

# FIRST PDRRC ANNUAL PEACE CONFERENCE

**POLICY BRIEFS SERIES**

**VOLUME 1**

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# SUMMARY

In Garowe, from September 21st to 23rd, 2023, the Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC) proudly hosted its first annual Peace Learning Conference, a distinguished gathering leveraging over three decades of expertise in Somali peacebuilding. This significant event aimed to foster vibrant discussions, facilitate the exchange of profound ideas, and share invaluable experiences. Its primary objective was to invigorate locally driven methods for conflict resolution and peacebuilding championed by enthusiastic stakeholders, practitioners, and community leaders. This summit provided a unique opportunity to establish vital networks among unsung community heroes and fervent peace-building advocates while serving as a platform for the voices, hardships, and sacrifices that have remained unheard of for decades.

The Peace Learning Conference, spanning three impactful days, aimed to recognize and bolster ongoing efforts toward peacebuilding and reconciliation within Somali communities. Its core objectives included facilitating dialogue and sharing strategies to resolve internal conflicts, conducting scholarly analyses to offer evidence-based solutions to underlying issues, highlighting the stories and practices of peace practitioners, and reinforcing community peace structures through exchanging experiences and establishing supportive mechanisms. Through these initiatives, the conference sought to amplify the voices and efforts of those working towards harmony and understanding within Somali society. The conference convened approximately 200 participants, comprising academics, researchers, dedicated actors, supporters, and seasoned peacebuilding practitioners. The conference was organized under the overarching theme of "Building Communal Peace and Reconciliation in Somalia."

This document consolidates seven (7) compelling Policy Briefs Series, carefully chosen from a pool of 17 submissions and presented during the conference. Authored by independent researchers, these briefs shed light on their experiences and offer illuminating lessons from the dynamic field of peacebuilding in Somalia.

## **Policy Brief Series 1: Transitional Justice Initiatives: Case of Galkayo Conflicts**

This paper focuses on how transitional justice initiatives can serve as a solution for protracted community conflicts in Somalia, particularly in the context of Galkayo. It emphasizes lessons learned from community-based transitional justice processes that can be applied in other conflict settings.

## **Policy Brief Series 2: Role of Somali Women in Peace and Reconciliation**

Examines the participation and contributions of Somali women in peace and reconciliation processes, using the Galkayo peace process as a case study. Highlights the importance of women's involvement in building sustainable peace.

## **Policy Brief Series 3: Understanding Political Conflict in Somalia**

Aims to enhance understanding of political conflict dynamics in Somalia. Explores approaches to addressing political conflicts within the Somali context, drawing on tested methodologies.

## **Policy Brief Series 4: Lessons from Government-Led Intercommunity Reconciliation in Galmudug**

Explores lessons from government-led reconciliation dialogues between the Saleebaan and Ayr communities in Galmudug, Somalia. Focuses on the effectiveness of state-sponsored reconciliation efforts in addressing inter-community conflicts.

### **Policy Brief Series 5: Lessons from Puntland's Local-Led Peace and State-Building Solutions**

Examines the experiences and lessons from Puntland's 25-year journey in implementing local-led peace and state-building initiatives. Highlights successful strategies and challenges encountered in building peace and governance at the local level.

### **Policy Brief Series 6: Prioritizing Peace or Justice in Somalia's Post-Conflict State**

This paper discusses the divergent paths of prioritizing either peace or justice in Somalia's post-conflict state and peacebuilding initiatives. It explores the tensions and trade-offs between pursuing peace and seeking justice and their implications for long-term stability.

### **Policy Brief Series 7: Somalia's Need for Sustainable Peacebuilding**

Advocates for implementing a systematic and sustainable peacebuilding solution in Somalia to ensure its existence as a nation-state. Discusses the challenges and opportunities in achieving sustainable peace in Somalia and proposes recommendations for long-term stability.

This series of Policy Briefs aims to consolidate and present policy-relevant insights for policymakers and stakeholders involved in Somalia's peacebuilding endeavors. Through this initiative, the PDRC endeavors to empower Somali professionals and practitioners with actionable knowledge, fostering a lasting impact on the nation's trajectory. It is our aspiration that these briefs will catalyze homegrown peacebuilding outcomes and solutions, guided by Somali expertise and experience.

# POLICY BRIEF SERIES 1:

## TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES AS A PANACEA FOR PROTRACTED COMMUNITY CONFLICTS IN SOMALIA: THE CASE OF GALKAYO.

