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PDRC Newsletter

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PDRC : Laying the groundwork for tomorrow's communities

the success story

Mogadishu : The National Reconciliation Congress

The Transitional Government of Somalia had officially announced the formation of an Independent National Reconciliation Commission (NRC) and holding the National Reconciliation Conference in Mogadishu. The decision was strongly welcomed by both the majority of the Somalis and the International Community (IC)----- to support the conference had been sent to the TFG. Although the conference was planned to start on mid June, it has been postponed to July 15, 2007, due to technical and administrative problems.

On the request of the National Reconciliation Commission, and as part of the Dialogue for

Congress Opening Ceremony

The Somali national reconciliation congress opened officially on 15 July in Mogadishu amid security concerns, boycotts of non-attendance, funding constraints as well as organizational challenges. The Somali president, Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf, the speaker of the Transitional Federal parliament, Sheikh Aden Madoobe, the Acting Prime Minister, Prof. Salim Aliyow Ibrow and high ranking of other government officials were present on the occasion of the opening. To the opening ceremony were also present foreign government



Governing Committee of the Congress

Peace Project, in line with one of the research topics, Social Reconciliation at National level, PDRC in partnership with Interpeace decided to contribute to this important endeavor, by inducting and familiarizing the Puntland delegation the ----- on reconciliatory processes and principles. The initiative was then coordinated with Puntland Administration and the envoys/emissaries of the NRC.

representatives: Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Yemen as well as the African Union and current IGAD chair. The EU and U.S. representatives were also there. President Yusuf addressed the Congress in the opening day with a long speech that touched upon various points of the current Somali political situation and the tasks of the Transitional Federal Institutions.

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Agenda of the congress

1. Adopting an appeal in support for the National Reconciliation Congress.
2. Delegates meeting with leaders of the TFG
3. Somali unity
4. Conflict resolution between and among Somali clans.
5. Disarmament and establishment of peace and security.
6. Return/repossession of property.
7. Nature and impact of Islam extremism.
8. Good governance, democratization and population census.
9. Resources and power sharing as established in the transitional charter.
10. Assessment of the deliberations, and formulation of the resolution of the congress.
11. Launching an appeal to the transitional federal institutions and international community to support the congress outcomes
12. The Rights of Women (additional agenda point)

National Governance Reconciliation Committee (NGRC)

The president appointed initially on 1st of March, 2007 a committee of 6 members and later on nominated 3 more members to the committee. The committee enjoyed a status of autonomy from the rest of the TFI. It had the following 9 members:

1. Mr. Ali Mahdi Mohamed (Hawiye: Abgal)
2. Mr. Mohamed Salah Ladane (Darod: Majerten)
3. Mr. Mohamed Nur Hufane (Dir: Isse) a substitute to

- Mr. Farah Waays Dhule
4. Mr. Ahmed Sheek Muktar (Digil & Mirifle)
5. Mr. Mohamud Jirde Hussein (Issak)
6. Mr. Abdurahman Abdi Hussein (Hawieye: Shekal)
7. Mrs. Sainab (Bahsan) Haji Ali (Dir: Gur-Gure)
8. Mr. Mohamud Omar Toto (Hawiye-Habar Gidir: Ayer)
9. Mr. Mohamed Ali Magan Dhery (Darod: Marehan)



Abdurahman Shuke
PDRC Executive Director

A message from the Director

Mogadishu: National Reconciliation ...

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The venue of the congress

The congress took place in Abdul-Aziz quarter of Mogadishu, in a former police transportation compound and warehouse. The security of the venue was very tight and all the streets from the surrounding quarters (Bondere, Shibis, Karan...) were heavily guarded and under strict surveillance. It seems that the TFG took into serious account the menace made by Islamist insurgents to blow up anyone who dared to take part to the congress.

Mogadishu violence versus the congress

In Mogadishu, as usual, sporadic gun battles took place from time to time between the forces of the TFG/Ethiopians and antigovernment groups; hand grenades were launched here and there in the markets and cross roads; targeted killings were executed, road bombs - Baghdad style - maimed civilians and security personnel equally and indiscriminately. These were the daily news flashes that overshadowed the important other daily news and achievements from the congress. The radical

redoubling de facto the original allocated figure of 1350. It was feared that clan balance might suffer from this increase, but so far no complains were made in that respect. In another respect this increase might have caused the premature ending of the congress proceedings for financial consideration. In a late interview, Ali Mahdi admitted that the participants to the congress amounted to more than 3000.



A different congress

This congress was different in many respects from the numerous previous reconciliation meetings held outside Somalia. The fact that it took place inside Somalia and particularly in Mogadishu- the epicenter of the eruption of the Somali crisis- was in itself an auspicious sign of the things that started to change direction in Somali politics. Among the delegates, selected by clan elders, no sign of the presence of the scores of war lords or consummate politicians we were accustomed to see in similar previous occasions.

