions that were
identified in the 2013 assessment were used in the 2015 research activities.

c) Improved research questions – for both qualitative and quantitative data - were reworked to
better complement each other and generate in-depth information on the topic; something
that was not the case with the 2013 research questions.

d) Smart-phones with mobile data collection software developed by Open Data Kit (ODK) were
used by the enumerators to administer the 2015 survey, while in 2013 conventional paper
and pen quantitative data collection methods were employed.

In addition, in the time between the wave 1 and wave 2 assessment, a rezoning exercise had been
undertaken by the District Council in Las Anod. As a result, during wave 2, five subdivisions (Daami-
Waaberi, Farha-Sukule, Jaamalaaye, Sabo-Sayid and Sha’abka) fell within the major urban settlement
of the district covered by the scope of the assessment. In the initial assessment, there had been four
subdivisions, namely, Jaamalaaye, Maandaremin, Samalaye, and Sha’abka.

While these changes resulted in an improvement in the quality of the data collected, it is essential to
recognise that they are likely to have had an adverse impact on the ability and confidence with which
one can compare the two datasets. With this in mind, the data obtained in the two assessments can
provide some indication of potential changing trends in the areas covered.

**Survey Participants**

The wave 1 assessment comprised a sample of 80 respondents, while the wave 2 assessment
comprised a larger sample of 160 respondents for the household survey. The following presents an
overview of the demographic profile of respondents for each assessment.

- Gender

With respect to the gender of the household survey respondents, while in wave 1 a larger proportion
of those interviewed had been female (60%: female vs. 40% male), in wave 2 the proportions were
more balanced at 53%: female vs. 48%: male. See figure 1 and Table 1.
Almost one-third of the respondents in wave 1 (31%) did not give a definitive response regarding their age, thereby adversely impacting the reported distribution of respondents across the various age categories as well as the usefulness of comparison with the wave 2 distribution. However, the findings indicate that the 20 – 29 year age group, followed by the 30 – 39 year age group, constituted the largest age cohort during both assessments (Fig. 2).

### Marital Status

Those who reported to be married represented the majority of the respondents in both waves with a slight decrease in their proportion between wave 1 (73%) and wave 2 (63%). Those reporting that they were single also remained the second largest category, with just a 3 percentage point increase from wave 1 (29%) to wave 2 (32%). While in wave 1 there were no respondents stating that they were either divorced or widowed, in wave 2 those categories were represented, albeit by small proportions (divorced: 4% and widowed: 1%). See figure 3.

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**Table 1: Number of participants by gender**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ gender</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
<th>Wave 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td>32</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
<td>48</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>160</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 3: Respondents' marital status

Wave 1, 71%
Wave 2, 63%

- Single: 4%
- Married: 92%
- Divorced: 1%
- Widowed: 1%

- Single
- Married
- Divorced
- Widowed
Perceived Performance of Security, Justice and Governance Providers

The two District Conflict and Security Assessments sought to record community perceptions of the deployment, performance, preference and perception of both formal and informal providers of security, justice, and governance, such as the police, courts, local government authorities, community elders and religious authorities. The assessments also sought to investigate respondents’ experience with local conflict and their perception of safety within their communities.

Governance Providers

The Las-Anod local government provides a variety of services, including sanitation, the maintenance of infrastructure, education, justice, water, health, security, town planning and agriculture. During both waves, the expectation of the general public for the delivery of such services has remained, even though financial constraints limited their service delivery capabilities.

