**Abyssinia Journal of
Business and Social Sciences**

The Challenges of International Powers Competition in the Horn of Africa: The IGAD Experience

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ABSTRACT

Geopolitical, economic, and security interests have recently prompted multiple international powers' involvement in the Horn of Africa. Although the region currently hosts a significant number of international powers, the challenges and impacts these powers pose to the region's peace and security and the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development's (IGAD) peace and security activities have received little attention in academic literature. Thus, the purpose of this article is to explore the challenges and impacts that international powers pose to the region's peace and security and the IGAD's efforts to promote it. The neorealist theory of international relations is utilized as a theoretical framework. The research method is qualitative. Primary and secondary data sources were employed. The findings indicate that the increasing involvement of international powers, driven by geopolitical and security concerns, has led to instability and conflict in the Horn of Africa. The presence of these powers challenges the IGAD's policy formulation, agenda-setting, implementation, decision-making, and financial autonomy, thereby affecting its performance in achieving its mandates.

Key Words: Horn of Africa, IGAD, international intervention, international powers

INTRODUCTION

The Horn of Africa has a long history of international powers' intervention. The region has consistently relied on foreign powers' interventions and effects for geopolitical, security, and economic reasons (Asnake, 2015). According to De Waal (2017), the region has had a uniquely complex colonial experience, with various types of African, Arab, and European imperial dominance. The Horn of Africa (henceforth the HoA) is also identified by Ylönen (2022) as one of the first African regions colonized during the colonial period. During the Cold War, the United States (U.S.) and the Soviet Union (USSR) competed for control over crucial maritime routes of the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean via the Horn (Byiers, 2016; Ylönen, 2022).Since the end of the Cold War, international powers have maintained their involvement in the HoA in various forms and for various reasons. Melvin (2019) found that the region has experienced new external security politics since the post-Cold War era. Asnake (2015) also stresses that the region has consistently relied on foreign powers' intervention and effects for geopolitical, security, and economic reasons. Particularly since the 2001 US terrorist attack, international powers have increased their involvement in combating terrorism and piracy while also promoting their strategic interests in the region (Melvin, 2019; Mosley et al., 2021).

Journal-homepage:https://abjol.org.et/index.php/ajbs

The Horn of Africa is currently attracting multiple international powers, including the U.S., China, Russia, European countries, Indo-Pacific States, and extra-regional powers from the Middle East and Gulf States. This article argues that a new dynamic is currently emerging in the HoA, where numerous nternational powers have become key actors in the region. Vertin (2019) and Ylönen (2022) assert that international major powers and influential actors are engaging in power rivalry and competition to influence security, political, economic, and social development in the HoA.

Although international powers have historically competed and been the source of conflicts in the HoA, the article is interested in the current dynamics of international powers' involvement and competition in the region. This article claims that there is currently renewed competition and rivalry among multiple international powers. According to Hazra and Bhaskar (2023), Africa, particularly East Africa, is growing as an important political and economic region in which major international powers compete for influence. De Waal (2017) argues that the HoA is a quintessential example of the evolution of the political marketplace in contemporary times. De Waal (2015) also reveals that the region is becoming a significant strategic security issue for the European, Asian, Middle East, and Gulf States. Vertin (2019) asserts that the HoA has recently emerged as a new geopolitical rivalry for a number of international powers. The stakes are high due to international foreign powers competing for access to and influence over the HoA and the Red Sea regions (De Waal, 2017).

Most importantly, the region is hosting several international powers' maritime naval bases and military companies. Great powers maintain global presence to protect their political, economic, and military power, and developing material capabilities is crucial for their recognition (Hazra & Bhaskar, 2023). Thus, international powers, including France, the U.S., China, Russia, Italy, and Japan, have established military and naval bases in the Horn of Africa (Melvin, 2019; Vertin, 2019; Feierstein, 2020). Djibouti, a small but important country with strategic importance, has been the main base for a number of foreign military companies.The question is what impacts and challenges the international powers' involvement has had on the Horn of Africa's peace and security and IGAD. This requires further investigation. This article intends to explore the challenges and impacts of these powers on the region's peace and security and IGAD's efforts to promote them. This article addresses two

specific questions. First, what are the impacts and repercussions of the international powers' intervention in the Horn of Africa's peace and security? What challenges does the presence of international powers pose to IGAD's efforts to promote peace and security in the region? Though the HoA hosts multiple international foreign powers, the challenges and impacts of these powers on the region's peace and security and IGAD's performance, policies, decision-making, and finances have received less attention in the literature. The article aims to fill a gap in the literature. The article presents two main arguments. First, the ongoing rivalry and competition among international powers could impact the peace and security of the Horn. Second, the presence of multiple powers could challenge IGAD's peace and security operations.

