Comparative District Conflict and Security Assessment Report For Erigavo 2013/2015
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Introduction

Since its establishment in 2009 the Observatory of Conflict and Violence Prevention\textsuperscript{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, in fact, 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 therefore 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 Erigavo 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

Erigavo (Ceerigaabo in Somali) is situated in northern Sanaag, the largest region in Somaliland. The city’s population is made up of members mainly from the Isaaq sub clans: Habar Yonis and Habar Jeclo, and the Harti-Darood sub clans: Warsangeli and Dhulbahante. The heterogeneous clan composition has made the city notorious for clan undercurrents arising from its vulnerability to clan-based disputes.

The district lies approximately 60km from the olden city of Maydh and is home to a variety of flora and fauna due to its semi-arid climate. Along with the Daallo Mountain, Erigavo serves as a popular tourist attraction. Because of the high altitude, temperatures remain pleasant throughout the year and normally remain under 30 degrees Celsius.

Erigavo is a Grade A District and therefore has a local government which comprises of 21 local councillors, led by a Mayor. The district offers higher learning through the East African University (EAU) and the Sanaag University. There are also two hospitals available to the public.

\textsuperscript{1} Website: www.ocvp.org
Methodology and Possible Limitations

The Wave 1 and Wave 2 District Conflict and Security Assessments for Erigavo were conducted in 2013 and 2015 respectively. Both Assessments employed a mixed method research approach that included both quantitative (household survey) and qualitative (focus group discussions and key informant interviews) means to collect public perception on the state of security, justice, governance as well as general stability of the district. However, it is worth mentioning that the 2015 assessment was carried out with the 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 154 respondents were randomly surveyed. During the research activity for the 2013 report, no such 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 to the changes outlined above, there were also changes to the administrative divisions for the district between the two assessments. The Wave 1 assessment covered four subdivisions, namely: Daallo, Dayacan, Kulmiye, and Xaafad Soomal. However, Dayacan was not represented in the Wave 2 assessment, which covered six subdivisions: Barwaqo, Daallo, Kulmiye, October, Sha’abka, and Xaafad Soomal.

While these changes may have 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 however, the data provided from 2013 and 2015 can provide some indication of potential changing trends in the areas covered.

Survey Participants

The Wave 1 assessment included of a sample of 80 respondents, while the Wave 2 assessment included a sample of 154 respondents for the respective household surveys. The following presents an overview of the demographic profile of respondents for each assessment.

- Gender

With respect to gender, a greater proportion of female respondents were interviewed in both assessments, with females representing 61% and 57% of respondents in Wave 1 and Wave 2 respectively, compared with 39% males in Wave 1 and 43% males in Wave 2. See figure 1 and Table 1.
Age

There were notable variations in the age distribution of respondents in the Wave 1 and Wave 2 assessments. While respondents in their thirties (30 – 39 years) constituted the largest grouping in both assessments, this cohort accounted for a slight majority of respondents in Wave 1 (51%) compared with 29% of the sample in Wave 2. During Wave 2, there was also a relative increase in the proportion of respondents in each of the other age categories up to 50 years. In contrast, there was a decline in the proportion of respondents who were 50 years and older (Wave 1: 25% vs. Wave 2: 16%). Figure 2 illustrates the age distribution of respondents in the Wave 1 and Wave 2 assessments.

Marital Status

The majority of respondents in both assessments reported that they were married despite a decrease in the proportion of married respondents in Wave 2 (72% compared with 81% in Wave 1). Correspondingly, there was an increase in the proportion of single respondents in Wave 2, in which this proportion doubled to 22% from 11% in Wave 1. Divorced and widowed participants each made up 3% of the respective samples. (Fig. 3.)
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.

