

# Ethnic Conflict and Insecurity in the Sondu Town Area at the Border of Kericho and Kisumu Counties, Kenya

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## Abstract

The border along Kericho and Kisumu counties has been a constant flashpoint of insecurity, arising from perennial ethnic conflict between the Kipsigis and Luo tribes. The primary objective of the study was to establish the causes of ethnic conflict and how it affects security in the Sondu area, situated along the border of Kisumu and Kericho counties, Kenya. The study, which was anchored on the Instrumentalist Theory of Ethnicity, adopted a mixed methods research design. It had a sample size of 367 respondents, comprising household heads, key informants, and focus group. Data was collected using questionnaires, a focus group discussion guide, and an interview guide. Secondary data was also gathered from security-related documents. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive analysis, while qualitative data was thematically analysed. The results disclosed that structural, cultural, political, and economic factors were the predominant contributors to ethnic conflict in the Sondu area, leading to cases of insecurity. The study further established that for the perennial conflict to be resolved, the identified contributing factors should be addressed amicably by all security stakeholders under the lead of government security agencies through multi-agency approaches. This paper presents the study findings on factors responsible for the perennial ethnic conflict and its effect on security in the Sondu area.

## Keywords

Factors Responsible for Ethnic Conflict, Forms of Insecurity, Control Mechanisms, Sondu Town-Area, Kenya

## 1. Introduction

Ethnic conflict classically encompasses non-violent or violent altercations between

two or more groups or communities with distinct cultural identities such as geography, language, religion, and ancestry. It is normally caused by competition over political representation and power, but shared scarce resources significantly escalate the tensions (Kaufman, 2023). According to Fawzi (2022), Keles et al. (2022), and Fontana (2023), ethnic conflict that leads to insecurity largely escalates where resource competition, political disenfranchisement, and weak institutional stability intersect. On insecurity in Asia, Barriga et al. (2023) observed that ethnic conflicts are fueled by political and economic marginalization.

On the other hand, insecurity refers to a situation where individuals and communities are exposed to lethal and harmful threats that endanger their physical status, social stability, political space, and economic order (Siloko, 2024). In contemporary society, security comprises state security, which is characterized by the defense against external aggression, territorial safety, and human security. This calls for the protection of human rights, safety against violence, and access to basic needs (Fawzi, 2022).

In Kenya, the Global Peace Index (2025) ranked the country as the most insecure nation in East Africa and seventh in Africa. The notable cases of insecurity identified by the organization were increased kidnappings, political unrest, banditry, and ethnic-related violence across various parts of the country. The UN Statistical Commission (2025) also pinpointed these threats to security in Kenya, and called for concerted efforts by appropriate stakeholders to deal with them.

However, ethnic conflict and its correlation to insecurity remain complex issues requiring continuous empirical investigation. To this end, several past studies have focused on the impact of ethnic conflict on the security of a country, mostly at the national level. Further, in Kenya, some studies have also looked at localized pockets of violence and clashes among people living within the Rift Valley region (Amolo et al., 2022). However, there is a paucity of studies that have looked at ethnic conflict and insecurity in the Kericho and Kisumu border area, a location characterized by diverse cultural, political, and socio-economic nuances. Basically, many studies on ethnic conflict and security conducted in Kenya have mainly focused on large-scale violent clashes and not localized conflicts that occur within the borders of culturally diverse counties. This study thus sought to fill this significant research gap by examining the relationship between ethnic conflict and insecurity in the Sondu area, situated along the border of Kericho and Kisumu Counties.

## **2. Literature Review: Ethnic Conflict and Insecurity**

Within the global space, the factors that lead to ethnic conflict, and which in turn affect security, have mostly been categorized as structural, political, and economic. A qualitative study conducted by Erőss et al. (2025) to examine insecurity and displacement of the Hungarian people from Ukraine as a result of ethnic conflict noted that the ethnic conflict was largely due to structural weaknesses related to political instability and poor governance. The study noted that the inability of the Ukrainian government to deliver the necessary and helpful public goods created

feelings of ethnic disenfranchisement, which led to violence and insecurity. It was found that structural weaknesses characterized by poor governance lead to significant insecurity. However, given that this study was conducted in Ukraine, it presented a geographical gap.