Participation in Local Government Consultations

Participation in local council meetings was limited and similar between the two waves (wave 1: 6% and wave 2: 8%). During the wave 2 assessment, the Mayor was positive towards the public’s views being represented during local government consultations:

*At times these [consultations] are carried out or done through the use of committees on behalf of the local community. The other means is through a group of elders representing the community. Everywhere throughout the district, a group of elders make decisions or participate in terms of security provision or matters and on developmental aspects as well. These elders have offices where these consultations take place.*

Figure 4: Participation in local government consultations

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² Mayor, Key Informant Interview, 10th June 2015
Opinions Regarding the Importance of Elected Local Officials

Respondents’ agreement regarding the importance of elected representatives increased from wave 1 (36%) to wave 2 (66). However, according to Women’s FGD participants from wave 2, there appeared to be dissatisfaction regarding the level of involvement of the public in the election of the local council:

The government has never involved any of us especially the local community in any elections, we just hear that so and so was elected. If however we were given the chance to elect between two persons, we would definitely elect the only one who would deliver or provide services to us. Given the chance to elect we would prefer say the current Mayor for he has done a few things like to demolish some houses constructed on road reserves and helped to create roads.

Figure 5: Opinion regarding the importance of elected representatives

![Opinion regarding the importance of elected representatives](image)

Issues Facing the Community

When asked to state the main issues facing the community, drought and lack of water (especially clean drinking water) was identified as the main challenges during both assessments. However, in wave 2, matters related to infrastructure, unemployment and poor sanitation became the three leading areas of concern. Nepotism, particularly surrounding access to equal job opportunities, was mentioned in the wave 2 FGD discussions, whereby candidates known by or related to hiring managers were offered vacancies: “Some of the ministry vacancies are given to the relatives of ministry officials without even taking exams and they sometimes receive salary while they are in Hargeisa.”

Poor health remained one of the main concerns and was frequently mentioned by discussants in both assessments, in particular when it comes to lack of Maternity Health Units and adequate qualified medical personnel.

Furthermore, during both waves there were mentions of political instability in Las Anod, mainly due to the territorial contest between Somaliland, Puntland and more recently Khatumo state. Allegiance to these three entities was causing division within the community and was also perceived as a pressing need in the community. Members of the Women’s group discussions pointed to the top down political management of Sool region and offered their own suggestions that involved greater autonomy:

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3 Governance Providers, Focus Group Discussions, 7th June 2015
We are not opposing Somaliland but what we want is a government that is entrusted with the resources, one we can bring or call to account for the resources in other words transparency to be created but not the way things or affairs are currently being operated or run. What we are rejecting is autocratic kind of leadership, one using force.⁴

### Justice Providers

As with all other Somali regions, justice provision in Las Anod is characterised by the presence of both formal and informal actors. The formal justice system operates alongside an informal justice system built upon Somali inter-clan customary law (Xeer) and Shari’ah law.

- **Awareness of the Court**

Awareness of the presence of a functioning court in the district has increased notably from wave 1 (66%) to wave 2 (94%). This was accompanied by a decrease in the proportion of respondents who stated that a functioning court did not exist in the district, dropping from 31% in wave 1 to a marginal 4% in wave 2. The court in Las Anod had three levels – the district court, regional court and court of appeal.

**Figure 6: Respondents’ awareness of the existence of courts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave 2</th>
<th>Wave 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Number of Courts**

Despite the increased awareness of the court in wave 2, few respondents had knowledge of the actual number of courts in the area. The majority of respondents during both assessments believed that there was one court in the district, as indicated by 53% of respondents in wave 1 and later, 68% in wave 2. Only similar proportions of 6% of respondents in wave 1 and 5% of respondents in wave 2 correctly stated that there were three courts in the district. Figure 7 illustrates the responses that were given when respondents were asked to state the number of courts in the area.

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⁴ *Las Anod Women, Focus Group Discussion, 6th June 2015*
Use of Justice Providers

The reported usage of justice providers was higher at the time of the wave 1 assessment. Religious Leaders was the entity that was most utilised by respondents for matters of justice during the year leading up to the wave 1 assessment (8%), followed by traditional elders (6%). The court had been utilised by 3% of respondents during this period. However, unlike the use of court(s), which remained constant at 3%, use of the other two entities declined in wave 2, in which 1% of respondents stated that they had utilised religious leaders and 3% stated that they had utilised the traditional elders for matters of justice during the corresponding reference period.

Similar issues had been referred to each justice provider by respondents who had utilised their services in both assessments. In wave 1, the mentioned issues were land disputes, and robbery. These issues were also mentioned in wave 2 along with youth violence, assault, and matters relating to household violence.