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## Background

This policy brief is one of the products of the PDRC Annual Peace Learning Conference held in September 2023. The Conference 2023 aimed to showcase Somali practitioners' rich knowledge, experience, and diverse perspectives on the potential solutions to the country's protracted conflicts. The PDRC Peace Learning Policy Brief Series seeks to synthesize research articles submitted and presented during the first peace conference in 2023 into policy-relevant knowledge products available to policymakers and stakeholders in Somalia's peacebuilding initiatives. PDRC hopes that with this initiative, Somali Professionals and Practitioners will impact the country's future and lead to Somali Borne Peacebuilding Outcomes and Solutions.

## Statelessness in Somalia

Somalia has become synonymous with state failure, conflict, and protracted humanitarian emergencies since the collapse of the formal government in 1991; "Somalization" emerged as a term describing balkanization in Somalia.<sup>1</sup> Three decades later, Somalia walked a tumultuous path characterized by significant instability, civil strife, interclan conflict, displacement, and a protracted humanitarian emergency.<sup>2</sup> 2011 marked a significant turning point for Somalia, as evidenced by concerted and visible efforts to improve socio-political, economic, and security conditions.<sup>3</sup> However, challenges remain as the country is still politically fragmented and has pockets of geographical territories not under government control. Furthermore, parts of the country are still considered hotspots for inter-clan and inter-state conflict e.g., Mudug – Puntland and Galmudug conflict in Galkayo, etc.

## The Panacea: Transitional Justice Initiatives

Transitional Justice Initiatives (TJIs) refer to traditional, informal, or local justice processes that often blend elements of retaliatory and restorative justice. These initiatives aim to hold past human rights abusers accountable for their crimes.<sup>4</sup> Efforts to resolve Somalia's protracted conflict have disproportionately focused on state-building over peacebuilding, resulting in neglect of the critical aspects of peacebuilding, mutual trust, and coexistence. While TJI goals vary depending on the context, they all commonly include the fundamental recognition of individuals' dignity and, importantly, acknowledgment of past violations to prevent recurrence.<sup>5</sup>

TJIs have been successfully utilized in countries that have experienced long-term and deep-rooted conflicts, war, genocide, and mass atrocities, such as Peru, Northern Uganda, Rwanda, Mozambique, and East Timor.<sup>6</sup> TJIs thus have the potential for transformational and sustainable resolution of Somalia's protracted inter-clan / inter-state conflicts.

## TJI Case Study: The Gacaca Court System in Rwanda

In 1994, Rwanda endured the harrowing experience of the genocide, during which hundreds of thousands of people lost their lives, and countless others were severely affected. In response to this catastrophic event, the Rwandan government initiated the Gacaca system, drawing upon traditional community court practices.<sup>7</sup> Under the Gacaca system, judges elected by local communities presided over cases involving individuals accused of crimes in the genocide, with the notable exception of planning genocide. The Gacaca courts emphasized reconciliation and community involvement, thus offering a pathway for individuals accused of crimes to engage in truth-telling and accountability in exchange for leniency, mainly where genuine remorse was expressed.

1. Kimenyi, et al., 2010.
2. International Journal of Finance, 2017.
3. Desei, 2019.
4. Cade, 2018.
5. Somali Stability Fund 2021.
6. Lundy & McGovern, 2008.
7. Kimenyi, et al., 2010.

The Gacaca Trials, conducted through more than 12,000 community-led courts, tried over 1.2 million genocide-related cases throughout the country. The Gacaca Trials played the roles of (i) dispensing justice, (ii) fostering reconciliation among communities deeply scarred by the genocide, (iii) informing families and relatives about the fate of their loved ones who had been victims of the genocide, and (iv) encouraged perpetrators to acknowledge their actions, express regret, and seek reconciliation thus rebuilding community trust and unity in Rwanda.

Rwanda's experience demonstrates that community-led TJI processes can be instrumental in delivering justice and fostering long-lasting peace and social cohesion. Exploring the adaptation of such mechanisms in Galkayo and other parts of Somalia may hold promise for addressing its protracted conflicts and promoting more peaceful coexistence among its diverse communities.