Enloe (2024), in a mixed methods study to determine the correlations between ethnic conflict and insecurity in Europe, identified the territorial concentration of diverse ethnic groupings, especially near border areas, as a catalyst for security dilemmas and the intensification of tensions. The study noted that ethnic groupings across borders often exacerbate competition over available resources, which then leads to clashes and serious violence that upend the security of the area. This study, while vital in examining structural factors that lead to ethnic conflict and insecurity, was nonetheless conducted in Europe and thus also had a geographical research gap.

In the USA, Fawzi (2022) examined the causes of ethnic conflicts and their effect on national security. The scholar identified political mobilization as a major factor contributing to ethnic conflicts that lead to insecurity. The study further found that elite manipulation of marginalized ethnic groupings, coupled with political exclusion, led to ethnic conflicts which in turn led to insecurity. Consequently, this results in the displacement of people, some of whom become refugees. It also leads to deaths, disruption of socio-economic livelihoods, and the creation of a weak governance apparatus.

On the association between ethnic groups and state security in the United Kingdom, Brass (2023), in a qualitative study, found that some countries have strong politicians who mobilize political and cultural grievances to legitimize certain political claims to the detriment of the security status. Consequently, the political leaders deepen beliefs and perceptions about political exclusion and intensify inter-group antagonism, which ends up threatening national security.

In Asia, Nguyen et al. (2023) examined security risks created by ethnic conflict. The study used a mixed methods approach to analyse both primary and secondary data from public records and past studies. Most of the data obtained were from Border States where ethnic groupings are antagonists. It was established that economic competition is significantly correlated to ethnic conflicts, which destabilize the security of regions. The study found that economic competition is a major factor in ethnic conflicts, particularly where the affected ethnic groupings are tied to some economic activities that overlap among the antagonistic groupings. Further, it was established that economic competition is rife among different ethnic groupings fighting over territorial boundaries and scarce resources. This finding could be attributed to the ethnic groups that operate along the border between Kericho and Kisumu counties. However, it was instructive to assess if such economic competition also applied within the Kenyan context.

In Africa, colonial legacies, economic marginalization, and political exclusion appear to be the main factors that lead to ethnic conflicts that affect the security of the continent. Mlambo et al. (2024), in a qualitative study done across the entire

continent, examined the challenges affecting Africa in the post-colonial era. The scholars found that colonial legacies characterized by the arbitrary demarcation of territorial boundaries without regard for historical, social, and cultural ties have led to significant ethnic violence, which affects the security of states in the region. The arbitrary colonial boundaries compound existing political and economic vulnerabilities, thus significantly influencing insecurity. It was instructive to domesticate colonial legacies within the localized context of the Kericho-Kisumu border and the ethnic groups living within the border region, and observe if the insecurity within the area can also be attributed to arbitrary boundary set-ups by the British colonial government.

Lenshie et al. (2022), in a study on ethnic conflict and insecurity in West Africa, found that ethnic conflict leading to insecurity was mainly fueled by resource scarcity. The resources in question were water, mineral wealth, and land. Further, it was established that environmental changes compound the scarcity and complicate the ethnic tensions that often lead to insecure outcomes. The study found that insecurity increased where one ethnic group felt disenfranchised in terms of resource allocation compared to another ethnic group. The issues of resource scarcity may apply to the ethnic groups along the Kericho-Kisumu border. In addition, there is a likelihood of disenfranchisement on the part of the Luos on the Kisumu side of the border, due to political marginalization since post-independence Kenya. In Kenya, the noticeable factors that lead to ethnic conflict and disruption of security are political exclusion, election violence, land and boundary disputes, and economic disempowerment (Schutte et al. 2022).

In Turkana and West Pokot counties, Osinde et al. (2023) established that resource scarcity was the main contributor to ethnic conflicts, which has made the region highly insecure. The Turkana and West Pokot people live along neighbouring borders; thus, the conflicts can also be linked to colonial boundaries. The study further established that cattle rustling, a traditional culture among the two pastoralist communities, is also a major contributor to ethnic conflict that perennially threatens security in the area. In Nakuru County, Odanga et al. (2022) found that land and boundary disputes exacerbated ethnic conflicts and disrupted security. It was useful to determine if similar circumstances were relevant as influencers of conflict along the Kericho-Kisumu border.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Instrumentalist Theory of Ethnicity as postulated by Brass (2000). The theory postulates that ethnic conflict does not arise solely from structural inequalities but mostly due to the strategic utilization of ethnic identities by the powerful in society and political actors whose main intention is to maintain power (Brass, 2000). The theory is undergirded by three main assumptions. The first is that ethnicity is both socially constructed and politically implemented. The second assumption is that political elites manipulate ethnic identity, often during election periods or other competitive events such as re-

source allocation. Third, conflict is a by-product of structures that underscore political opportunity (Che, 2016).