Security

The Police is the main provider of security services in the district of Erigavo. They are assisted in carrying out this role by informal entities, including traditional elders and religious leaders, as well as other community members through established village security committees. At the time of the Wave 1 assessment, there were two police stations in the district – the Central Police Station (located in the Sha’abka area) and the Daalo Police Station. During this period, survey participants expressed concerns about the number and quality of police officers in the district. The Police Commander also suggested that two police stations were insufficient given the needs of the local population and proposed the need for a third police station in the east of Erigavo. However, there had been no increase in the number of police stations by the time of the Wave 2 assessment, during which some participants, including the Police Commissioner, reiterated that the number of police stations was inadequate. Nevertheless, few respondents were of the opinion that, with the exception of a few minor issues, the police was currently able to meet the needs of the local population:
The police officers in town can effectively provide the needed security services, and there are no serious security breaches in our district. Things are always smooth in the security department. However, there are sometimes minor issues.2

In terms of accessibility, close to one-half of respondents (49%) estimated that they were able to walk to the closet police station from their homes in less than twenty minutes. However, there was notable variation in respondents’ proximity to a police station based on their location within the district. For example, respondents in the Daallo subdivision appeared to be closest to a police station, with the majority of respondents in that subdivision (83%) indicating that they were able to walk to the closest police station within 20 minutes. On the contrary, none of the respondents in the Xaafad subdivision reported being able to walk to the closest police station in a similar period.

- Awareness of the Police

All the respondents in the Wave 2 assessment acknowledged the presence of the police in Erigavo, resulting in an increase in awareness when compared with Wave 1, during which approximately three in ten respondents (31%) stated that the police were not present in the district. Most respondents (72%) were also aware that there were two police stations in the district. See Figure 4.

![Figure 4: Awareness of the police presence](image)

- Reporting Preference: Security Matters

Respondents in the household survey generally indicated a preference for reporting various security matters to the police. During Wave 2, the police was consistently identified as the most popular choice for reporting of civil matters, petty and serious crimes. Although the police had also been identified as the preferred entity to which respondents would prefer to report petty and serious crimes during Wave 1, results from the Wave 2 assessment saw the police surpassing the Local Authority as the leading choice for reporting of civil matters.

Overall, the majority of respondents in the Wave 2 assessment (84%) named the police as the security provider that they trust most for responding to crime and violence. When asked to state reasons that influenced their choice, fast response was most frequently cited (82%). Household survey respondents in Wave 1 were not asked to identify their most trusted security provider. However, discussants in both assessments argued that the absence of trust in the police and justice system

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2 Women, Focus Group Discussion, 30th May 2015
sometimes prompted people in the district to bypass the police, whereas others commended the work of the police in the area.³

**Civil Matters**

Respondents steadily indicated a clear preference for reporting civil matters to formal institutions, namely the police, the Local Authority and the courts. The popularity of the police in this regard soared during Wave 2, as indicated by more than three-quarters of respondents (78%) who stated that they would prefer to report civil matters to the police, up from one-quarter (25%) of respondents in Wave 1. However, there was a decrease in the proportion of respondents who stated that they would prefer to report such matters to the Local Authority (Wave 1: 44%; Wave 2: 18%) or the Court (Wave 1: 14%; Wave 2: 2%). Informal security providers saw an even greater decline in respondents’ indication of their willingness to report civil matters to them. Only 2% of respondents stated that they would report a civil matter to a traditional elder and none opted to report to a religious leader during Wave 2, compared with 15% and 3% respectively in Wave 1. Figure 5 illustrates.

**Figure 5: Reporting preference for civil matters**

**Petty Crimes**

With respect to petty crimes, a clear majority in both assessments (Wave 1: 82%; Wave 2: 91%) indicated that they would opt to report these types of incidents to the police. The Local Authority was also mentioned as a possible option, but by only 2% of respondents in Wave 2, down from 5% in Wave 1, whereas the Court, which had not been mentioned in Wave 1, was regarded the entity to which 4% of respondents would prefer to incidents of petty crime. The traditional elder was the only informal provider that was mentioned during both assessments. However, while 13% noted that they would opt to report such matters to the elders in Wave 1, this proportion was reduced to only 3% at the time of the Wave 2 assessment. See Figure 6.

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Serious Crimes

The vast majority of respondents in Wave 1 and in Wave 2 – 96% and 91% respectively - stated that they would opt to report serious crimes to the police. None of the respondents mentioned the court during Wave 2, despite its mention in Wave 1, albeit by only a small portion of the sample (3%). However, the Local Authority and Traditional Elders emerged among respondents’ choices in Wave 2, with 2% and 7% of respondents respectively stating that they would prefer to report serious crimes to these entities. See Figure 7.