Questions on the congress

After the conclusion of the congress, nevertheless, important questions around the whole event remain thus far to be answered. Without any doubt these questions are too many. But among them, the following could be considered key questions for the understanding of the reconciliation process as well as the assessment of the congress outcome:

1. Was it worth to have the congress?
2. What is the outcome of the congress?
3. What will be the impact of the congress on the advancement of the reconciliation process?



insurgents wanted to destabilize the TFG and make the country ungovernable.

The delegates

At the end of the congress the number of the delegates reached the figure of 2605,

All the parts involved in the conflict in Somalia will, most likely, give different answers, according to their perspectives and interests, to these and other related questions.

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Puntland at the NRC

Puntland delegation official number was 180 and 28 of them were female delegates. The delegates from Puntland, before coming to the congress in Mogadishu, received three days of orientation workshops sponsored by PDRC and INTERPEACE in PDRC Center in Garowe (Puntland). The delegation was highly admired and valued in respect to the activities of the congress and they were very keen to participate and exercise a moderating role when necessary.

The Diaspora at the NCR

The Diaspora presence in the congress was inadequate and seemingly under-represented. In fact the number of Diaspora delegates amounted to less than 50 members and among them just few female representatives. A number of Diaspora representatives addressed the congress on the many challenges they face in the new countries of adoption and the risks of cultural alienation the young generation are exposed to. Prof. Mohamud Siyad Togane, famous for his wit and colorful language galvanized the congress when he spoke on behalf of the Diaspora.

The titled clan elders

Almost 200 Titled Clan Elders respectively from Darod (41), Dir (27), Hawiye (38), Digil & Mirifle (38) and Clan Five (47) were present at the congress proceedings. This sized and comprehensive participation, representing the grass root communities of the entire Somali clans, makes the deliberations made by the congress undoubtedly an enormous commitment to peace and reconciliation. So it does the solemn agreements signed twice by the titled elders, once among themselves on 19 August in Mogadishu and lately with the Transitory Federal Institutions on 16 September, 2007 in Jeddah- Saudi Arabia. The agreements signed should hopefully be binding for all those who recognize and respect the authority and wisdom of their respective clan leaders.

A diya payment established the peace



PDRC researcher Mohamed Ismail at the ceremony in Buhodle

Sayid Mohamed Abdalla until the conflict ensued, Hagar and Hayaag were co-existing peacefully at Buhodle and its close environs. At the same time, they (the parties) have developed cemented traditional linkage of clan inter-marriages. In line with this, other interviewed elders described the mutual relations as resembled like the texture of the flesh and bone, concluding the attractive relations built between the two parties could remind you of "UL iyo DIIRKEED" which literally mean the trunk and the sheath of the tree.

In spite of the strong intermingling marriage relations they maintained; it happened that, in 2006 the killing at Angolo of the Imam at the mosque has exasperated the Hagar sub-clan and escalated the conflict to cause the death of 10 individuals. The deceased were 6 from the Hayaag, 3 from Hagar and 1 from Yaxye- a different Dhulbahante lineage. Neighbouring akin lineages intervened to cease the fire and mediate the parties. Thus; made the following proposal points to appease the difference that was:

- > A Diya payment of 110 camels from each person, but in the case of the Yaxye man; Hagar and Hayaag will share paying the Diyah

- > A penalty to Hagar of US\$3000 paid as result to killing the Hayaag Nabaddoon

- > A fine to Hagar of US\$1500 for killing people at the Mosque

- > A penalty to Hagar of US\$1500 in stimulating causes of the deaths occurred

- > Within a period of 3 month, each party has to succumb above conditions.

Both parties accepted the agreement; nonetheless, Hayaag has breached it in June 2007. They (Hayaag) doubted the commitment of the Hagar party to the accord; instead killed 1 man from the Hagar sub-clan at Buhodle-the district capital. Settling of scores caused the homicide of 14 men from the Hayaag party. The incidence of the dispute alarmed the

neighbouring communities and the Puntland administration to bring to an end. Therefore, the mediating committees were reinforced with administrative officers and peace building team of researchers from PDRC. That assisted the mediating committees; the conflicting parties behind the scenes to come to resolution and document in writing and making full coverage filming of the events. Within that process, PDRC has contributed US\$1500 to honour the festivity to concluding the accord. At the end, an attachment to the previous convention was also made with additional points of soothing initiatives that was:

- > The Hagar party pays the Diya of 120 camels, to each of the deceased 14 Hayaag individuals. Which 10 out of the 120 is a penalty to Hagar, for the killing of 14 against 1 man in a short span of time

- > A penalty to Hagar party of US\$5000 for the misuse of the common Dhulbahante armoury under the Buhodle district governance

- > A Diya payment from Hayaag of 120 camels to the deceased Hagar man; which 10 out of the 120 as a penalty to the Hayaag in breaching the accord laid between the parties.

The Diya ceremony at Quraca (Acacia Somnolence) Buhodle:

The ceremony took place at Quraca Buhodle and it was a colourful occasion that, both

A Diya paying ceremony between the Dhulbahante subclans of Hagar and Hayaag was held in Buhodle town in September 2007

Overview

The historic preview of the two parties was elucidated to PDRC team by the community elders from other Dhulbahante sub-clans that stated; since the downfall of the Somali liberation movement of

parties were in agreement to end the unanticipated hostility the parties experienced recently. Meanwhile, the Hagar sub-clan has managed the arrangements to paying an imposing Diya of 1810 camel as the blood compensation to the families of the deceased Hayaag people. 720 out of the 1810 were live camels that were handed over to the Hayaag, while the remaining parts of the Diya was paid in US\$ cash.

Elders from the Hagar party declared that, they were at fault and accepted the accusations the mediating committees put forward to them that say: "waxa aad sameyseen lama arag"; which literally mean "you, the Hagar party have done beyond expectations". In response to the saying, their reply was: "wax aan sameyneynaa la maqal"; that literally mean "we will do something never heard before", that was the huge Diya they paid to console the aggrieved Hayaag party. In addition, the Hagar party vowed in front of the participating communities that, they agreed to bring to the law to any culprit from their party; so as to maintain tranquillity. What have remained behind, from the pact, were the arranged inter-marriages (Godob-tir) which 20 inter-marriages was to be performed by the Hagar party and 4 inter-marriages were to be undertaken by the Hayaag sub-clan after the month of Ramadan.

Mohamed Ismail

News Flash

IT'S A FACT:

Final act of the Congress**Conclusion of Phase I on 1st of August**

Despite the many constraints, the congress entered day after day deep into its programs and it proceeded with sustained strides after the initial timid and pre-cautious beginning.

"Clan conflict resolutions", "Disarmament, establishment of peace and security" and "Returning looted properties"- were covered thoroughly by the delegates who laid down also guidelines of how to untangle long disputed issues - grievances, properties- and how to disarm militias and stop weapon proliferation. These debates concluded the first phase of the proceedings of the congress.

**From Phase I to Phase II**

The congress succeeded to advance from Phase I after days of strenuous debates to Phase II to address political issues

The congress entered its second phase with the discussion of new topics of the agenda.

"Good Governance, democratization, population census, establishment of political parties etc.", "Nature and impact of Islamic extremism", "National resources and power sharing" , "Somali Unity" and "Women's Rights"

General Mutual Forgiveness

The delegates had ample opportunity to discuss the question of forgiveness, considered a central point in the national reconciliation process, from different angles, be it through the lenses of Somali tradition, Islamic faith and through the necessity of rebuilding a peaceful Somalia. They took time to let seep these noble concepts deep into their psyche during the discussion on the agenda topic of Clan Conflict Resolution which concluded on 5th of August.

Congress final act

Somali TFG president, Mr. Abdullahi Yusuf, officially closed on 30th of August, 2007, the

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National Reconciliation Congress in a well orchestrated ceremony held in the same Hall of the congress. The President addressed the delegates, the Somali people as well as guests from the International Community, amid resounding applause and acclamations. He was visibly very happy about the results. Before the President, brief speeches were made

by the Prime Minister, Mr. Ali Geedi, and the Speaker of the House, Mr. Sheikh Aden Nur and the Chairman of NGRC, Mr. Ali Mahdi as well as the Special Representative of UN Secretary General to Somalia, Ambassador Francoise Fall and other dignitaries of

the International delegation present to the ceremony.

Mr. Ali Mahadi, the Chairman of NGRC, after his speech, handed over to the President, as the final act of the congress, a bundle of papers constituting the deliberations, on the points of the agenda, made by the congress in 45 days of discussions. The document was read out in the early morning session and approved as the awaited outcome of the National Reconciliation Congress by the delegates.

As the final act of the congress, the gesture of conveying - the document - as the outcome of the delegates' hard works by the chairman of NGRC to the President of the TFG, in the presence of the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament, was meaningful as well as symbolic in the same time. The symbolism was clear: the torch of the reconciliation rekindled by the traditional clan elders and the delegates to the congress was passed to the legislative and executive branches of the TFI in front of the witnessing eyes of the world. As a matter of fact a renewed mandate was given to the TFI (Transitional Federal Institutions) to take responsibility for and to govern accordingly the country.

Hassan Aden Mohamed
PDRC Researcher

Upcoming Events:

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