This theory is vital and strong, especially because it has wide application from political studies to security and diplomacy (Agashe, 2022). Secondly, the theory explains political, structural, and economic factors that led to conflicts (Agashe, 2022). Thirdly, the theory accounts for the unexpected escalation of ethnic conflicts and tension, and properly allocates the role leaders and power players offer in the same (Che, 2016). The theory is applicable in explaining ethnic conflicts, their nature, and associated causal factors.

However, Kataria (2018) criticizes the theory, stating that it oversimplifies the genuineness of grassroots grievances. The scholar posits that the theory does not consider the fact that the people in the area where conflict occurs may have genuine problems that instigate conflicts in order to be eventually resolved. The study found the theory relevant in analyzing ethnic conflict at Sondu based on its explanation that conflict does not just accrue out of structural inequalities but also due to the strategic utilization of ethnic identities by powerful and political actors.

#### 4. The Study Area and Methodology

The study was conducted in the Sondu town area, situated at the border of Kisumu and Kericho counties, within the Republic of Kenya. The area is inhabited by the Luos on the Kisumu County side and the Kipsigis on the Kericho County side. The two ethnic groups have had occasional hostilities since the year 1992. The conflicts usually reach alarming levels during every electioneering cycle. The two communities share Sondu town as the main urban centre in the area. The Kisii-Kisumu highway, which cuts across the town, acts as the common boundary between the two counties, and it separates the two ethnic groups. The study specifically focused on Sigowet sub-county's Kaplelartet ward in Kericho County and Nyakach sub-county's South East ward in Kisumu County. The two wards make up the Sondu area, which is the focal point of the ethnic conflict.

The study adopted a mixed methods research design. The design combines both quantitative and qualitative components, thus providing access to quantitative data via questionnaires and qualitative data through key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

The study had 336 respondents, out of the 367-target sample size, drawn from South East Nyakach and Kaplelartet wards. Purposive sampling was employed to locate government officials, security personnel, local administrators, peace committee members, NGO officials, church leaders, community leaders, and elders who were the key informants and focus groups perceived to have vital information about the ethnic conflicts. Simple random sampling was employed to select a sample of 234 heads of households who were the study's respondents. The respondents were selected to fill questionnaires, while 89 key informants drawn from the two sub-counties were engaged in interviews. 13 Sub-County Peace Committee members, 7 drawn from Kaplelartet ward and 6 from South East Nyakach, were

engaged in Focus Group Discussions.

Secondary data were also collected from government records, giving an insight into the level of insecurity in the study area. Specifically, data were collected from annual crime reports between 2019 and 2023, from Soin and Pap Onditi Police Divisions in Sigowet and Nyaka Sub-Counties, respectively. Additional data were obtained from crime records at Sondu Police Station, located along the border of the two communities. Quantitative data were analyzed using the Statistical Program for Social Scientists (SPSS version 22.0) and descriptive analysis, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed. Before the actual study, the researcher conducted a pilot study at Angata Barikio along the border of Narok and Migori Counties. This area is predominantly inhabited by members of the Masai and Kuria ethnic communities, and had also experienced persistent conflicts between the two ethnic groups. The study abided by all ethical considerations applicable to this kind of study.

## 5. Discussion of Findings

The following are the research findings on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents who participated in the study, and their perspectives on the factors responsible for ethnic conflict in the Sondu area from 2007 to 2023, and recorded cases of insecurity within the area from 2019 to 2023.

### 5.1. Response Rate and Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The following are the research findings on the response rate and socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents.

#### 5.1.1. Response Rate

The study targeted 367 participants from both South East Nyakach Ward and Kaplelartet Ward. Based on the distribution, it was expected that the respondents from South East Nyakach would total 166, while those from Kaplelartet Ward were expected to be 201. However, those who responded from South East Nyakach Ward were 157, representing a 94.5% response rate, while 179 participants were involved from Kaplelartet Ward, representing an 89.1% response rate. The average response rate was thus 336 (91.8%). The response rate, according to [Edwards & Perkins \(2024\)](#), is acceptable to give reliable and valid results.

#### 5.1.2. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, age, marital status, level of education, and employment status are as shown in the following tables.