Figure 7: Reporting preference for serious crimes

- Challenges facing the police

Participants in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews in both assessments identified a number of factors which they regarded as challenges facing the police in their day to day operations.
Familiarity with the residents

Many of the members of the police force had been serving in their positions for some time. This was considered to present both advantages and disadvantages. During Wave 1, the Police Commissioner pointed out that there were officers who had been in the district for the last twenty years, yet many lacked the capacity to perform their jobs effectively. Participants in the Wave 2 assessment expressed similar opinions. In particular, it was felt that the familiarity with the residents, including clan relations, sometimes resulted in biases which influenced the police response. This was said to be one of the factors that sometimes resulted in issues being reported to other entities, such as the traditional elders, instead of the police. Traditional leaders felt that there was a need to change the way in which the police operate by bringing in police who were less familiar with the community:

...bring other ones [police] who do not know this community, also who are not part of these clans, because he [police] would not know either of the two sides and he will therefore not choose a side.

The Police Commissioner, however, did not share this perspective and, citing what he perceived to be some of the pros and cons of having officers who were familiar with the district, he proposed that the ideal situation would be to have a combination of officers who had been there for some time as well as new ones:

It is true that policemen in Erigavo are not often replaced with new faces, but that does not necessarily have a negative impact on their performance. This case is quite relative and in some cases, knowing the community members helps policemen to identify and effectively extract information from the community members, while it can have a negative impact on them in terms of developing unnecessary friendships which hinder their activities. To me, it is a mix of old faces with new ones that ensures effective police performance.

Clan Affiliation

It was also felt that clan affiliation impacted the work of the police force. Few participants in the Wave 1 assessment raised concerns about the representation of different clans among members of the police force. They contended that the police was dominated by the Isaaq clan who often did not have trust in members from the Hart/Darood clan, who they regarded as tribal policemen. In seeking to defend this perceived imbalance, the Police Commissioner argued that this was because members from the Darood clan often deflected from the police. Nevertheless, the issue was later raised in the Wave 2 assessment. It was felt that the way the police carried out their roles was influenced by their clan affiliation, and consequently, this was another factor which resulted in greater reliance on the traditional elders to resolve certain issues.

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6 Erigavo District Conflict and Security Assessment (Hargeisa: OCVP, 2013), 33.
5 Traditional Elders and Religious Leaders, Focus Group Discussion, 31st May 2015
6 Ibid
7 Police Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 2nd June 2015
8 Erigavo District Conflict and Security Assessment (Hargeisa: OCVP, 2013), 32.
9 Ibid, 32.
10 Traditional Elders and Religious Leaders op.
o Meagre salaries

In addition to the alleged impact of the police’s familiarity with the residents on their performance, traditional leaders in Wave 2 posited that the meagre salary which the police received was a likely contributor to corruption and delayed response. They stated that the police would sometimes ask for money when their services were requested and then delay their response or refuse to respond altogether if they were not paid.\(^\text{11}\) The youth appeared to share this opinion as they attempting to justify the action of the police with respect to the request for payment: “The reason that the police do not respond unless you pay them is that they do not get enough salary.”\(^\text{12}\) These allegations were not supported by the Justice Providers, who stated in their focus group discussion, that the police always responded. They added that the response was especially fast if the case was known to be serious.\(^\text{13}\)

o Insufficient manpower

The matter of insufficient manpower was highlighted as one of the factors with the potential to impact the police response during both assessments. At the time of the Wave 2 assessment, the Police Commissioner noted that the limited manpower could hamper a swift police response given the large geographical area. The distance that the police had to cover was estimated to be up to 230 km and it proved difficult for the police to arrive at distant places within a reasonable time, particularly in light of limited resources.\(^\text{14}\)

o Other Challenges

The limited capacity of the police, which was cited as an issue during the Wave 1 assessment, was again mentioned as an area of concern during Wave 2. It was noted that the police lacked proper processes to support their work. An example of this was poor record keeping. According to the Police Commissioner, the police stations held no records of suspects who had been booked at the station.