The article is divided into seven sections. The introduction is the first section. The second section delves into the research methods. The third section is the article's theoretical framework. The fourth section is devoted to a review of the empirical literature. Section five discusses the international powers' involvement and the race for military installations in the region. Section six explores the impacts and challenges of international powers on the region's peace and security, as well as IGAD's efforts to resolve crises. The final section is the conclusion.

RESEARCH METHODS

The article employed a qualitative research approach. This approach was useful for understanding the diverse perceptions and viewpoints of research participants. Creswell (2009) stressed the importance of qualitative research in understanding people's opinions of social or human concerns.

Both primary and secondary sources were employed. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews, internet websites, newspaper articles, broadcast television news, and social media outputs like YouTube. Creswell (2009) suggests that qualitative research should utilize methods like interview data and audiovisual data. Accordingly, Fieldwork sessions and interviews with IGAD personnel from the Peace and Security Division (PSD), Security Sector Program (ISSP), and the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) were conducted in Ethiopia and Kenya.

The article also involved interviews with experts in peace and security, political science, and international relations from research and academic institutions. Purposive sampling and snowballing were employed

to select participants with extensive knowledge about the issue.

Secondary data sources, such as journal articles, books, book chapters, research outputs, policy documents and briefings, and reports, were thoroughly reviewed. Furthermore, the article utilized a descriptive qualitative analysis method to analyze the data.

Theoretical Framework

The article is based on the neorealist theory of international relations. The article, utilizing the neorealist theoretical framework, asserts that states primarily interact with each other for their national interests. The presence of numerous international powers can be attributed to neorealist thinking, which aims to maximize national interests and project influence in the Horn. The article suggests that international powers' actions in the Horn of Africa are part of their power maximization strategy. John Mearsheimer's (2001) offensive realism argues that great powers always seek ways to gain an advantage over their rivals, ultimately achieving hegemony. In the anarchic system, every state employs self-help strategies to safeguard itself (Hazra & Bhaskar, 2023). Mearsheimer (2002) asserts that the international anarchic system is characterized by states seeking power and capability to protect their interests.

Furthermore, neorealists argue that the international system's anarchic structure and lack of authority leave states reliant on themselves for survival, requiring constant vigilance and conflict preparation for individual and cooperative defense (Waltz, 1979). Neorealists believe that self-help is the most effective strategy for survival. Hazra and Bhaskar (2023) observe that states can work together to contain an adversary for their survival. The authors argue that states consider the impact of others' actions on their survival strategy alongside their actions (Ibid.).

Borrowing from neorealist thoughts, the article argues that the current intense involvement of international powers in the HoA, driven by rivalry and competition, is intended to maximize their influence and maximize their national interest in the region. Vertin (2019) posits that the presence of major powers' militaries is a means to assert their influence in the region and beyond, including the Red Sea coast and the Gulf of Aden. Hazra and Bhaskar (2023) assert that China's increasing power is evident in its strategic presence in the region. Verhoeven (2018) and Melvin (2019) argue that Middle Eastern states' increasing involvement in the HoA aims to project regional leadership in the Red Sea region, driven by national

security, geopolitical, and economic interests. The article emphasized the competitiveness of international powers in the Horn, highlighting their military firms and naval bases, and their ambition to leverage their influence.

REVIEW OF EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

It is important to start by asking why the HoA has long been the primary focus of international powers' intervention and interest. Geopolitical, security, and economic issues remain crucial factors for international powers' intervention in the region. The region's strategic location near the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean has drawn the attention of numerous foreign powers. It connects three continents, including Africa, Asia, and Europe, via the sea lanes that connect the Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean.