##### Gender of the Respondents

The respondents' genders are shown in [Table 1](#).

The results from [Table 1](#) show that the majority of the household heads from the two wards (South East Nyakach and Kaplelartet) were male at 60.4%, while

39.6% were female. This implies that the household head pool in the Sondu area of Kisumu and Kericho Counties is male dominated. This aligns with literature showing that in patriarchal societies that are pervasive in the Luo and Kalenjin regions, males dominate household headship unless a woman is single or widowed (Julius, 2025). However, as concerns this study, the presence of both males and females as participants is an indication that the data collected presents reliable and valid views of both genders on the causes of ethnic conflict and how it impacts security in the Sondu town area.

**Table 1.** Gender of the respondents.

Response	Frequency	%
Male	203	60.4
Female	133	39.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data (2025).

### Age of the Respondents

The respondents' ages are shown in **Table 2**.

**Table 2.** Age of the respondents.

Response	Frequency	%
<20 years	9	2.7
20 - 29 years	27	8.0
30 - 39 years	41	12.3
40 - 49 years	101	30.0
50 - 59 years	85	25.3
>60 years	73	21.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data (2025).

The results from **Table 2** above show that the majority of the respondents who were household heads at 77.0% were aged above 40 years. Only 23.0% were below 40 years. These findings on ages align with Cattell (2021), who established that in the rural areas a majority are aged above 40 years. The fact that a majority of the research participants were aged 30 years and above confirms that they were old enough to understand the issues of conflict in the area between the years 2007 and 2023. In addition, their institutional memory, having experienced the conflict first hand over time, places them in an advantageous position in prescribing the best remedial measures to manage the conflict.

### Marital Status of the Respondents

The respondents' marital status, as was established, is shown in **Table 3**.

**Table 3.** Marital status of the respondents.

Response	Frequency	%
Single	39	11.6
Married	178	52.9
Divorced	20	5.6
Separated	20	5.6
Widowed	79	24.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data (2025).

From **Table 3** above, more than half, 52.9%, of the respondents were married, followed by 24.3% who were widowed, 11.6% who were single, and only 5.6% who were either divorced or separated. That a majority were and had been in marital relationships shows that they have family members and thus are duly concerned about the security situation in the area, which makes them have relevant information about the conflict.

#### **Level of Education of the Respondents**

The respondents' level of education is shown in **Table 4**.

**Table 4.** Level of education of the respondents.

Response	Frequency	%
Primary	88	26.2
Secondary	76	22.6
Certificate	69	20.5
Diploma	51	15.1
Degree	41	12.2
None of the above	11	3.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data (2025).

The results from **Table 4** above show that a majority of the respondents, at 47.8%, had certificate level of education and above. Further, 26.2% had Kenya Certificate of Primary Education level, followed by 22.6% with Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education level, while only 3.4% had no formal education. These results suggest that the majority of the respondents were literate enough to understand the nuances of causes of ethnic conflicts between the year 2007 and 2023 and how the conflicts impact security in the area. They were also better placed to suggest lasting solutions to the problem. Further, the findings cohere with Kisumu County's Public Participation Policy (2025) findings, which established that the

primary level is the highest attained level of education for people in the Sondu area. This is followed by secondary level of education, then tertiary level, and finally university level.

### Employment Status of the Respondents

The respondents' employment status is shown in **Table 5**.

**Table 5.** Employment status of the respondents.

Category	Frequency	%
Formal Employment	140	38.4
Informal Employment/Unemployed	196	61.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Research Data (2025).

The results from **Table 5** indicate that the majority of the respondents, at 61.6%, were informally employed or unemployed, while only 38.4% were formally employed. This finding suggests that high levels of unemployment and informal employment (artisans, farmers, boda boda riders, among others) in the Sondu town area could be the catalyst for ethnic conflict.

## 5.2. Factors Responsible for Ethnic Conflict in the Sondu Area from 2007 to 2023

The respondents were asked in the questionnaire to give their assertions on eight (8) possible causes of ethnic conflict and insecurity during the years 2007 to 2023 at the Sondu area. **Table 6** gives the output from the respondents on the subject matter.