## **Opportunity: TJI for Somalia**

TJIs have inherent characteristics that make them ideal for sustainable resolution of Somalia's protracted conflicts: (i) they enhance accountability and ownership of past human rights violations, (ii) they are more bottom-up, ensuring that voices of the vulnerable and marginalized are heard and heeded, (iii) are ideal in low trust and low capacity of formal justice structures, (iv) are ideal in deeply rooted historical human rights abuses settings, and (v) are ideal where non-state actors play a predominant role in peacebuilding. With these considerations in mind, Somalia's TJI requires a multifaceted and multi-actor approach for sustainable success. The key actors/stakeholders (and their roles) that should be engaged in this process include:

### **1. Government Institutions / Actors**

**1.1. Ministries of Justice at Federal and State Levels:** These are the key drivers of justice related matters at the federal and member state levels and will need to work collaboratively to ensure policy and legal coherence that provides clarity on TJIs in the country. Collaborative engagement between the federal and member state level Ministries of Justice will contribute to trust building and legitimacy of TJI initiatives at various levels. This is a critical precursor for any TJI.

**1.2. Independent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (ITRC):** Article 111 of Somalia's provisional constitution mandates the ITRC to promote national healing, foster reconciliation within society, and foster unity and solidarity among communities.<sup>8</sup> The ITRC should be constituted and operate independently while considering the Federal State Structure, i.e., the representation of all federal member states. The ITRC's existential challenges, responsive to its inactivity, include deeply entrenched divisions and animosities within the communities, thus commissioner bias, interference from the federal government, and undue external influence. These limit the commission's ability to carry out its duties effectively.

**1.3. Somalia Human Rights Commission (SHRC):** Article 111B of Somalia's provisional constitution establishes the SHRC as an independent commission mandated to (i) Promoting a Culture of Human Rights and (ii) Monitoring and Evaluating Human Rights. The SHRC's existential challenges include a poorly structured and underfunded justice architecture, ingrained harmful traditional practices such as revenge killings and FGM, as well as political interference.

### **2. Non-State Institutions/Actors**

**2.1 Conflict Resolutions, Human Rights and Peace-building Organizations:** Since Somalia's 1991 State Collapse, Non-State Actors (NSAs) have played a pivotal complementary and supplementary role in Somalia's development, peacebuilding, and state-building efforts.

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8. Sanei & Omar, 2019.

rights and conflict resolution oriented NSAs have been at the forefront of fostering positive change in the country, including brokering peace and ceasefire agreements between warring communities and warlords as well as different political factions. Somalia Stability Fund (SSF) contends that CSOs / NSAs are key actors in TJI programs, serving as the nucleus of TJIs by fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among the population.

**2.2 Media:** Somali Media plays a critical role in shaping public perception and disseminating information and has evolved in a complex journey. Operating in a regulatory vacuum, the Somali media of the past was often instrumentalized, exacerbating clan conflicts and divisions.<sup>9</sup> Modern Somali media especially social media is increasingly cognizant of the need to self-regulate and to adhere to journalism standards thus enhancing its credibility and trust as a source of information and a tool for state building. Programs such as "**CAFIS IYO ISKU GARNAQID**" (Forgiveness and Confession) facilitate the dissolution of long-standing hostilities and enmities among different segments of society.

**2.3 Somali Art and Cultural Performers:** Being an oral society, Somali Art and Cultural Performers play a vital role in Somalia's TJI discourse. For instance, the Somali poet Salaan Carabey says, "TOLOW COLKA JOOJA" which means "My clan please stop the war".<sup>10</sup> Like the media, Somali Art and Cultural Performers can also propagate conflict by rallying their supporters / clans to defend themselves. Somali poets are especially revered with their messages being readily accepted and embraced which makes them influential opinion leaders and invaluable TJI actors.

### **Somalia at a Crossroad: Prioritize Peace or Justice?**

In similar contexts marked by conflicts, war crimes, and pervasive human rights violations, fundamental questions arise: (i) Should peace or justice take precedence? (ii) Can Peace be achieved without addressing justice? (iii) Should peace agreements be signed before holding individuals accountable for their actions, and (iv) What role does justice play in the pursuit of peace? Consequently, the idea of simultaneously achieving both peace and justice becomes a daunting challenge.<sup>12</sup> One prevailing argument has been that peace cannot be attained without engaging with the perpetrators of crimes at the negotiating table and taking accountability for their actions. Proponents of justice as a means to attain peace argue that the goals of justice and peace are intrinsically intertwined and mutually reinforcing. However, achieving one does not necessarily result in the other "Signing a peace agreement does not necessarily encompass addressing justice concerns."<sup>13</sup>

TJIs provide an acceptable compromise solution and future for both victims and perpetrators while stemming future conflict incidences that are based on past crimes and conflict events. TJIs seek to rectify the scars of a tumultuous past by encouraging the acknowledgment of past violence, documenting historical atrocities, ensuring accountability for wrongdoers, and, importantly, reconstructing fractured social relationships.