The Horn is not only a strategically crucial region for geopolitical and security reasons but also for its geo-economic advantage. The region's location within the larger area of the Red Sea, the Nile Basin, and the Arabian Peninsula has made it a significant political and economic advantage (Mosley et al., 2021). It is strategically vital for facilitating international commerce routes to Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East (Berouk, 2011; Mosley et al., 2021).

However, international powers' interventions have frequently led to conflicts and insecurity within the HoA. Although the region is a hotspot for various conflicts in its own affairs, the intervention of international powers has significantly contributed to rising tensions and instability, particularly after the end of the Cold War (Berouk, 2011). International interventions such as colonialism, the Cold War, and the global fight against terrorism and piracy have significantly impacted the region's peace and security. During the colonial period, violent conflicts in the region were primarily attributed to the actions of colonial powers (Clapham, 2013). During the Cold War, the U.S. and USSR superpowers significantly contributed to the region's escalating insecurity and conflicts. Berouk (2011) found that the region was frequently used as a battleground for Cold War superpowers in the 1970s and 1980s.

Following the end of the Cold War, The region has been consistently shaped by various international powers. Melvin (2019), Feierstein (2020), and Mosley et al. (2021) have highlighted the increasing involvement of various international powers in the region in recent years. Melvin (2019) analyzed the impact of foreign actors from Asia, the Middle East,

Europe, and the U.S. on the Horn's external security politics since the end of the Cold War.

The region is currently attracting the intervention of several international powers. The article suggests that the presence of foreign powers signifies a new era of international intervention in the region. The article analyzed the challenges and impacts of international great powers (the U.S., China, and Russia), major European countries, Indo-Pacific States, and Middle Eastern extra-regional powers in the region.

International Powers' Involvement and Competition for Military Installation in the Horn of Africa

Although international powers have historically been involved in the Horn, their current engagement is deep and substantial. Multiple international powers have renewed their interest in the region, resulting in competition and rivalry. De Waal (2015) posits that the presence of multiple international powers indicates a renewed geopolitical and strategic interest in the region. This section discusses the recent involvement and competition of international powers, focusing on their military companies in the region.

Over the last two decades, the Horn of Africa has become a widespread destination for many foreign military firms and naval bases. Following the 9/11 terrorist attack in the U.S., several international powers established military bases in the region. Melvin (2019) highlights the presence of numerous military bases, logistics hubs, and naval forces in the maritime domain of the region. The region has been home to military and naval bases established by international powers such as France, the U.S., China, Russia, Italy, and Japan (Vertin, 2019).

France constructed a military base, Aerienne 188, in Djibouti. The military base was established to safeguard French nationals and maintain its security presence in the region (Vertin, 2019). France's presence in Djibouti, stems from its desire to maintain its influence and its military dominance in the region (Bah, 2009).

The U.S. has maintained its significant presence in the region. Despite its significant influence since the Cold War, the country remains dedicated to its global campaign against international terrorism, particularly in Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Kenya (Asnake, 2015). The US launched two initiatives, including the East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiative (EACTI) and the Combined Joint Task Force for the Horn of Africa

(AFRICOM-HOA), based in Djibouti. In 2001, the US established a military post in Lemonnier, Djibouti.

Russia has established strong engagement in the region. Its involvement has significantly increased since 2014 (Kohnert, 2022). Oultürk (2017) divulges Russia has rekindled its political, military, and economic interests in the region. Oultürk (2017) notes that Russia's desire to rejoin the Horn is motivated by two factors. First, the growing interests of China, India, Brazil, and, most notably, the U.S. in securing natural resources and energy in the region. Second, the dynamics around the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden are affecting its expanding global significance in the region.

Despite its multifaceted role, Russia's involvement is multi-sectorial, primarily focused on security and military cooperation, including arms sales in recent years (Oğultürk, 2017; Kohnert, 2022). The country established triangular military relations with Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Sudan, focusing on economic and military cooperation (Oğultürk, 2017). Vertin (2019) reports that Russia established a military base in Eritrea to enhance its security presence in the region. Russia is also reportedly increasing its engagement with Ethiopia, beyond military pacts with Eritrea and Sudan, and believes it is becoming more water-catching and significant in recent years (Oğultürk, 2017).