**Table 6.** Factors that influenced ethnic conflict within the sondu area during the years 2007 to 2023.

Statements	N	Mean	StD	F	%
Unemployment is a major factor leading to ethnic conflict and insecurity.	336	4.177	2.198	212	63.1
Poverty among local residents is a major factor leading to ethnic conflict and insecurity.	336	4.187	1.987	208	61.9
Retrogressive cultures such as cattle rustling are factors leading to ethnic conflict and insecurity in Sondu.	336	4.165	1.099	238	70.8
Political incitement in the area is a major factor leading to ethnic conflict and insecurity.	336	4.109	1.981	257	76.5
Ethicised politics fuel ethnic conflict and insecurity in the Sondu area.	336	4.099	2.098	261	77.7
Inadequate local security apparatus in Sondu creates opportunities for insecurity and ethnic conflict to thrive in Sondu.	336	4.766	1.988	203	60.4
Partisan security personnel worsen ethnic conflict within the Sondu area.	336	4.176	1.082	213	63.4
Ethnic conflict is the main threat to security in the Sondu area.	336	4.018	1.681	248	77.2
<b>Average</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>4.262</b>	<b>1.765</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>67.6</b>

F - Represents respondents who strongly agreed/agreed with the statement. Source: Research Data (2025).

Based on the results in **Table 6**, all the mean and standard deviation results were more than 4.0 and 1.0, respectively. This shows that the respondents reliably agreed with all the assertions. Thus, the respondents agreed that unemployment, poverty among local residents, retrogressive cultures such as cattle rustling, political incitement, ethnicized politics, inadequate local security apparatus, and partisan security personnel were the major causes of ethnic conflicts, which normally lead to insecurity in the Sondu area. However, among these causes that lead to ethnic conflict in the area, political incitement and ethnicized politics received the highest ratings at 76.5% and 77.7%, respectively. Further, 77.2% of the respondents opined that ethnic conflict is a major threat to security in the area.

Based on the findings, it is clear that the factors which influence ethnic conflicts and, by extension, cause insecurity are mostly structural, political, and economic factors. The above results agree with [Eröss et al. \(2025\)](#), who noted that the inability of the Ukrainian government to deliver the necessary and helpful public goods created feelings of ethnic disenfranchisement, which led to violence and insecurity. The study established that structural weaknesses characterized by poor governance lead to significant insecurity. Another scholar, [Enloe \(2024\)](#), also noted that different ethnic groups along borders often exacerbate competition over available resources, which leads to ethnic clashes and insecurity. According to [Fawzi \(2022\)](#), manipulation of marginalized ethnic groups by the elites, coupled with political exclusion, usually intensifies ethnic conflicts and exacerbates insecurity. [Nguyen et al. \(2023\)](#) found that economic competition is significantly correlated to ethnic conflicts, which destabilize the security of regions. The scholars posit that the situation worsens in cases of shared economic resources and activities that overlap among antagonistic ethnic groups who fight over territorial boundaries. This observation can also apply to the ethnic groups that operate along the border of Kericho and Kisumu counties.

Comparatively, in West Africa, [Lenshie et al. \(2022\)](#) established that ethnic conflict, which is a leading cause of insecurity in that region, is mainly fuelled by the scarcity of resources such as water, minerals, and land. Thus, the structural, political, and economic factors responsible for ethnic conflict among the Luos and the Kipsigis living along the Kericho-Kisumu border are not unique to the area.

In an interview with a key informant, a local administrator from Sigowet Sub-County, who is a government officer, the key cause of ethnic conflict is boundary dispute. The key informant, a government officer, here referred to as KI-1, 2025, expressed his opinion that:

*The boundary separating Kericho and Kisumu counties, as supported by official government records, especially the Sondu town area, is entirely in Kericho County. However, this reality has been disputed by the Luo community in Kisumu County, particularly those who reside in the area. This has been a major cause of the perennial conflicts in the region (KI-1, 2025).*

However, it is noteworthy to state that some of the boundaries in disputes that cause conflicts in Africa were drawn by the colonial regimes. This fact has been

established by Mlambo et al. (2024), who noted that the colonial governments' arbitrariness in drawing territorial boundaries without regard for the historical, social, and cultural ties of the local residents has led to significant ethnic violence, which has affected the security of states in several regions.