Somalia has robust cultural and religious dispute resolution mechanisms and governance structures highly trusted by Somali communities. Potential TJI models for Somalia should adopt a blended model that utilizes "Xeer," Somali's Traditional Justice system complemented by an ad-hoc tribunal, thus enhancing retributive and restorative justice.<sup>14</sup>

Consistency, stakeholder support and buy-in, trust, and neutrality are key success factors in implementing TJIs. Implementing TJIs in Somalia will require consistency in implementation and continuous learning from past and ongoing TJIs, including historical analysis of both the drivers and triggers of past conflicts. Consistent funding and political goodwill will also go a long way in charting the path for a successful TJI process in Somalia.

9. Hared, 2020.

10. Stremmlau, 2020.

11. Kaariye. B. M., 2016.

12. Lundy & McGovern, 2008

13. Nagy, 2020.

14. Margherita Zuin, 2008.



## Somalia's Experience with TJI Mechanisms: The Case of Galkayo

Mudug Agreement: Signed on June 4th, 1993, in Mogadishu, this landmark peace accord marked a significant milestone in Somalia's tumultuous history. It played a pivotal role in mitigating the long-standing enmity between local communities in Galkayo, a city that had been a hotspot for internecine communal violence<sup>15</sup> since the collapse of the military government in 1991.<sup>16</sup>

**CAFIS (Forgiveness Program):** The 2018 CAFIS (Forgiveness Program) program was spearheaded by Somali-Finnish journalist Wali Hashi, with the support of other prominent Somali journalists, including Abdalla Ahmed Mumin, through a media campaign. On a historic Thursday, June 28th, the program was launched across various Somalia regions, including Mogadishu, Kismayo, Baydhabo, Galkayo, and even Nairobi. Notably, the event drew the participation of approximately five thousand guests from diverse segments of the community, comprising government officials, clerics, poets, traditional elders, musicians, journalists, women, members of the Somali diaspora, and representatives from the business community.<sup>17</sup> The CAFIS program initiated a community-led campaign aimed at fostering forgiveness within the Somali community while analyzing and amplifying the ongoing reconciliation and healing processes among the people. Furthermore, as a testament to its enduring impact, June 28th was officially recognized as "CAFIS Day" (Day of Forgiveness) within the Somali community.

Therefore, the CAFIS (Forgiveness Program) stands as a shining example of a community-driven initiative that successfully harnessed the power of media and collective determination to promote forgiveness, reconciliation, and healing. Its widespread acceptance and impact underscore the vital role that such programs play in the ongoing journey toward lasting peace and justice in Somalia and beyond.

### The Challenges of Implementing TJIs in Somalia

Somalia has several structural and governance deficiencies that pose a challenge for the successful implementation of TJIs. These challenges include:

**Lack of Dominant Legitimate Legal Structures:** while making strides toward recovery, Somalia still grapples with the aftermath of past conflicts characterized by fragile and underfunded state institutions/agencies that are ill-equipped to handle the complexities and sensitivities of TJIs. Furthermore, the exists wide ranging policy and legislative incoherence between the Federal and FMS Governance institutions which disadvantages potential for a national wide TJI. The trust and capacity of legal and governance institutions is further put into question by limited state control over most of the country, given the Al Shabaab presence in the country.

**Clannism and Negative Cultural Practices:** Clan affiliations often take precedence over legal norms in Somalia, leading to situations where clans protect and conceal perpetrators of past crimes. This undermines the state's ability to hold criminals accountable for their actions thus contributing to the deepening of clan-based conflicts especially where customary laws, such as "xeer," have sometimes taken precedence over formal justice systems.

**Role of the International Community:** While efforts continue towards state and peacebuilding in Somalia, the international community plays a critical role in aid and peacebuilding efforts. In numerous instances, individuals working under the banner of the international community have been accused of various forms of human rights violations, with the most recent accusations being leveled against AMISOM.

15. Obsiye, 2017..

16. Majid, Nisar, & Abdirahman, Khalif, 2020.

17. Nur Gedi, 2020.

**Systemic Violence Against Minorities and Women:** Somalia's patriarchal society continues to marginalize women, hence increasing their vulnerability and exposure to gender-based violence. Additionally, minority clans and marginalized groups continue to face systemic discrimination and violence<sup>18</sup>. The current 4.5 political governance structure does not guarantee equality for women and minority clans in state appointments.