Confidence in the Formal Justice System

There was an increase in respondents’ trust in the court relative to other providers, there was also an overall increase in the proportion of respondents who indicated that they were very confident or fairly confident in the formal justice system. Approximately 84% of respondents stated that they were very confident or fairly confident in the formal justice system during the wave 2 assessment compared with
65% in the previous assessment. Furthermore, the proportion of respondents who stated outright that they were not confident in the formal justice system decreased from 31% in wave to 17% in wave 2. During the wave 2 assessment, the Court of Appeal Commissioner informed OCVP researchers during a key informant interview that the improved confidence in the formal justice system could be attributed to an increased level of interaction with the informal justice sector, particularly traditional elders; a cessation of attacks against judicial officers that had occurred in the past; as well as the sensitisation of the community to the importance of the formal justice system.\(^5\)

Figure 9: Confidence in the formal justice system

![Confidence in the formal justice system](image)

**Security Providers**

There are three police stations in Las Anod\(^6\) as well as several police outposts in the peri-urban parts of the district. In addition to the police, the Somaliland army was also said to be an active security provider in the district during both reporting periods, primarily as a deterrent to the secessionist elements posed by Khatumo state activists.\(^7\) Furthermore, in the second wave of the assessment, the District Commissioner, the Mayor and the Local Council as well as the Governor were said to collaborate with the Police in the provision of security in the district.\(^8\)

- **Awareness of the Police**

Awareness of the existence of the police increased from wave 1 were close to two thirds (65%) of the household respondents had indicated that they were aware of the police to wave 2 where the totality (100%) of the household survey respondents were aware of police presence (Fig. 10).

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\(^5\) Court of Appeal Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 9\(^{th}\) June 2015  
\(^6\) Las Anod District Police Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 9\(^{th}\) June 2015  
\(^7\) Las Anod Religious Leader, Key Informant Interview, 10\(^{th}\) March 2013 and Las Anod Justice Providers, Focus Group Discussion, 8\(^{th}\) June 2015  
\(^8\) Las Anod District Police Commissioner, 2015, Op cit.
Despite the increase in awareness of police presence in the 2015 assessment compared with the 2013 assessment, it was felt that the number of police officers and stations present was insufficient in proportion to the size and population of the district. The Police Commissioner in a key interview surmised for instance:

No; we do not have enough stations. The district is very large, the mountains are hiding its actual size from view, but the city needs more stations. Currently there are three police stations in the city but in reality we need a minimum of five stations.\(^9\)

One of the participants in and FGD with the youth in the 2015 assessment also opined that the lack of sufficient stations hindered accessibility for some residents:

I can conclude that given the police and their needs, the police stations are not enough, the distance between the stations and people are far.\(^{10}\)

- Preference for Reporting of Civil Matters, Petty Crimes and Serious Crimes

In both waves, the police were identified by a majority of the household survey respondents as the entity to which they would prefer to report in the event of civil disputes, petty crime and serious crime. However, there were changing trends with regard to the proportions declaring preference for a particular service provider.

In the discussions during the wave 2 assessment, it was severally pointed out that a number of factors influenced the choice of security providers, among them being the rate of response of the particular provider in question, the likelihood of unbiased enforcement, the respect accorded to the providers in the community and the nature of the matter at hand.\(^{11}\)

- Civil Matters

In the event of an incident involving a civil matter, the proportion of respondents stating that they would prefer to report to the police increased from 26% in wave 1 to 51% in wave 2. The proportion of respondents stating that they would prefer to report to the local authority also increased, rising

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9 Las Anod District Police Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 9\(^{th}\) June 2015
10 Las Anod Youth, Focus Group Discussion, 6\(^{th}\) June 2015
11 Las Anod Youth, Focus Group Discussion, 6\(^{th}\) June 2015 and Las Anod Justice Providers, Focus Group Discussion, 8\(^{th}\) June 2015
from 10% in wave 1 to 23% in wave 2, as did the portion of respondents stating that they would report to a religious leader, which went from 1% in wave 1 to 6% in wave 2. Whereas respondents naming the court as the preferred entity for reporting civil matters had made up 26% of the sample in wave 1, they only made up 14% in wave two. There was also a notable decline in the portion of respondents who stated that they preferred to report civil matters to traditional elders (23%: wave 1 to 6%: wave 2).