- Level of Trust in the Police

Overall, despite its challenges, respondents consistently indicated favourable levels of trust in the police during both periods. There was a slight decline in the proportion of respondents who indicated that they had fairly high or very high levels of trust in the police, with 74% of respondents indicating this level of trust in Wave 2 compared with 78% in Wave 1. Nevertheless, there appeared to have been an overall increase in respondents’ level of trust in the police as the majority of respondents (57%) stated that they had a very high level of trust in the police, increasing from less than one-quarter (23%) who indicated a similar level of trust in Wave 1. However, it is also noteworthy that 21% of respondents in Wave 1 and 24% in Wave 2 indicated low levels of trust. Figure 8 illustrates

\(^{11}\) Traditional Elders and Religious Leaders, Focus Group Discussion, 31st May 2015
\(^{12}\) Youth, Focus Group Discussion, 30th May 2015
\(^{13}\) Justice Providers, Focus Group Discussion, 1st June 2015
\(^{14}\) Police Commissioner, Key Informant Interview, 2nd June 2015
As capital of the Sanaag region, a district court, a regional court, and a court of appeal were present in Erigavo. However, as is customary in Somaliland, elders and religious leaders (informal justice providers) also played a complementary role in justice provision. There were no registered Shari’ah Offices in the district.

### Awareness of the Court

Nearly all the respondents in the Erigavo household surveys acknowledged the presence of a functioning court in the district during both assessments (Wave 1: 98%; Wave 2: 99%). (Figure 9). More recently, during the Wave 2 assessment, the majority of the respondents (94%) who stated that they were aware of the location of the courts estimated that they were able to walk to the court that was closest to their homes within one hour.

### Use of Justice Providers

The court was the entity that was most utilised by respondents for matters of justice during the year leading up to the respective assessments. However, there was a slight decrease in the proportion of respondents who had used the courts during the year leading up to the Wave 2 assessment (Wave 1: 13%; Wave 2: 10%). Furthermore, there was a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who...
stated that they had used traditional elders during the stipulated period (Wave 1: 6%; Wave 2: 9%). None of the respondents in Wave 1 reported using religious leaders for matters of justice and only 1% reported having done so during Wave 2. Notably, unlike Wave 1 in which use of the courts was approximately twice the use of informal providers, equal proportions of respondents reported that they had used the courts and the informal providers during Wave 2 (Figure 10).

There was a general indication that both the formal and informal justice providers handled similar matters. Issues concerning business disputes and household violence had been referred to the courts, elders, and religious leaders by respondents who had used their services in the period corresponding to the Wave 2 assessment. The court and elders had also handled land disputes, youth violence and assault; whereas robbery (mentioned by only one respondent) was the only issue that was unique to the court during this period.

Figure 10: Use of justice providers

- **Issuance and Enforcement of Judgments**

With respect to the issuance and enforcement of judgements, feedback from the respondents who had used justice providers during the respective assessments suggests that the informal providers had been more effective in this regard. The traditional elders managed to issue and uphold a judgement in more than one-half of the cases (60%) that had been referred to them by respondents during the year leading up to the Wave 1 assessment, compared with 40% for the courts during this time. Additionally, during Wave 2 there was an increase in the proportion of judgments that were issued and enforced by the elders (92%) during the reference period, while the courts experienced a decline (33%). A judgement was issued and enforced for the only case which was referred to a religious leader by a respondent in Wave 2. See Figure 11.

The elders also played a role in the enforcement of judgments that were issued by the formal court. Based on the Court Commissioner’s account: *“When settling a dispute, we bring the respective elders of both parties and ask them to be responsible for the enforcement of the outcome.”*15 This

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15 **District Court Commissioner, Key Informant interview, 2nd June 2015**
involvement could also serve to influence the opinions regarding the court’s effectiveness in enforcing judgments.
### Table 2: Issuance and enforcement of judgements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Entities that were consulted on matters of justice</th>
<th>Judgments issued and enforced</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wave 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Court</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional Elders</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious Leaders</td>
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</table>

- **Perception of Justice Providers**

At the time of the Wave 2 assessment, more than one half of respondents (56%) named traditional elders as the entity that they trust most for matters of justice. The court was selected by 36% of respondents, while only 4% mentioned religious leaders. Respondents were not asked to name the entity that they trust most for matters of justice during Wave 1. However, despite the greater usage of the courts by respondents during that period (Wave 1), it was suggested that the local people preferred to use customary law or to take the law into their own hands rather than file cases with the court as they feared that the court would prolong their cases.\(^\text{16}\)