Italy has been actively involved, demonstrating its commitment to global competition. Melvin (2019) reports that Italy has been actively involved in the construction of military facilities since 2013. The country has a military support base in Djibouti, which was built in 2013 (Vertin, 2013). According to Vertin, this base is "the smallest of NATO country facilities that provide logistical and surveillance support to Italian warships and wider EU anti-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean" (Ibid., p. 15).

Indio-Pacific Asian powers like China, India, South Korea, and Japan have a presence in the region. Melvin (2019) identifies Asian giant countries like China, Japan, South Korea, and India as "rising powers" with significant security engagement in the HoA (p. 16). Japan has strengthened its ties with the Horn of Africa through its efforts in combating global piracy (Vertin, 2019). Melvin (2019) asserts that Japan's counter-piracy activities in the Gulf of Aden marked the initial steps towards its ongoing and expanding security commitment. Oultürk (2017) highlights Japan's presence in Djibouti. In 2011, Japan established a military base in Djibouti, which is

currently managed by the Japanese Maritime Self-Defense Forces (Vertin, 2019). Japan's increasing presence in the Indian Ocean is seen as a counterbalance to China's military presence, particularly in the Horn region (Melvin, 2019).

China is gaining momentum as a significant global player in the Horn of Africa. China's current engagement with the region is driven by its desire to establish economic and political influence in the region (Ursu & Berg, 2018). Vertin (2019) asserts the increasing involvement of Chinese military, security, and commercial interests in the region. In August 2017, China has established the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) military base in Djibouti (Vertin, 2019).

The HoA comprises international powers not only from major countries but also extra-regional powers from the Middle East and Gulf States. Since the 2000s, the Middle East and Gulf States have shown increased interest and involvement in the region (Ylönen, 2022). Their significant involvement in real estate acquisitions along the African coast, including commercial ports and military outposts, is remarkable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The Impacts and Challenges of International Powers' Competition in the Horn of Africa's Peace and Security

The impact of international powers' involvement in the Horn is a contentious issue. Despite acknowledging the significance of foreign powers in the region's peace and stability, as well as economic development, the article focuses on their impact on peace and security. The article argues that the involvement of multiple international powers, driven by national security and geopolitical interests, has negatively impacted the region's peace and security.

The article explores three negative effects of international powers' intervention. First, the participation of foreign powers complicates IGAD's efforts to resolve conflicts. Second, the involvement of multiple international powers has a considerable impact on the region's peace and security. Third, international powers influence IGAD's policy formulation, implementation, decision-making, and autonomy through their financial influence.

The Challenges of International Powers in IGAD's Conflict Resolution Activities

IGAD faces numerous challenges in achieving regional security, influenced by environmental, economic, political, historical, geopolitical, institutional, and structural factors. However, the article examines the influence of international powers on IGAD's operations, highlighting their significant challenges in addressing regional peace and security issues.

International powers can play a disruptive role in resolving regional issues by prioritizing their national interests. Grang (2015) argues that disputes often involve external parties' interests and regional implications, with external players representing their interests and exerting extra influence in party settlement or destabilizing disputes. Likewise, international powers' apathy towards IGAD's peace and security initiatives can negatively impact its activities, as their involvement in conflict resolution efforts in the region often leads to negative outcomes. Ylönen (2022) asserts that international powers' actions are primarily self-serving, seeking assistance from local, state, and non-state actors to achieve their national interests, with little consideration for the consequences of their actions in the region. Witt (2014) asserts that the interests and policies of these actors impact the regional security dynamics of the region.

Basically, IGAD grapples with security challenges arising from the influence of international interventions and their repercussions. Adetula et al. (2016) discovered that IGAD has historically relied on international powers for agenda setting, norm implementation, and financial requirements. Melvin (2019) also argues that the involvement of external powers poses challenges to regional security institutions, including IGAD. For example, IGAD's regional agenda has been significantly influenced by extra-regional powers like Egypt, Libya, and Yemen, thereby affecting the region's peace and security (Witt, 2014). Witt further speculates that these powers influenced IGAD's peace and security objectives through two primary methods. First, they exerted power by acting as peace brokers, since Egypt and Libya were both active in resolving the Somalia conflict. Second, they act as primary players in regional disputes, as Egypt has made efforts to de-escalate the emerging competition over the Nile with Ethiopia.