Figure 11: Reporting preference for civil matters

When asked to state which of the security providers they would prefer to report an incident involving a petty crime to, the majority of the household survey respondents in both wave 1 and wave 2 mentioned the police, with the proportion increasing from 50% to 59% over the period between the waves. There was also a notable increase in the proportions stating that they would report to the court (4%: wave 1 to 16%: wave 2) and the local authority (4%: wave 1 to 13% wave 2). On the other hand, the portions of respondents indicating that they would report petty crimes to traditional elders or religious leaders decreased from 13% each in the wave 1 assessment to 6% and 5% respectively during wave 2.
Serious Crimes

With regard to reporting preference in the event of a serious crime, although the police remained the most mentioned provider in wave 2, there was a decrease in the proportion of respondents mentioning them from 73% in wave 1 to 56% in wave 2. Of note, there was an increase in the portion mentioning the court to 26% in wave 2, up from 6% in wave 1.

Level of Trust in the Police

Overall, there was an increase in the popularity of the police as noted by the increase in the proportions of the household respondents indicating that they had either very high or fairly high levels of trust in the police with regard to their response to crime and violence within the district, rising from 38% in the first wave to 42% in wave 2. There was also a slight drop in the proportion of respondents indicating low levels of trust in the police, going from 61% in wave 1 to 59% in the latter assessment.
Challenges facing the police

In both assessments the low capacity of police training was pointed out as a major challenge to their effective performance. During wave 1 in 2013, religious leaders and traditional elders in a focus group discussion were of the opinion that the capacity of the police ought to be increased, both in terms of their number and the level of training they had. They also felt that the communication and transport facilities of the police ought to be enhanced. At the time of the second assessment in 2015, the police commissioner informed the OCVP researchers that in addition, there was a need to increase the number of police stations so as to effectively serve the district.

Dynamics of Conflict and Violence

While conflict between clans or groups in Las Anod was not observed to be very prevalent in either of the waves, residents nevertheless spoke of a common sense of insecurity owing to the district’s peculiar geopolitical circumstances. The presence of groups, such as Khaatumo state activists and sympathisers of the Puntland government, which are not allied to the Somaliland government coupled with the past targeted killings of Somaliland government officials were said to be the main drivers of fear among residents. In addition, the presence of the military, sent in by the government of Somaliland to support the police, had also led to mixed feelings among residents, with some, particularly in the first wave, feeling that the escalation of military presence contributed to tension in the district. Where conflict occurred between civilians, this was mostly attributed to land disputes during the first wave and youth skirmishes at the time of the second assessment. Competition over scarce employment opportunities in the face of high levels of unemployment in the district was also mentioned as a cause of conflict in the first wave of the assessment in Las Anod.

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12 Las Anod District Police Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 9th June 2015 and Las Anod religious leaders and traditional elders, Focus Group Discussion, 10th March 2013
13 Las Anod religious leaders and traditional elders, 2013, ibid
14 Las Anod District Police Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 9th June 2015
15 Las Anod Youth, Focus Group Discussion, 11th March 2013
16 Participants in the FGD with religious leaders and traditional elders during wave 1 claimed that the expansion of the military into areas it had not controlled before, allegedly without consulting the local population, might lead to the local community’s increased dissatisfaction.
17 Las Anod Women, Focus Group Discussion, 10th March 2013
Experience with Conflict

In the household survey, the portion of respondents who reported that they had actually witnessed conflict between clans or groups in the 12 months preceding the assessment dropped slightly from 9% in the wave 1 assessment to 6% in the second assessment.

Figure 15: Account of witnessing conflict between clans or groups (last 12 months)

Reasons for Conflicts that were Observed

During the 2013 assessment the most commonly stated reason for the conflicts that the respondents reported having witnessed was family disputes, with competition over resources, primarily land, and power/cultural struggles also being prevalently pointed out. In the second assessment, however, the most predominantly mentioned cause was youth violence, with power/cultural struggles and resource-based disputes being the only other causes mentioned.

Experience with Crime and Violence

In a similar vein, there was a notable decline in the proportion of respondents stating that they had witnessed a crime or violence against someone outside their own homestead in the 12 months preceding the assessment. Whereas in wave 1, 16% of the household survey respondents had stated that they had witnessed an incident of crime or violence against someone outside their homestead, in wave 2 the proportion dropped to 4%.

Figure 16: Account of witnessing crime or violence (last 12 months)
Perception of Safety

A positive trend was notable in the perception of the residents of Las Anod with regard to the levels of safety. To wit, the portion of respondents reporting that they felt very safe in their community rose to an outright majority of almost three quarters (73%) of the sample, up from 16% in the previous assessment. An additional 17% reported that they felt fairly safe, up from the 15% that had held the same view in wave 1, bringing the portion of respondents that held positive views about safety in the district up to 90%, compared with 31% in wave 1.

Figure 17: Perception of safety
Conclusion

A comparative analysis of the results of the District Conflict and Security Assessments is useful in helping to understand the direction of community perception in relation to the thematic areas of study, namely governance; security; justice; conflict and violence. With due consideration afforded to the methodological challenges in comparing the two waves of DCSCAs for Las Anod (wave 1: 2013 and wave 2: 2015) owing to the changes to data collection tools, the information presented in this report provides an indication of potential changing trends in the issues covered in the two assessments.

There was an overall decrease in the incidence of conflict between groups as well as crime and violence between the two assessments. Where conflict had been observed, there was a change in the nature of the cause, with youth violence replacing family disputes as the most mentioned cause of the conflict in wave 2, although land disputes and power/cultural struggles appeared as the second most prevalent causes in both waves. Despite the lessened occurrence of conflict, residents still expressed a general sense of insecurity owing to the peculiar geopolitical circumstances of the district, where competing interests between the governments of Somaliland and Puntland as well as the secessionist Khatumo State contributed to instability in the political and security arena.

The rift created by these competing interests was in fact mentioned as one of the community’s most pressing concerns during the second wave of the assessment, with the indication that residents felt that it was important to have clear, consistent and accountable national level leadership. With regard to the local governance of the district, participation in local governance consultations remained low between the two waves but the belief in the importance of having elected representatives at the district level increased substantially in wave 2. However, there was also some dissatisfaction among some residents, particularly the women, with regard to their involvement in the election process for members of the local council. Other pressing issues that were mentioned included drought and lack of clean drinking water during the wave 1 assessment and infrastructure, poor sanitation and lack of employment during the wave 2 assessment. Furthermore, there were claims of nepotism in the award of employment opportunities within government ministries.

With regard to the provision of security, the awareness of the police presence within Las Anod increased to 100% in the wave 2 assessment up from about two thirds in the first assessment. However, in both waves, the residents felt that neither the number of police officers deployed in the district nor the number of existent police stations was sufficient relative to the size and population of the district. Nonetheless, the attitude towards the legitimacy of the police as security providers appeared to have remained positive as they were consistently most frequently mentioned in the household surveys as the entity to which respondents would prefer to report matters involving civil disputes, petty offences or serious crimes. There was also an increase in the level of trust attributed to the police across the two reporting periods.

As for the provision of justice, there was a notable increase in the awareness of the existence of functioning courts in the district, of which there were three levels: the District Court, the Regional Court and the Court of Appeal. Most respondents however still believed that there was only one court. The reported usage of any of the justice providers decreased between the two waves. Whereas in the wave 1 assessment the informal justice providers (traditional elders and religious leaders) had more reported usage than the formal court, in the wave 2 assessment, the court and the traditional elders
had been used more than the religious leaders. There was also an increase in the level of confidence accorded to the formal justice system as a whole.