When asked to state reasons for their choice of most trusted justice provider in the Wave 2 assessment, reliability and affordability were the most frequently mentioned reasons for selection of the traditional elders. Among those who had selected the courts, fair judgments and fast decisions were the top two reasons for selection. Discussants in the focus group discussions, however, presented contradictory opinions. Court officials were accused of being susceptible to bribery and the influence of clan politics.\(^\text{17}\) Similar to the views expressed by participants in Wave 1, there were also complaints about the length of time for the court to resolve issues. The District Commissioner, however, pointed out that some of these delays were the result of the time it took for defendants to appear before the court, especially when they were from outside Erigavo.

In addition, the judiciary and other court staff were criticised for lacking the requisite knowledge to fulfil their roles: “There is lack of knowledge. Most of our prosecutors are not the right men for the job.”\(^\text{18}\) Further to this were claims that implied a lack of professionalism among the staff: “You come early for court appointment, but the court staff come late to the work, with angry face because he has been chewing khat and cannot solve cases properly.”\(^\text{19}\)

- **Challenges Faced by the Formal Justice System**

Inconsistency in the qualifications and competency of staff was highlighted as one of the challenges faced by the formal justice system. The absence of standard criteria for the recruitment of justices was identified as one of the contributing factors. Commenting on this, justice providers stated that for instance, some judges were more knowledgeable about Shari’ah law, while others were only familiar with the penal code (which had been used in Somali courts since 1964): “You can see a judge

\(^{16}\) Erigavo District Conflict and Security Assessment (Hargeisa: OCVP, 2013), 34.

\(^{17}\) Governance Providers, Focus Group Discussion, 31st May 2015

\(^{18}\) Traditional Elders, Key Informant Interview, 1st June 2015

\(^{19}\) Traditional Elders and Religious Leaders, Focus Group Discussion, 31st May 2015
who is an expert in Islamic Shari’ah while another is [an] expert in the man-made law; there should be uniformity.\textsuperscript{20}

The effectiveness of supporting functions, such as the investigation of cases by the police, was also regarded as one of the challenges faced by the formal justice system. Investigative officers were accused of intentionally misleading the investigation at times.\textsuperscript{21}

Usual challenges resulting from lack of insufficient resources were also identified among the challenges faced by the justice system. These included logistical deficiencies as well as shortage of items such as basic office stationery and furniture.

- Confidence in the Formal Justice System

Collectively, similar proportions of approximately three-quarters of respondents expressed confidence in the formal justice system during both assessments (Wave 1: 74%; Wave 2: 76%). However, the findings indicate a decline in the level of confidence, as only one-third of respondents in Wave 2 (33%) stated that they were very confident in the formal justice system compared with 44% who had expressed a similar level of confidence during Wave 1. Moreover, there was a slight increase in the proportion of respondents who stated outright that they were not confident in the formal justice system (23% up from 19% in Wave 1). Figure 11 illustrates.

Figure 11: Confidence in the formal justice system

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

**Governance**

Erigavo is classified as a Grade A district under the Regions and Districts (Self-Management) Law of Somaliland. In accordance with this, the district has a local council which comprises 21 elected members. The serving councillors came into office in December 2012 and were elected for a period of five years. Therefore, the current council was serving at the time of both the Wave 1 and Wave 2 assessments. There had been changes in the administrative divisions for the district between the two assessments. However, three of the subdivisions, namely Kulmiye, and Xaafad Soomaal, were represented in both assessments.

\textsuperscript{20} Justice Providers, Focus Group Discussion, 1\textsuperscript{st} June 2015
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid
The council is led by a Mayor who was in his second term at the time of both assessments. The Mayor, the Deputy Mayor and the Secretary are the members of the Council’s Executive Committee. There is also a standing committee, which attends to the day-to-day activities of the municipality. The standing committee comprises of seven members – the three executive members and another four councillors. The municipality has six departments, namely: (i) Administration and Finance; (ii) Taxation; (iii) Land; (iv) Planning; (v) Social Affairs; and (vi) Human Resources.