Moreover, IGAD faced significant challenges in resolving the South Sudan conflict due to international powers' involvement and interests (Ngunia, 2014). Mehari (2016) argues that the IGAD's peace efforts in the South Sudan conflict were consistently hindered by the competing interests of global funders. Michaele (2020) also asserts that the IGAD-Plus-led peace processes in South Sudan were challenged by the

competing interests of international and regional powers. The ICG (2015) similarly highlighted regional rivalries within IGAD and power struggles between international and extra-regional powers, including China, the U.S., and Egypt, have hindered IGAD's mediation efforts. While the IGAD-Plus in South Sudan conflict served to diminish the split within IGAD, the international community itself was constantly engaged in competing interests (Jok, 2015).

Moreover, international powers employ various strategies to exert influence over IGAD in resolving regional conflicts within the region. Specifically, IGAD's conflict resolution initiatives were challenged by similar initiatives from other international powers. Witt (2014) argues that Egypt, Libya, and Yemen have historically utilized various channels to influence IGAD's regional agenda. According to Witt, these extra-regional powers launched a peace conference to resolve the crisis in Somalia in 1998 and functioned as peace brokers in the conflict while IGAD was arranging a peace deal in Djibouti (Ibid.). Similarly, IGAD-led peace initiatives were supplemented by additional efforts pertaining to the South Sudan conflict. The Arusha Agreement, convened in Nairobi in 2015, was a meeting between the Tanzanian and South African ruling parties, Chama Cha Mapinduzi and the African National Congress, to facilitate talks between the three SPLM factions (Motsamai, 2017). The involvement of extra-regional powers in peacemaking activities can often strain regional security organizations (Informant 06 Interview, March 6, 2023).

The 2019 Sudan revolution and its subsequent crisis were also significantly influenced by international involvement, particularly from the Middle East and Gulf States. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt were reportedly instrumental in the downfall of Omar al-Bashir's 2019 regime. Feierstein (2020) posited that Saudi Arabia and the UAE fueled Sudan's 2018 political uprising against al-Bashir. The countries contacted Abdelfattah al-Burhan, a military general commanding Sudanese military activity in the Saudi-led Yemen coalition, and Hemedti, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) leader deployed there (Gallopin, 2020). Salah Gosh, Sudan's NISS head, received financial assistance from Saudi Arabia and the UAE (Hassan & Kodouda, 2019).

Since al-Bashir's ouster on April 11, 2019, various regional and international actors have played a crucial role in resolving Sudan's post-coup crisis. The AU and IGAD have played a crucial role in resolving the post-coup crisis (Vhumbunu, 2019). However, their efforts were influenced by the intervention of international actors. The UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt significantly contributed to the destabilizing effects of the IGAD and AU-led mediations (Vhumbunu, 2019). IGAD has expressed its condemnation of foreign interference in the Sudanese situation, citing concerns about the destructive role of international powers (IGAD, 2019). Similarly, in mid-2019, the AU observers reported that Saudis and Emiratis were allegedly acting as "spoilers" in Khartoum (Feierstein, 2020, p. 4). Subsequently, the AU issued a warning to foreign actors to refrain from interfering and instead supported the Sudanese-led and-owned peace process (AU, 2019). Both IGAD and AU criticized external powers' interference in Sudan (Vhumbunu, 2019).

The Tigray conflict in Ethiopia is a prime example of the involvement and impact of international powers. Yohannes and Cheeseman (2021) assert that international competition for influence in Ethiopia has impeded the UN, EU, AU, and IGAD's efforts to resolve the Tigray conflict. Donelli (2022) argues that the Tigray war set a precedent for international confrontation between major powers, potentially testing global power balance and intensifying the global dominance struggle. More importantly, the great powers displayed stark contradictions regarding the conflict and who they had supported during the course of the conflict. While China and Russia have provided support to Ethiopia's government, the US has imposed sanctions on the Ethiopian government since the beginning of the crisis (Samuel, 2021). China opposed the US's decision to impose economic sanctions on the Ethiopian government (Samuel, 2021, para. 1). Russia, along with other anti-American countries, also opposed the U.S. decision (Donelli, 2022).