**Divergent Narratives on the Past:** In Somalia, a villain to one community is a hero to another community. This contrasting narrative presents a challenge in documenting and redressing past crimes comprehensively. Ultimately, TJIs cannot succeed in an environment without consensus and willingness to open past wounds and address past injustices.

## Conclusion

Pursuing peace in Galkayo and other areas of protracted conflict in Somalia and the enduring divisions within the town's communities represents a formidable and arduous endeavor. The resulting strategy/outcomes must balance the imperative to reconcile a deeply divided population and the moral and legal duty to hold past perpetrators accountable for the crimes. The Somali Transitional Justice Initiatives (TJIs), such as the Galkayo Community Trials (GACOT) and the CAFIS (Forgiveness Program), offer a glimmer of hope for the applicability and resolution of such protracted conflicts and underscore the crucial roles played by civil society, media, and community-driven efforts.

However, it must be acknowledged that Somalia poses key structural and governance challenges to fully and effectively implementing TJIs for peace and justice. The dichotomy that has persisted between traditional cultural and religious structures and emerging formal governance legal and justice infrastructure can be transformed into an opportunity for building a more inclusive, united, and prosperous Galkayo and Somalia as a whole. This mission demands continued diligence, cooperation, and the collective will of all stakeholders involved.

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18. Lundy & McGovern, 2008.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

**Promoting Reconciliation and Healing:** "The Best Bed That a Man Can Sleep on is Peace" is a Somali Proverb that should guide the communities in Galkayo and other Somali communities impacted by protracted conflict. However, it must be acknowledged that peace without justice is only one step away from the next conflict; hence, justice is equally important. TJIs provide opportunities for the joint pursuit of peace and justice to resolve historical and protracted conflicts and human rights abuses. Reconciliation initiatives should aim to heal the wounds of the past, foster forgiveness, and build bridges among the communities; their success is highly hinged on forging a joint understanding of what constitutes historical rights abuses and a shared vision of what justice constitutes for the communities. A multi-stakeholder engagement and inclusion is important not only in establishing an enabling environment for TJIs but also for addressing institutional and cultural factors likely to pose challenges to TJIs.

**Putting Communities at the Forefront of TJIs:** The involvement of grassroots communities is an important pre-condition for the success of TJIs, and as such, TJIs efforts and solutions must be decentralized as much as possible. Importantly, communities must be allowed to define the TJI's scope and approaches to justice; addressing grievances and ensuring perpetrators take full accountability should be the priority. However, care must be taken to ensure that only credible and respected community and religious figures with a strong moral standing in their communities lead the process. This will lighten the burden of handling historical injustices from the still nascent government agencies and build a sense of community ownership and empowerment in conflict resolution.

**Strengthening Local Government Engagement in TJI:** Local governance structures play a vital role in peacebuilding and conflict resolution; they should be empowered to effectively manage and mediate conflicts within their communities through training and capacity building. Strengthening local governance contributes to peace and builds their credibility as instruments of fair and just governance, hence reducing future conflicts and delivering justice for victims.

**Promoting Media for Peace:** The Ministry of Interior, in liaison with the media associations, should train journalists and media organizations in conflict-sensitive reporting to avoid perpetuating divisions and tensions. Media campaigns, like the CAFIS program, promote active public engagements in peace and reconciliation. Further, self-regulation and adoption of ethical standards should be promoted for an objective media that contributes to state and peacebuilding.

**Engaging Civil Society:** Civil society organizations continue an active role in Galkayo's peace building efforts by acting as intermediaries and facilitating dialogue and reconciliation processes. Besides providing support to victims, they are key promoters inclusive and participatory TJIs.

**International Support and Partnerships:** Whilst providing technical and financial support to peacebuilding through TJIs, international actors should adopt a do no harm approach for their actors so that they do not contribute to deepening human rights abuses.

# POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## 2:

### THE ROLE OF SOMALI WOMEN IN PEACE AND RECONCILIATION: A COMMENTARY CASE OF GALKACYO, MUDUG REGION

**Author:** <sup>6</sup>Asha Gelle Dirie

The Executive Director of the TAG Foundation, and former Minister of Women Development and Family Affairs in Puntland,

Puntland Women have been instrumental in building collective peace activism, where they have demonstrated that they are influential in peacebuilding. For instance, Puntland Women leaders have engaged communities, encouraging their participation in peace talks and emphasizing the importance of implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which focuses on women, peace, and security (WPS). Their advocacy for women's inclusion in conflict prevention, peacemaking, negotiations, agreements, and peace support operations equal to men.