- **Awareness of the Council and its Role**

All respondents in the Wave 2 assessment acknowledged the presence of the Local Council in the district. Most respondents who were aware of the council could state at least one service that the council provides. Sanitation was the service that was most readily associated with the local council in both assessments. The council’s roles in the provision of justice, infrastructure, water, education, health and security were also mentioned by respondents in Wave 1. All these services, with the exception of security, were also spontaneously mentioned by respondents in Wave 2. In addition, one person in the Wave 2 assessment also noted that the council provided services relating to agriculture.

- **Issues Facing the Community**

There were, however, a number of concerns regarding service provision by the local government. When asked to identify the most pressing issues or challenges facing the community, lack of water was identified as the most pressing issue during the Wave 1 assessment. This remained one of the main issues in Wave 2. However, other issues, including poor infrastructure, unsuitable health facilities, and poor education were mentioned ahead of water during Wave 2, in that order. Notably, these were not new concerns as they had all been mentioned during Wave 1. Poor sanitation, the state of the economy, insecurity, and unemployment were also identified among the pressing issues facing the community during both assessments. The shortage of electricity was the only new issue that was mentioned in Wave 2.

- **Participation in Local Government Consultations**

Despite the demonstrated awareness of the council’s role as well as issues concerning the community, the results from the household surveys suggest that there was very little interaction between the local government and the community. Only 3% of respondents reported to have participated in local government consultations in Wave 1, and this small proportion dwindled even further to 1% in Wave 2. (See Figure 12.)

The Local Municipality Secretary recounted approximately six consultation meetings since the time of the election. However, in keeping with the findings from the household survey, discussants in the women’s group claimed that there was no communication between the Local Council and the public: “There is no active communication between the local council and the community.”
Opinions Regarding the Importance of Elected Local Officials

The majority of respondents (77%) were of the opinion that it is important to have elected government representatives. This proportion represents a decline when compared with results from the Wave 1 assessment (85%). In addition, during Wave 1, approximately 9% of respondents stated outright that they did not believe it was important to have elected government officials. This proportion, however, more than doubled to 21% during Wave 2. (Fig. 13).

Consistent with these results, there were mixed views concerning the electoral process. Locally elected councillors were perceived to be more aware of local issues. However, there were also arguments to suggest that councillors were not fairly elected on the basis of qualifications and competence. Instead, discussants claimed that the process was unduly influenced by clan dynamics (tribe perception). Added to this was the belief that the current officials felt that they would not be changed unless their term in office had ended. Against this background, it was suggested that the nomination of one Mayor resulted in greater accountability, partly due to fear of being replaced due to nonperformance:
The nomination was much better because the Mayor used to be afraid to be changed if [he] did not perform. The current ones know that they were elected and they cannot be changed unless their office term ends.  

- **Perception of the Council’s Performance**

Taxes were the main source of revenue for the district. However, the secretary of the council stated that there were only a few tax payers and consequently this led to a shortage of funding and lack of sufficient resources, which ultimately restricted service delivery:

> There are many challenges in regard to service provision. ...everything we do needs money and all we get is the tax collected from the people, though most of the people do not pay taxes and this causes hardships in service delivery.

Although a few respondents in both assessments mentioned poor sanitation as one of the pressing issues facing the community, there was general consensus that sanitation, mainly through garbage collection, was the most notable service provided by the council. Youth in the Wave 2 assessment commended the council for their performance in this area. However, they pointed out that service provision in a number of other areas was negatively impacted by the centralised governance system. It was felt that decentralisation would help to bring about improvements in this regard:

> Regarding sanitation, Erigavo is one of the best cities [in the country]. We just need decentralisation in terms of service provision such as water, education and health. We need service improvement.

Respondents in the household survey during Wave 2 were asked to give an indication of the change in the council’s performance over the past year. Approximately 46% of respondents stated that the council’s performance had improved whereas a similar proportion of 44% felt that the council’s performance had remained the same or declined during this time. There were also mixed opinions regarding the level of confidence in the council, with approximately one-half of respondents (50%) stating that they had very high or fairly high levels of confidence. The remaining respondents were split between those who indicated low levels of confidence (41%) and those who did not give a definitive response.