Diplomatically, China and Russia have provided diplomatic support to Ethiopia's government, claiming that the internal conflict should be resolved independently. Their diplomatic support is significant in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), playing a preventive role in SC resolutions and discussions within the UN General Assembly (Samuel, 2021). Donelli (2022) emphasized China's significant role in the SC to prevent unwarranted US foreign interventions, demonstrating both diplomatic and military support for Ethiopia's government.

Furthermore, China's support for Ethiopia's government extends beyond diplomatic ties to include military support (Donelli, 2022). China has been reported to have provided military support to the

Ethiopian government in the ongoing conflict against Tigray. Donelli (2022) posited that China has been bolstered by an increasing armament supply following the implementation of U.S. sanctions. Moreover, The Ethiopian government has received military aid from Russia, including armed artillery and fighting jets like the MIG-23, Sukhoi Su-27 (Donelli, 2022).

The next question is what role IGAD played in resolving the crisis in Tigray and what implications these powers have for the organization. Initially, IGAD took a diplomatic stance to address the conflict, expressing both concern and a desire to end it. It also served as a facilitator alongside the US and EU, while the AU led the signing of the Pretoria peace deal between the Ethiopian government and the TPLF on November 02, 2022. However, The IGAD's involvement was criticized for not taking the lead in conflict resolution. The organization faced challenges from various actors. External factors like Eritrea, the Middle East, Gulf States, and major powers have impeded international community efforts like IGAD, AU, EU, and UN (Yohannes & Cheeseman, 2021). The involvement of the great powers and their impact have already been mentioned. However, the role of the Middle East and Gulf States in Ethiopia's war in Tigray should not be underestimated; rather, it needs further investigation.

Although the article focuses on the challenges that IGAD faces from international powers, it also recognizes their positive contribution to the Horn of Africa's peace and security and assists the organization. Their positive contributions to conflict resolution were seen in Sudan following South Sudan's independence in 2011, Somalia (Healy, 2011), and South Sudan (Micheale, 2020).

International Powers and their Impact on Militarization of the Horn of Africa

The presence of international powers and their competition for military bases pose threats to peace and security, leading to conflicts, militarization, and emerging security issues. First, the presence of multiple foreign powers has caused conflicts and instability in already war-torn states. Vertin (2019) asserts that "great power involvement and interest have further complicated the region's geopolitical and security landscape" (p.1). The presence of these entities has led to instability and conflicts, as seen in Ethiopia's Tigray conflict (Informant 02 interview, 24 August 2021).

Second, the presence of numerous international powers' military companies has a substantial impact on the militarization of the region. Melvin (2019) and Feierstein (2020) argue that the presence of numerous military companies and naval bases has resulted in the militarization of the region. Melvin (2019) discloses the growing number of international powers and their military deployment has promoted militarization and shifted the region's politics into a new external security dynamic. Feierstein (2020) asserts the growing interest in the region's militarization as a new hub of great power competition, particularly between the U.S and China.

Third, the presence of multinational powers and their military companies has led to the emergence of numerous emerging security issues. Byiers (2016) asserts that the existence of multiple foreign powers has raised security concerns. Their competition mainly has exposed the region to new transnational risks and challenges, such as illegal migration, terrorism, violent extremism, and unregulated fishing. The former IGAD PSD Director underscored that foreign powers' unjustified intervention has significantly impacted peace and security, inciting emerging security risks like terrorist attacks, piracy, and drug and human trafficking (ENN Television, 2018). Piracy on Somali coast persists due to maritime insecurity, international power competition, illegal migration, terrorism, and unrestricted fishing (KTN News, 2019).

