



## Supply Chains and Transport Corridors in East Africa

Transport infrastructure plays a key role in boosting a country or region's economic development. The International Peace Information Service (IPIS) has a long tradition of studying peace, security, and development in Sub-Saharan Africa and TransArms has extensively researched the logistics chains of conventional arms and natural resources. They have ascertained on several occasions that the underdevelopment or degeneration of transport infrastructure is indeed a problematic issue across a number of African countries and regions.

This report analyses the current logistics situation in Eastern Africa, and the logistic challenges faced by various actors in that region. It is based on desktop research, and interviews and data collected by the authors during several field missions to East and Central Africa.

Dilapidated or underdeveloped transport infrastructure is a substantial barrier to socio-economic development and sustainable growth of many regions and sub-regions of Africa. The Northern and Central Corridor represent two examples of transport networks in Central and East Africa that are essential to connect landlocked African countries with the world market. These corridors play a vital role in transferring the countries' export commodities and in supplying local populations with consumer goods. However, both the Northern and Central Corridor are currently facing a number of challenges.

The role of the Northern Corridor is discussed in greater detail in two case studies, East Congo and South Sudan. The report describes the importance of this transport axis for both countries, and pinpoints how high logistic costs hamper trade development. Other issues that add up costs (besides logistics) include the currently critical condition of most roads and railways across the corridors; cross-border corruption; lack of security along certain (long) stretches of the road; slow implementation of harmonised rules for transport and Customs documents; and port congestion once goods reach the port of Mombasa, Kenya. Consequently, donors should be encouraged to financially support the rehabilitation of transport infrastructure, alongside the creation of feeding roads and ancillary infrastructure to truly enable the economic integration of landlocked and isolated areas. In addition to this, there is a dire need for accelerating the implementation of cross-border and regional co-operation, as well as harmonisation of legislation, to facilitate transit, import and export of commodities in Central and East Africa. In order to address these issues, the region's governments have already created relevant agencies: the Northern Corridor Transit Transport Coordination Authority and the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency.

At the time of writing, however, logistic and other challenges to cost-efficient trade and overall economic development are yet to be addressed. Further research and policy actions to effectively tackle current shortcomings are much needed. A strategy relying on a piecemeal approach (e.g. on ad hoc investments in infrastructure) is likely to result in a 'quick fix' to ship raw materials out of the African continent rather than in an effort to boost sustainable economic development.

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The Report is available online at: [www.ipisresearch.be](http://www.ipisresearch.be)

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