

Special Lecture: Layers of Conflict and the Oil Industry in Turkana County, Kenya

Speaker:

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Abstract

In 2012 the discovery of commercial quantities of oil in Turkana county was announced. It became the latest of several oil and gas discoveries throughout the Eastern Africa region. Turkana, like many other areas where new resources have been found is arid/semi-arid, remote and underdeveloped, politically and economically marginalized and prone to conflict. There are high levels of armed conflict between pastoral groups on the international and inter-county cross-border areas with large numbers of lives lost, and an intermittently confrontational relationship between Turkana pastoralists and the state, the latest of which saw 21 police ambushed and killed in 2014. There are many layers of insecurity therefore, and oil is the latest issue, exacerbating international and county border conflicts, and bringing with it tensions between communities and investors. This presentation is based on 3 years of research in Turkana since oil was discovered and explores the potential for further conflict. It brings out a variety of issues, particularly governance and human security issues and analyses how these may interact with pre-existing conflict dynamics. It concludes that oil has the potential to lead to armed conflict or crime on a larger scale, and that the most crucial factor which can be either ignored or assisted, is the livelihood of pastoralists.



Kennedy Mkutu has worked on the North Rift, North East Africa, exploring issues of conflicts, gendered impacts of conflicts, state security and peace-building. More recently he has explored the impact of new oil discoveries in pastoral areas and the security implications of devolution in Kenya. He is also the author of *Guns and Governance: Pastoralist Conflict and Small Arms in North Rift, Northeast Africa*, (James Currey, Oxford).

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