The Challenges of International Powers on IGAD's Policy Formulation, Implementation, Decision-making, Autonomy, and Finance

The availability or lack of finance significantly could impact IGAD's policy formulation, implementation, decision-making, autonomy, and its overall performance. Adetula et al. (2013) underscore the importance of financial independence for the viability of IGAD. However, IGAD has faced financial difficulties to sustain its activities, demonstrating its lack of self-sufficiency. The organization's financial operations are heavily reliant on external funding. Scholars like Healy (2011), Asnake (2015), Byiers (2016), and Adetula et al. (2016), and Redie (2019) all argue that the organization has consistently relied on international funding for its operations. Its budget is primarily funded by donors, with 90% coming from external powers, and member states contributing only 10% (Byiers, 2016; Informant 02 interview, 24 August 2021). This amount of reliance on international donors paved the way for international powers to exert influence over the organization's operations.

The article explores how the financial capacity of international powers influences IGAD's policy formulation, agenda-setting, implementation,

decision-making, and autonomy. The IGAD's reliance on international donations influences its power relations with its donors. The bargaining leverage with IGAD is heavily reliant on international donors, as external support accounts for 90% of its budget (informant 02 interview, 24 August 2021). Byiers (2016) argues that IGAD's financial dependence on international actors has resulted in its political subservience to them. Who controls the finance has a substantial influence on the process and outcomes, which this article argues this could undermine the organization's power balance with the funders (Asnake, 2015).

The IGAD's reliance on external funding could also impact its agenda-setting, implementation, and decision-making capabilities. Redie (2019) claims that IGAD's financial dependence on international donors significantly affects its operations, agenda-setting, and implementations. Byiers (2016) stresses that the presence of various regional states influenced IGAD's regional strategy for implementing its policy formulation and decision-making. Asnake (2015) says that IGAD's reliance on international funding hinders its ability to establish its identity and regional standards. Healy (2011) holds IGAD accountable for its reliance on foreign funders and prioritizes the aims of external powers over its policies and agendas. An interviewee argues that donors often dictate the terms for the selection, formation, and implementation of projects, programs, and activities (Informant 02 interview, 24 August 2021).

Furthermore, the IGAD's reliance on international donors poses a significant threat to its autonomy. Critics claim that IGAD has become a tool for international funders to execute their foreign policy objectives (Byiers, 2016), indicating its dependence on their interests. More fundamentally, IGAD's autonomy and performance are being compromised due to member states' inability to fulfill their financial obligations, making it more vulnerable to international power manipulation (Redie, 2019; Byiers, 2016). Byiers (2016) asserts that donors consistently have expectations regarding the allocation of their funds. An interview with a former IGAD official confirmed that IGAD, which receives 90% of its funding from donors, is compelled to put the interests of its financiers over its own (Informant 02 interview, 24 August 2021). IGAD's reliance on external funds has led to its role as a conduit for international influence, rather than a tool for safeguarding regional autonomy (Redie, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The Horn of Africa is currently a strategic region for multiple international powers. The involvement of these powers, driven by national security and geopolitical interests, has sparked intense competition for regional and global influence. However, the growing presence and competition of international powers in the region could potentially lead to tensions, conflicts, and regional insecurity. The involvement of international powers in the region has significantly influenced the effectiveness of IGAD in resolving conflicts. The article highlights the challenges faced by international powers in IGAD's conflict resolution efforts. The influence of these powers has led to conflicts and instability in various regions, including Ethiopia's Tigray conflict, Sudan's 2019 post-coup crisis, Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan.

Furthermore, the involvement of these powers and their military companies significantly impacts the peace and security of the region, including the militarization of the region. Furthermore, the involvement of these powers and their military companies has exposed the region to emerging transnational threats, risks, and challenges, including illegal migration, international terrorism, violent extremism, and unregulated fishing.

Moreover, international powers have impacted IGAD's policy formulation, agenda-setting, implementation, decision-making, and autonomy through financial activities, potentially threatening its performance in fulfilling its mandates. The organization's budget, which accounts for 90% of its total expenditure, is primarily funded by donors, with only 10% coming from member states. This implies that the organization operates under the influence and challenges of numerous international powers. Their financial influence has made IGAD financially dependent on them, compelled it to implement their foreign policy interests.

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