A notable example of Puntland Women's impact in their involvement in resolving clan conflicts in the Cagaare area near Burtinle district of Nugal Region between 2005 and 2007. Under the stewardship of Mrs. Asha Gelle who as the Minister of the Minister Women Development and Family Affairs in Puntland took on a vital role in mediating and resolving these conflicts. This successful endeavor led to the establishment of the Puntland Women Peace Networks (PWPN) and its subsequent legal registration. The PWPN continues to actively engage in peace and state-building efforts throughout Puntland.

The dedication and proactive engagement of Puntland Women in peacebuilding efforts highlight their commitment to creating a more peaceful and inclusive society in Somalia. Their contributions serve as an inspiration and a testament to the important role that women play in shaping the future of their communities and the nation as a whole.

## **The Role of Women in the Galkacyo Peace and Reconciliation Process**

Galkacyo town is a divided city administered/governed by two different federal member states (Puntland & Galmudug) which has had political differences resulting from chronic/endemic clan conflicts. Interclan conflicts in Galkacyo have led to the loss of lives of innocent people, displacement, loss and wastage of resources, destruction of public infrastructure, and disruption of education and health services. Furthermore, the chronic interclan conflict has led to unemployment, business opportunities, and multiplied differences between the clan elders and politicians, and prolonged the conflict and disagreements among the people of Galkacyo Town.

Galkacyo's women have been at the forefront in initiating peace mobilization discussions and engaging Radio and TV messages for peace and stability. Further, they have been engaged in and engaged with Joint Peace Committees composed of community elders, women's peace network, youth committees, business committees, and a joint security police force, which led to the end of the Galkacyo clan war and sustained peaceful environment.

The Galkacyo Joint Peace Committees developed peace agreements through community dialogues aimed at ending interclan conflicts and resolving clan differences. With the support of the Somali Federal States, Federal member states, regional administrations, international communities, and peace-loving individuals, the committees ended the Galkacyo clan wars and conflicts in 2017.

During the Galkacyo peace dialogue, information messages (stickers) were disseminated, Radio and TV peace interviews aired, and public billboards with peace messages were erected throughout the entire city. Subsequent meetings and workshops conducted to the peace committees such as women groups, community elders, youth, religious groups, joint police, justice institutions, business groups, peace-loving individuals, and selected insurgents).

The joint stakeholder efforts have led to sustained peace from 2017 in Galkacyo town and the surrounding villages. The Peace in Galkacyo and surrounding villages have been bolstered/supported by the signed peace treaties which are respected. After the peace agreement signed by both sides, the Joint Peace Committees took over the outlook and follow-up responsibilities to resolve if any disagreements or new signs of conflicts happen. In Galkacyo, the role of women in peacebuilding has gained recognition and acknowledgement from other stakeholders involved in conflict mediation and peacebuilding processes. Their contributions have been valued, leading to increased representation and participation of Galkacyo women in peace negotiations and the development of implementation plans.

Some of the notable achievements and impacts of the Galkacyo Peace Agreements include:

- Launched peace agreement and cooperation to end the conflicts signed by community stakeholders (women, youth groups, elders, religious groups, business community, regional and district authorities.)
- Ended media (Radio/TV) led war programs and promoted peace and coexistence.
- Establishment of integrated and recognized peace committees in all sectors, including women, youth, elders, religious groups, and the business community.
- Established Joint community policing to secure the entire town, grazing area, and settlements.
- Conducted Regular peace meetings/gatherings for all peace stakeholders, including selected prominent elders, clan militia leaders, women, and youth, to end the retaliations and conflicts throughout the city and the surrounding settlements.
- End of patrolling clan militias and assigned outside the town and diaspora conflict investors.
- A regular radio and TV program that promotes peace and ends conflict among the warring functions of Galkacyo City.
- Maintains meetings, workshops, and conferences that promote peace and heal the wounds and continue peace and stability in the entire Mudug Region.
- Disseminated peace messages stickers throughout the town and consigned the public places, hotels, restaurants, and marketplaces facilitated the community to accept peace.
- Aired and broadcast peace interviews of the prominent people in both Puntland and Galmudug to strengthen the peace agreements.
- Mobilized youth groups by performing good practices, i.e. conducting friendly events, youth exchanging ideas that promote peace and stability, ending the concept of “GUN,” and replacing guns with the “PEN”.
- Strengthen prospects for peaceful coexistence and reconciliation and decline and restrict the return of new violence.
- Increased peaceful environment and building confidence.
- Motivated conflict transformation process and inspiration to engage through the use of peace messages.
- Implementation of peace agreements, launching decisions on ending conflicts between the warring functions.
- Enduring awareness, integration, and understanding of peace and co-existence.
- Conveyed trust building and satisfaction about the sustaining peace processes and the security recovery.

## **Challenges of Women's Peacebuilding**

Despite the capacity and potential, Somali women continue to be underrepresented in formal peace negotiations and the implementation of peace treaties and agreements. This underrepresentation is primarily due to the societal setup that favors patriarchal systems, where power and decision-making authority are often concentrated in the hands of men.

Male leaders often exclude women, denying them equal access to decision-making platforms and relegating them to informal peacebuilding efforts. In the early days of the civil war, Somali women actively engaged in peacebuilding efforts through grassroots initiatives and community mobilization; women played a crucial role in mediating conflicts and fostering dialogue at the local level.

Efforts are being made to address the gender gap in peacebuilding and ensure the meaningful participation of women. International organizations, local NGOs, and civil society groups are advocating for gender-responsive approaches and working to create spaces for women's inclusion in decision-making and peacebuilding processes.

Women's Peace Networks have emerged as important platforms for consolidating the experiences and voices of Somali women in peacebuilding. These networks provide spaces for women to share their perspectives, enhance their skills in mediation and conflict resolution, and advocate for their participation in the formal peace processes. From 2000 to 2003, Galkacyo Women's role in peacebuilding has grown due to its harmonization, recognition and acknowledgement of their involvement by other stakeholders and actors in the conflict mediation and peace building processes. Indeed, Galkacyo Women have made a significant contribution to the resultant sustained peace in the divided city of Galkacyo which has become peaceful. Increasingly, Galkacyo Women are represented in peace negotiations and their implementation plans.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations

Based on the Galkacyo peace and stability maintained for the last couple of years in the divided city of Galkacyo, this brief recommends three key steps that will be essential the sustainability of the signed Galkacyo peace agreement:

- Mapping exercise: to better understand (i) the complexity/dynamics of conflict environments in Galkacyo; and (ii) the interests, objectives, and actions of stakeholders. This is essential in addressing the drivers and triggers of conflict in Galkacyo while also providing vital lessons that can be replicated in other Somalia regions with similar conflicts.
- Risk and opportunity assessment: Identifying the negative and positive ways in which the peace and conflict environment could impact peacebuilding initiatives.
- Peace and conflict impact assessment: Identifying the ways in which the initiative could create or worsen conflicts or contribute to peacebuilding. This assessment should be conducted pre-initiative, during the initiative, and post-initiative, thus contributing to planning, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Promote effective / functional inclusion and participation of women, youth and other marginalized groups in peace building and governance initiatives and structures e.g. community peace committees, community dialogues, etc.

## CONCLUSION

The participation and engagement of women in community peace initiatives and structures has a positive effect on overall success of these initiatives and structures in the attainment of community peace and ultimately in state building. Women Peace Networks have emerged and continue to be critical platforms through which the voices of women in peace and state building efforts are amplified in Somalia.

It is important to continue addressing the structural barriers that hinder women's full participation in peacebuilding and to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in all aspects of the peace process. By harnessing the potential of Somali women as peacebuilders, greater progress can be achieved in building sustainable peace and reconciliation in Galkacyo and beyond.



# POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## 3:

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL  
CONFLICT IN SOMALIA “TESTED  
AND POTENTIAL LOCAL  
PEACEBUILDING APPROACHES IN  
SOMALIA.”

**Author:** <sup>6</sup> Ahmed Jama

Independent Researcher, authors articles on Education for social development, Climate change and conflict in Horn of Africa.

## Past and Current Conflicts in Somalia

Somalia has been associated with prolonged conflict over three decades. Previously, conflicts in Somalia were often driven by competing clan interests attempting to assert control over other clans due to the absence of a functioning government. Upon the re-establishment of a formal government in Somalia, there were hopes that the number of conflicts and their occurrence in the country would decrease. Although some progress has been achieved, it has been slow and gradual, and more work will need to be done.

Conflict in Somalia has socio-political, economic, and humanitarian implications. Destitute and vulnerable communities are the most impacted by displacement occasioned by conflict in the country. Displacement of people in urban areas leads to increased competition for scarce resources, contributing to rangeland degradation and perpetual urban conflict.