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22 Traditional Elders and Religious Leaders, Focus Group Discussion, 31st May 2015
23 Local Municipality Secretary, Key Informant Interview, 3rd June 2015
24 Youth, Focus Group Discussion, 30th May 2015
Dynamics of Conflict and Violence

Most respondents (83%) declared that they were unaware of any conflict that had taken place in the year leading up to the Wave 2 assessment. Reports of having witnessed conflict as well as incidents of crime and violence were similar among respondents during both reporting periods. However, respondents in Wave 2 had mixed opinions regarding the change in the level of safety in the area. When asked to state their perception of the change in safety over the past year (between the two assessments), a slight majority (51%) felt that safety in the area had improved. Another 16% did not believe that there had been any change during this time, approximately one-third (33%) felt that the level of safety had in fact deteriorated during this time.

- Experience with Conflict

As stated before, a comparison of results from the household surveys did not suggest that there was a change in the experience with conflict among Erigavo residents in the period between both assessments. Approximately 12% of respondents claimed that they had witnessed conflict between clans or groups in the year leading up to the Wave 2 assessment, comparable to the results of the Wave 1 assessment in which 13% reported that they had witnessed conflict in the corresponding period. (Fig. 14.)

Figure 14: Account of witnessing conflict between clans or groups (last 12 months)

- Reasons for Conflicts that were Observed

There was some variation in the stated reasons for the conflicts that were witnessed in the periods corresponding to the Wave 1 and Wave 2 assessments. Crime, including robbery, rape, etc. was identified as the main reason behind the conflicts that were witnessed during Wave 1. Family disputes and power/cultural struggles were also identified as contributing factors. While crime and family disputes remained among the causes in Wave 2, power/cultural struggles were not mentioned as a possible cause for any of the conflicts that were observed during this period. Disputes over resources,
perceived lack of justice, youth violence, and revenge were additional causes that influenced conflicts which were witnessed by respondents in Wave 2.

- **Experience with Crime and Violence**

Specifically, as it relates to crime and violence within the area, approximately one in ten respondents had witnessed at least one incident of crime or violence against someone outside of their household over the past year, as indicated by similar proportions of 10% and 8% of respondents in Wave 1 and Wave 2 respectively. (Fig. 15.)

Figure 15: Account of witnessing crime or violence (last 12 months)

- **Land Conflict**

Although land disputes were not mentioned among the causes of conflict that had been witnessed by respondents in the Wave 1 household survey, participants in the qualitative component of the study identified land-based conflict as the main cause of insecurity. Land disputes were said to be very common, especially in the area between Ceel-afweyn and Erigavo during the rainy season. The claiming and fencing of large swathes of land, usually to facilitate grazing of animals, was one of the main factors which contributed to land disputes. In addition, “land grabbing” which was largely associated with the capturing of land owned by persons who had left the country during the civil war was another key contributor. Discussants lamented that they could not rely on the justice system to resolve these issues:

Some people grabbed the land which was not their own during the civil war in the district ...some people fled the city while others stayed behind and until now they are illegally occupying the land as their own. There is no strong justice system to reclaim our land.\(^{25}\)

These issues lingered and remained one of the main causes of insecurity at the time of the Wave 2 assessment. Commenting on the issue and its potential impact on security, one of the participants in

the women’s focus group discussion pointed out that, “People always fight over those [fenced] lands which creates serious security issues and violence in the community.”

- **Perception of Safety**

The perception towards the level of safety in the district appeared to have been more favourable at the time of the Wave 2 assessment. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents (67%) in the Wave 2 assessment indicated that they felt safe in the area compared with 55% who expressed similar opinions in Wave 1. Further to this, 51% of respondents in Wave 2 declared that they felt very safe in the area, whereas no one reported feeling very safe in Wave 1. There was also a corresponding decrease in the proportion of respondents who reported feeling unsafe. However, whereas only 1% of respondents had reported feeling very unsafe during Wave 1, this proportion rose to 19% in Wave 2. Respondents’ perception of safety was observed to vary according to their area of residence.

Figure 16: Perception of safety in the district

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26 *Women*, Focus Group Discussion, 30th May 2015
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 Erigavo (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 both assessments.

Erigavo has a Local Council which comprises 21 councillors, representing the major clans in the district. All respondents in Wave 2 were aware of the Local Council, yet only a small minority of respondents in both Waves had had any interaction with the Local Council in the past year. Respondents, however, demonstrated awareness of community issues, with most stating what they regarded as pressing issues facing the community. Of the concerns that were stated by respondents in Wave 1, security was the only issue which was not mentioned in Wave 2. Similar issues, such as the water supply, infrastructure, health and education, were mentioned during both assessments. Nonetheless, the only emerging area of concern during Wave 2 was the electricity supply.

