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The Political Ecology of War and Famine in the Horn of Africa: Oromia in Focus
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Introduction

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¹ <https://www.facebook.com/OromoStudiesAssociation/>

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⁴ <https://reliefweb.int/report/ethiopia/ethiopia-humanitarian-update-situation-report-27-jun-2022>



Drought and mobility in the Horn of Africa in historical context

The ongoing war and famine in Oromia

- Productive human resources have moved to cities/towns in fear of government retribution. Further, the government has closed the political space and violently silenced dissent, leading to Oromo youth joining the armed resistance movement.
- Pastoralist seasonal mobility has been hampered by war and state interventions leading to an increased vulnerability of livestock to drought.
- In areas such as western Oromia, the government has systematically restricted farmers from accessing fertilizer and other farming inputs over the last four years.
- Starvation is being used as a political instrument of subjecting people to state control.
- The government's denial of drought and famine has increased the fatality level of the disaster. While the situation in pastoralist areas is underreported, the famine in Western Oromia is completely hidden from the media and public knowledge due to the government's communication blackout in the region.



- Resource expropriation in the form of land transfer to private and state investments have also contributed to the displacement and poverty of local populations.

Possible consequences

Recommendations

1. **Emergency Humanitarian support:** Unfettered humanitarian support to the affected people in southern, eastern and western Oromia, and other parts of the country is a matter of utmost urgency to save the lives of millions.
2. **Peace:** Because the underlying causes of the crisis are state violence, war and conflict, priority should be given to peace through a transformative approach considering historical and contemporary political and economic questions of the people.
3. **Resilience building:** War, drought and state interventions destroy community resilience and their adaptive capacities. Therefore, working on traditional and modern strategies of resilience building are important strategies to tackle human and manmade disasters.
4. **Political solutions:** Neither war nor famine can be depoliticized in the current Ethiopian context. While the war in Oromia is being waged to curb the people's struggle for political autonomy, resource sovereignty and cultural dignity, famine is the product of war and political suppression of productive human resources. Therefore, addressing the causes of the famine also requires finding a political solution to the ongoing war through engagement of the involved actors.