However, an opposing view was presented in a focused group discussion with the Nyakach Sub-County Peace Committee. Here, one of the elders, referred to as Elder 3, expressed his opinion that:

*The ethnic conflict in the Sondu area has historical roots. In the early 1990s, the then-President Daniel Moi conspired with the Department of Lands and moved the boundary, which was approximately 500 metres from the Kisii-Kisumu Highway to the current location, causing two-thirds of the Sondu area to lie in Kericho County. This has been a major cause of ethnic conflict in the area (Elder, 3, FGD 2025).*

It is evident that the boundary issue in the Sondu area, which is a border town, is a major cause of ethnic conflict that causes serious insecurity in the area. The other notable causes of conflict, as per the discussions, are politics and cattle rustling issues. One elder from Kipsigis, referred to as Elder, 6, FGD 2025, had expressed his opinion that:

*Ethnic conflict in Sondu is a result of a combination of political incitement, cattle rustling, and a spirit of entitlement from both sides. Political incitement is particularly vibrant during election times. Usually, the Luo and the Kipsigis are often on opposing political divides. Politicians always exploit this fact to incite violence. Concerning cattle rustling, the rustlers, who are often the Kipsigis, seem entitled to raid cattle from the Luos, whom they accuse of having forcefully taken theirs on a market day during the 1991-1992 hostilities. These long-standing rumours and cattle theft often build tensions, which escalate to ethnic conflict (Elder, 6, FGD 2025).*

These findings agree with Schutte et al. (2022), who found that political incitements, especially during electioneering periods, significantly contribute to ethnic conflicts and upend security in the affected areas. The scholars established that selfish political players always galvanize support through ethnic mobilization, which is an illegitimate way of seeking political power. It is instructive to state that a similar observation can be made in respect to conflict within the Kericho-Kisumu border.

From the questionnaire responses, interviews with key informants, and FGD, boundary disputes, cattle rustling, and political incitements were flagged as the major causes of ethnic conflict in Sondu, which in turn leads to insecurity in the area.

### **5.3. Forms of Insecurity within Sondu Town Area in the Year 2019 to 2023**

Information on the cases of resultant insecurities that originated from the fights between members of the two ethnic groups was obtained from synthesised sec-

ondary data from annual crime reports prepared by Soin and Pap Onditi Police Divisions in Sigowet and Nyakach Sub-Counties, respectively. Additional data were obtained from crime occurrence records prepared by Sondu Police Station for the 5 years under study. The findings are presented in **Table 7**.

**Table 7.** Forms of insecurity at Sondu area during 2019-2023.

Category	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Number of Fatalities	2	4	3	5	7
Number of people displaced	35	10	22	16	68
Number of violent attacks	6	2	3	4	5
Numbers of Injured	33	9	11	9	4
Number of livestock stolen	53	41	34	51	77

Source: Research Data (2025).

The findings in **Table 7** show the forms of insecurity that resulted from ethnic conflict in the Sondu area from 2019 to 2023. The year 2023 recorded the highest insecurity indicators in terms of fatalities, displacement of people, number of attacks, number of injured people, and cases of cattle rustling. According to **Kida & Kimokoti (2025)**, such cases of insecurity from tribal clashes disrupt peace, thus affecting socio-economic development and political engagements whenever they occur.

## 6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on responses from the research participants, the study concluded that unemployment, poverty among local residents, retrogressive cultures such as cattle rustling, political incitement in the area, ethnicized politics, inadequate local security apparatus, and partisan security personnel were the major causes of ethnic conflict in the Sondu area. The study further established that ethnic conflict is the major source of insecurity in the area.

To reduce conflict in the area, the study recommended the establishment of the Peace Committees in the area by the government. The local security apparatus should set up an informal inter-ethnic engagement forum between the two communities living in the Sondu town area, where locals can air their grievances so that they can be addressed on time before escalating into conflict.

Secondly, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms through mediation, negotiation, and reconciliation should be encouraged to address the security issues within the area, rather than relying solely on the criminal justice system. This will encourage the community leaders and elders to prescribe local solutions in addressing the local security problems. Third, the National Land Commission (NLC) should initiate steps towards permanently addressing the boundary issue in a consultative, evidence-based approach with the intent to create a win-win situation. Even if new boundaries are to be created, as long as they are agreeable

to the two communities, this will reduce ethnic conflicts. Fourth, the number of security personnel should be increased by deploying sufficient police officers in the area to manage conflict when it arises. They should also establish an additional Anti-Stock Theft Police Unit (ASTU) in the Kaplalertet ward to coordinate with the one established in the East Nyakach ward.

Other measures include economic empowerment programs and effective resource mobilization to reduce poverty and minimize conflicts, collaboration between the community and security agencies in the form of timely sharing of information on all matters that may lead to ethnic conflict before its eruption, and finally, there is a need to strengthen multi-agency engagement between all security stakeholders in the area.

### Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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