Taxes were the main source of revenue for the district, but the amount collected was considered inadequate. With consistent complaints about the lack of resources, this shortfall in available funding was regarded as the main hindrance to effective service provision by the Local Council. Respondents held different opinions regarding the council’s performance; however, most respondents in the Wave 2 assessment felt that the council’s performance had improved or at least remained the same over the past year. Only a small proportion of respondents stated that the council’s performance had declined. Despite this, there was notable room for improvement in respondents’ confidence in the council as, at the time of the Wave 2 assessment, only one-half of respondents expressed confidence in the council. While the majority of respondents during both Waves agreed that it is important to have elected officials, Wave 2 saw a decline in the proportion of respondents who shared this perception. The stated benefits of having an electoral process included greater awareness and competence of councillors. However, others argued that elections were unduly influenced by clan dynamics and suggested that nominations resulted in greater accountability, partly due to the councillors’ fear of being replaced on account of nonperformance.

With regard to the security providers, the number of police stations remained two during both assessments despite complaints in Wave 1 that this number was insufficient. Respondents in both Waves also voiced their discontentment with the number of police officers and the quality of the police force in the district. A number of other factors, including lack of equipment and the overfamiliarity of police officers with the residents were perceived to have a negative impact on the police performance. Despite this, the police remained the entity to which the majority of respondents would prefer to report petty and serious crimes during both Waves. In addition, the police was also the leading choice for reporting civil issues during Wave 2, surpassing the local authority, which had been mentioned ahead of the police as the preferred entity for handling such matters during Wave 1.

Correspondingly, most respondents indicated high levels of trust in the police during both assessments, with a notable increase in the proportion of respondents who stated that their trust in the police was very high, from less than one-quarter of the sample in Wave 1 to more than one-half
in Wave 2. The increased visibility of the police, denoted by a significant increase in awareness of the police presence, was a potential contributor to an improvement in respondents’ perception of the police. Also, despite being criticised for their close relations with the local population, the Police Commissioner pointed out that this also helped to improve the efficiency of investigations.

The court’s presence in the district was acknowledged by nearly all the respondents during both Waves. In addition to the formal court, elders and religious leaders also served as (informal) justice providers. Nonetheless, the court remained the entity that was most frequently used for matters of justice, despite a slight decrease in the use of the courts, which was accompanied by a slight increase in the use of the elders during Wave 2. However, in contrast to Wave 1, the collective use of informal justice providers was equal to that of the court during Wave 2. Furthermore, the informal justice providers were regarded as being more effective than the court with respect to issuing and enforcing judgments during both assessments. At the time of the Wave 2 assessment, more than one-half of the respondents identified elders as the entity that they trusted most to handle matters of justice, citing reliability and affordability as the main reasons for this choice.

Those who said that they trust the court most for matters of justice mostly attributed this selection to fair judgements and fast decisions, contradicting the opinions of the discussants who accused court officials of being susceptible to bribery and clan influence as well as prolonging cases. Respondents’ indication of their level of confidence in the formal justice system reflected a slight decline between both assessments. Although similar proportions, representing approximately three-quarters of respondents, expressed some degree of confidence in the formal justice system during both Waves, the proportion who stated that they were very confident declined from 44% in Wave 1 to 33% in Wave 2.

While residents in Erigavo enjoyed relative peace, approximately one in ten respondents reported that they had witnessed conflict(s) in the year leading up to both assessments, while accounts of witnessing crime or violence during the corresponding periods were just slightly lower. However, there was a reported shift in the drivers of conflict between both assessments. However, when asked to identify causes of insecurity, land conflict was consistently mentioned by discussants in both assessments as one of the main concerns. Despite the lingering issues with respect to security in the area, the results from the Wave 2 assessment indicate an improvement in the general perception of safety in the area. However, while there was a reduction in the proportion of respondents who reported feeling unsafe in general, it should be considered that there was a marked increase in the proportion who stated they felt very unsafe.
OBSERVATORY OF CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION