



**REPORT**

# SAAXMAYGAAG - SANGEJABIYE Reconciliation Efforts

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Puntland  
Development &  
Research Center







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# BACKGROUND

In the mid of last year, clan conflict broke out at the border between Nugaal and Sool regions, the conflict had its root causes in land claims and subsequent urbanization attempts from Hassan Ugaas on one side and Mohamed Ugar & Bahdubays on the other. The conflict turned to violence in July and September where several people were killed. Within few days, PDRC started a reconciliation between the clans to end the conflict. While using the experience gained from earlier peace processes, PDRC invited the Cagaaran peace committee that succeeded the cessation of hostilities between Omar Mohamud and Baharsame to mediate the two clans.

This has got the attention of many Somalis within and beyond Puntland regions who shared their messages of condolence and cessation of violence on the media and dispatched peace delegations to the conflict areas. On the following day, a peace delegation mission of Nugaal and Sool communities led by Islan Isse Islan Mohamed and Garad Jama Garad Ismail, peace missions have embarked on a parallel peace mission from Garowe and La'anod and accessed to fighting communities via Birta-dheer and Bocame corridors On that someday,

The October/November peace talks did not produce results as the mediation committee had members from both sides, this limited their ability to detach themselves from the conflict. After weeks of mediation however, the committee reached the conclusion that the conflict area falls under Sool region, and since both parties have a long history of residing in the area, using Sharia law they judged that neither sides can deny urbanization to the other. Hassan Ugaas delegation rejected the proposed peace deal and claimed territorial ownership, denying the other party a possibility to settle in the area.

another delegation of government officials and army commanders led by the vice-president arrived at the frontline and created a buffer-zone between the warring clan militiamen to prevent an immediate flareup of the violence. After nearly a weeklong field visit of working parallelly and collaboratively, the three peace-delegation missions succeeded to ease the tension with feuded parts and convinced them to exercise maximum restraint and resort in a peaceful means of resolving conflict.

Following this, the mediation committee, titled elders and Puntland government halted the process and called for resumption in three months with the hope that prominent titled elders would be able to resume the peace talks and convince both sides to reach an agreement. Unfortunately, on January 2022, another violent conflict erupted the area which has caused heavy casualties, more than a dozen were killed and nearly a hundred were wounded during the fighting, as well as destruction of property.

## HADH-WANAAG PEACE CONFERENCE

The Hadh-wanaag peace conference was organized by the government on January 7, 2022 and brought together more than 200 participants including the titled traditional leaders and elders of the two warring sub-clans, self-organized delegation of elders and religious groups from different regions and clans in and beyond Puntland, members of previously commissioned

peace mediation committees, Puntland government delegation of parliamentarians, ministers and army commanders led by the vice-president and civil society representatives and the media. The objective and agenda of the conference was read to the participants by the Minister of interior, democratization and federal affairs, Mohamed Abdirahman Dhabancad and covered on four main items namely i) ceasefire agreement ii) withdraw of militias from the frontline to Bocame and Birta-dheer areas iii) government forces to be deployed to takeover security responsibility in the conflict and iv) the government/vice president to appoint committee for overseeing the implementation of the ceasefire

The aim was to complete the peacebuilding initiative that the launched in January this year, when a ceasefire was reached at Hadhwanaag village. The conference was opened by the spokesperson of the mediation committee, Mr Awoowe who welcomed the participants to the meeting and shared the purpose of the meeting. The mediation group consists of 13 elders selected from different clans outside the two warring parties.

agreement including the withdraw of two militiamen from the frontline to designated places nearing at Birta-dheer and Bocame. The conference was then opened with a Islamic lecture by Sheikh Mohamud Haji Yusuf, a prominent religious scholar and member of previous mediation committee. Everyone talked and endorsed the above four proposed action-points, this was followed by the inspection of the ceasefire agreement by the designated committee member. Upon their return to Garowe, the government/vice president and the titled traditional elders of the feuding sub-clans formed a 13 member-sized committee for peace mediation and whose members come from other Darood/Harti clans than Majerten and Dhulbahante.

Then Sheikh Mohamud Halike, a prominent religious scholar narrated how Islam banned fighting between Muslim communities and called upon all sides to refrain any act that might exacerbate the problem; the sheikh reminded the two sides the brotherhood between them and enjoined all parties to obey the final decision from the mediators. Caaqil Osman the deputy reconciliation group disclosed the history of the mediatory group and affirmed to the participants the integrity and impartiality of the group. Mr Osman asserted the need to bring peace in the area and how peace is important for all humans.

## THE SECOND PHASE OF RECONCILIATION

### The Opening Day

On 1st March 2022, the second phase of the reconciliation between the two clans of Mohamed Ugaar & Bahdubays and Hassan Ugaas convened at PDRC hall. The conference which was organised by Puntland Government which invited the peacebuilding and mediation committee as well as the belligerent sides.

After that, the mediation group was sworn in before the delegates. The purpose of the swearing was strengthened and enhance trust and confidence from the sides. Another prominent Shiekh, Abdiqani Qorane indicated that no one clan can live in isolation or build a town or even village. The issue of land which was the root cause of the conflict, the sheikh told the participants that land is owned by the government and it is the one to grant anyone to construct a house or a well.

Ugaas Mohamud of Sool region speaks at the event, the traditional leader praised both sides on how they have refrained from any violence during the ceasefire. He urged the warring factions to sit together and solve their differences through the mediation. Ugaas Mohamud also criticized the government for not taking its role to mitigate the conflict.

Islan Isse Islan Mohamed highlighted the need to end this unnecessary conflict, he asked the delegates to come up with long lasting solution to the conflict and reminds them the consequence of clan conflicts. Islan Isse echoed if the two sides fail to reach an agreement, the traditional elders would intervene in the situation.

After the opening remarks of the traditional and religious leaders, the mediation committee called all delegates to sign a letter of acceptance of the decision of the committee, 21 delegates from each side signed the declaration that "they will obey and observe the decision and the outcome of the mediation group". Each delegate publicly signed the letter. After the signatures completed, several religious and government officials were invited to speak.

Awil Hassan, the governor of Nugaal region requested the delegates and the mediation committee to bring something that rejoice all participants and the community. The deputy speaker of Puntland Parliament appreciated the acceptance of both sides to the mediation and asked the mediation committee to investigate what has gone wrong. A member of Puntland parliament called Sadiq Garaad also spoke at the event, Mr Sadik who has been in the parliament since 1998 said "every side has an argument, if you come here to win and insist your argument nothing would be reached" he requested both sides to show compromise and willingness to abide what mediation committee decides.

Lastly but not least, the vice president of Puntland Ahmed Karaash concluded the event, the vice president told the audiences that everyone wants peace and encouraged warring parties to denounce violence and obey the outcome.

## STEPS BY THE COMMITTEE TO BEGIN MEDIATION

- Preparation of the committee bi-law
- Election of the chairman
- Disclosure of communities representing the case for both sides, which are 21 members from each side.
- Listening and documenting (written statements) the complaints from both sides, which compromises of land, death, wounded, and property.
- The committee while taking into consideration the religious scholars and elders, supported the two sides to agree to talk and find solutions through dialogue, however the delegates from the two sides preferred the committee to mediate.
- Thereafter, the committee prepared a workplan on the procedure that would lead to an agreement. They started to take on the cases of complaints by order of importance.
- The committee visited on 3 occasions the area where the conflicts sparked which is contested by all sides.

The committee started their work for mediating the delegates, the committee gave each clan to present its arguments and counter arguments. Each clan were given three focal speakers who presented their argument and another two were backed after clans demonstrated the limited time given to them. The committee also asked the delegates to present written cases or arguments that can be analysed, clearly showing the clans perspectives with evidence. The committee wrote the transcripts of the speeches of delegates.

The two clans argued the ownership of the land of dispute namely Saaxmaygaag and Sangejabiye, each clan showed the committee their historical roots to the area.



The argument of Hasan Ugaas clan is since the area comes under Sool region as such defacto a Dhulbahante land; while the other side claimed their tribes have lived in the area from generation to generation and that their livestock grazing area, and as such have the right to develop a settlement.

Another contentious issue that has delayed the reconciliation process was the approach that the committee shall use to solve the conflict. Hassan Ugaas clan insisted the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms be used while Mohamed Ugar and Bahdubays preferred Sharia law. It is worth noting that Sharia does not divide people into clans and gives land ownership to God and land is owned by the person who enriches it. The committee later decided to use traditional system.

Initially the two clans proposed the committee to solve the land dispute and leave alone the blood compensation issue; however, the committee objected because they cannot solve half of the problem and leave the major question of casualties that has happened during the fighting aside.

It took nearly a week to convince clans to give unwavering support to the committee and leave all matters to be solved. The two clans later agreed to cede that power to the committee. Then the committee gave every clan to present the damage it incurred during the war.

The total damage between the two clans was 33 deaths and 89 wounded, the destruction of property including demolished house in Saaxmaygaag and the missing of 12 guns from both sides. The committees then called on three sheikhs to consult and give advice about the issue. The religious elders listened the presentation of each clan and gave their views to the committee.

Another contentious issue emerged from the bloods claimed by clans when it became clear that five killed in the fighting did not belong to the fighting clans and one of the sides Mohamed Ugaar & Bah dubays refused to accept the five killed.

## COMPLAINTS BY TYPE MOHAMED UGAAR AND BAH-DUBAYS SIDE

No.	Complaint	Number	Responsibility
1.	Land	We lived in that area forever (generations upon generations)	Committee
2.	Deaths	15	Committee
3	Wounded	27	Religious Scholars
4.	Probox Car	4	Committee
5.	14B car	1	Committee
6.	AK47	4	Committee
7.	Another type of weapon	1	Committee
8.	Motor	1	Committee
9.	Destroyed Houses	6	Committee
10.	Destroyed Shops	2	Committee
11.	Well (1 complete, one in building)	2	Committee
12.	Cement	15 paquets of 25kg	Committee
13.	Building Stones	60 kaariko	Committee
14.	Building Sand	20 lawr	Committee
15	Building Wood	20	Committee

# HASSAN UGAAS SIDE

No.	Complaint	Number	Responsibility
1.	Land ownership claim	Border to Nugaal and Sool	Committee
2.	Death	18	Committee
3.	Wounded	63	Religious Scholars
4.	AK47	6	Committee
	Another type of weapon	1	Committee

## COMMITTEE'S FINAL VERDICT

On the 7th of April, the committee called in all involved parties' in PDRC hall to share the verdict. They urged all members to accept the decision of the committee, and that some of it would be hard to swallow.

## THE LAND ISSUE

After studying the history and different maps of the region, the committee decided that the contested land comes under Bocame district of Sool region.

## URBANIZATION OF SANGEJEBIYE AND SAAXMAYGAAG

The committee after much research on the grazing, marital and neighborhood relationship that has existed for long time, and at the realization that the conflict has been going for long, and the reasons that led to unsuccessful reconciliations in the past; they have reached the following decisions:

- That Sangejebiye remains an urban center (falls under Hassan Ugaas).
- That Saaxmaygaag, where the last conflict occurred be moved to 3 km Southeast, a place that used to be a city in the past (falls under Mohamed Ugaar and Bahdubays).
- That both Sangejebiye and Kaam (the new location) fall under Bocame district.

## DEATHS FROM BOTH SIDES

- Mohamed Ugaar and Bahdubays should pay blood compensation of 100 camels for each of the 13 uncontested men they have killed. They should pay in 6 months starting from April 7th 2022.
- Hassan Ugaas should pay blood compensation of 100 camels for each of the 15 men they killed from the other side. The same period is given for the payment.
- For the 5 contested deaths from Dhulbahante who were not Hassan Ugaas, the committee decided that the blood compensation of 100 camels each should be paid by Puntland government.

## REGARDING THE DIFFERENT ATTACKS

### The first attack at Saaxmaygaag

After analysing the first conflict which sparked all the rest, the committee judged Hassan Ugaas subclan to pay \$30,000.

## The second attack at Finlay

After seeing that the second conflict occurred at a place different from the contested area, the committee judged Mohamed Ugaar and Bahdubays to pay \$15,000.

## The killing of elderly man Mohamud Mohamed Abdulle (Soofe)

- He was unarmed
- Was by marriage and blood from Mohamed Ugaar and Bahdubays side
- That these two elements should have been considered as impossible to kill him as per Somali culture and Islamic law

After looking at those elements, the committee has decided that Mohamed Ugaar and Bahdubays should pay an extra 100 camels beyond the previous judgement for elderly man Soofe.

## WOUNDED FROM BOTH SIDES

The committee decided that 3 months should be given to both parties to report their wounded and the type of wounds in order to finalize the complaints in this regard. The religious scholars will then take over this matter as per their area of expertise.

## DESTROYED PROPERTY

The destroyed property from Mohamed Ugaas and Bahdubays by Hassan Ugaas in Saaxmaygaag was estimated at \$30,360. The committee judged that the government of Puntland should pay it within 10 days.

## STOLEN PROPERTY

After making sure that both parties agree that they do have the listed properties from the other side, the committee gave them a period of 2 months to return each other's property such as the weapons, and cars.

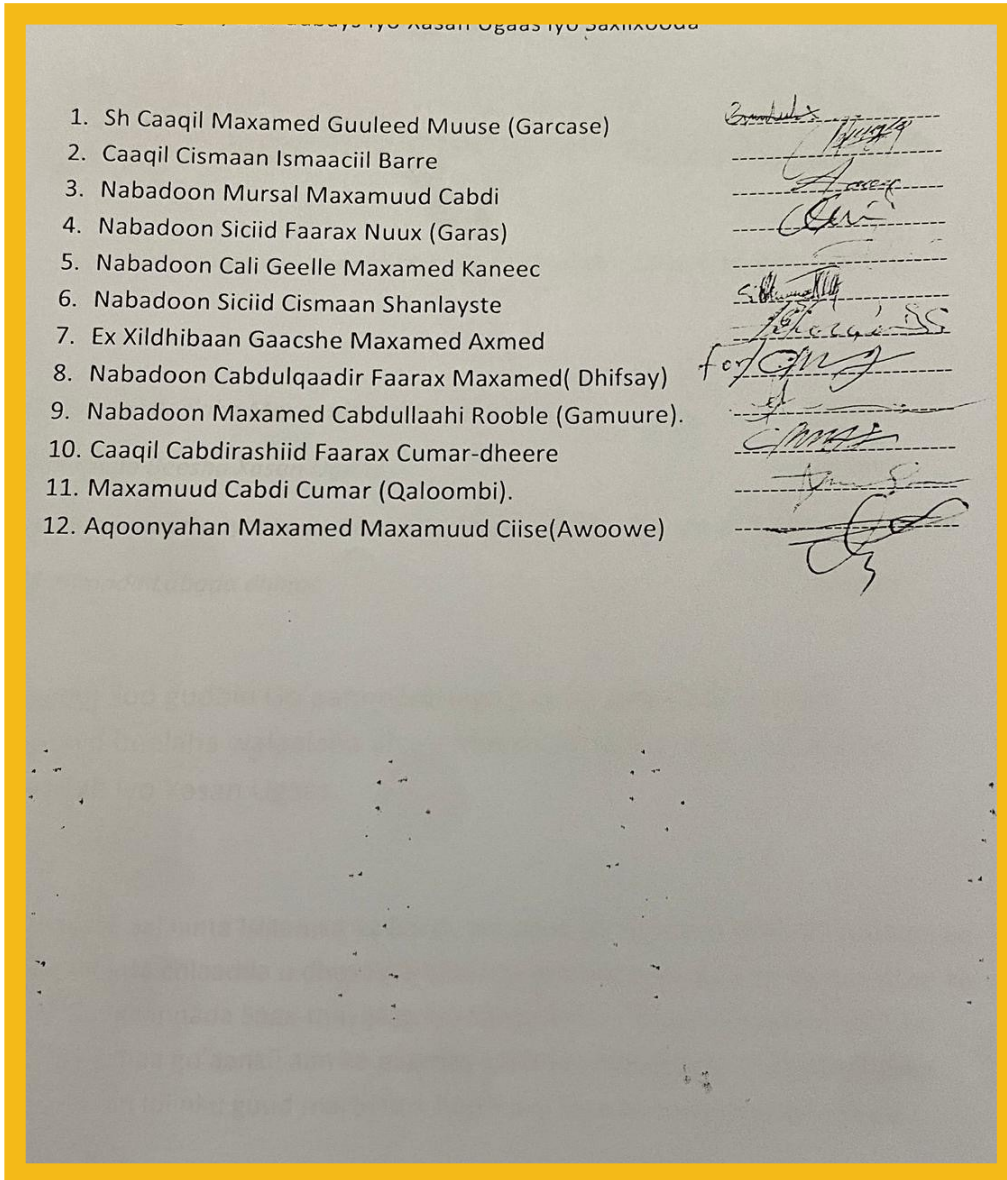
## PUNISHMENT FOR BREAKING THE AGREEMENT

- One that kills another should be arrested and judged. If he is not found or hidden, his family will be arrested and judged to pay 100 camels.
- Any of the sides that start a conflict will be judged to pay 200 camels beyond the damage done.

Any side that damages the peace through actions such as attempted murder, or stealing of property will be judged to pay \$25,000 as well as compensation for the damage done.

After going through the judgement, the committee then thanked the feuding sides for agreeing to the mediation and reconciliation efforts, they also extended their thanks to the government of Puntland, particularly vice president Ahmed Cilmi Karaash, the deputy speaker of parliament and elders from Nugaal and Sool, as well as the police and army for their role in securing the area. Finally, they thanked the PDRC for their unwavering support to the committee in their endeavors, for the time, space and funding provided to reach sustainable peace between the brotherly clans of Hassan Ugaas and Mohamed Ugaar/Bahdubays. After debates and speeches from all parties, the representatives and elders agreed on the terms stated by the committee. While there have been some complaints and refusal to follow the agreement by some members in Bocame, there have been no official communication by Hassan Ugaas on their refusal since the 7th of April 2021.

# LIST OF THE MEDIATION AND PEACEBUILDING COMMITTEE





## ABOUT **PDRC**

Puntland Development & Research Centre (PDRC) is a successor body of former War-torn Societies Project International (WSPI), which operated in Puntland during 1997-99. On October 30, 1999, the center was founded as an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit research institute dedicated to peacebuilding, promotion of democracy and respect for human rights.



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