Current incidences of conflict are political and based on various forms/aspects of constitutional/political crisis. The local factors of political conflicts include (i) internal factors - social, economic (scarce resources), political (constitutional amendments, electoral processes); (ii) external factors; geo-political and strategic international interests, e.g., war on terror, international maritime interests, etc.

Existing/commonly utilized conflict resolution mechanisms/approaches include (i) political agreements (among political stakeholders), (ii) traditional elders (*Isimo*) in response to the political chaos, while inter-society conflict is resolved by (i) the traditional leaders (*Isimo*), (ii) clan leaders (*Nabadoono*), and (iii) religious scholars (*Culimo*) through social reconciliation process or local governance led approaches. Non-state actors, especially LNSAs, play a critical role in Somalia's conflict resolution processes for localized and higher-level conflicts.

### **Past Incidences of Localized Conflicts in Somalia**

**Jubbaland State:** The root causes of conflict in Jubbaland are: (i) Environmental (scarce natural resources including land and water, natural resources exploitation), (ii) Socio-economic (population pressure, poverty, criminality & terrorism, unregulated & exploitative investment), (iii) governance-related (weak governance, weak land administration, politics of exclusion, capture of state instruments, chaotic urbanization).<sup>19</sup>

The political conflict in Gedo and Jubaland embodies multi-faceted conflict and is based on, among other things, (i) internal political issues from Jubbaland state House, Villa Somalia, and inter-clan social conflicts (Clan composition in the region is diverse – having different political & social interests) and (ii) external transboundary political issues from Kenya and Ethiopia. The Gedo region hosts Somali National Armed Forces (SNA), National Intelligence Security and Agency (NISA) troops, and African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) troops made up of Ethiopian and Kenyan forces. The region is also widely occupied by the Al-Shabaab Terrorist group and has experienced a high number of airstrikes at an excessive cost to human lives, communication and public transportation infrastructure.

Political and social contestations fueled the 2017 - 2022 Gedo Conflict; the constitutional crisis associated with Jubbaland's presidential elections coupled with Federal Leadership interference in the Gedo region's political process. Conflict in Gedo has the potential to cause higher-level impacts especially on the Somali Federal elections (Gedo region selection of parliamentary seats). On 9 May 2022, Sheikh Adan Madobe, Somalia's Lower House Speaker, certified 16 MPs selected in El-Wak as the legitimately elected MPs for Gedo region<sup>20</sup> locking out 8 MPs who had been elected in Garbaharey.

19. UNHABITAT, 2021

20. Goobjoognews, 2022

This was in contravention of local political arrangements whereby eight seats were reserved for Garbaharey and eight seats for El-Wak, thus making up the 16 Gedo seats; the two elections (Garbahaarey and El-Wak) had been reportedly held by Farmaajo's supporters.

Jubbaland's Kismayo-based government has given increasing focus to the crisis in Gedo with the nomination of the governor<sup>21</sup> and deputy governor<sup>22</sup>. The conference held on the 16th-18th Aug 2023 led to a communique containing 13 points, including "To hold forgiveness and conflict resolution meeting for the traditional leaders in Gedo on 15th October 2023".<sup>23</sup> Further, high-ranking officials from the Jubbaland State Government, led by Mohamoud Sayid Adam, the first Vice President of Jubbaland, accompanied by Yusuf Hussein Osman (Dhuumaal), the minister of internal security, and Mohamed Ibrahim (Oogle), the minister of interior affairs, have been engaged in the Gedo Peace Conference.

Southwest State: The state comprises of Bay, Bakol, and Lower Shabelle regions with access to supply routes being its biggest challenge, given its lack of seaport which forces it to rely on either the Mogadishu or Kismayo seaports. Terrorism and seasonal flooding significantly impact the region due to supply route disruptions. Like Jubbaland, SWS has a high Al-Shabaab concentration/occupation, and as such military conflict is a predominant factor with the region hosting the SNA and ATMIS forces.

Political conflict in SWS is associated with electoral processes and constitutional mandates. For instance "in December 2022, violence broke out in Baidoa, the state's temporary capital, as security forces loyal to Southwest president Abdiyaziz Hassan Laftagareen raided the residence of Mohamed Adan Ibrahim (Farkeeti), the former federal minister of finance and a presidential contender".<sup>24</sup> The crisis stemmed from the extension term of Southwest's president (One year extension, from December 2022 to December 2023); it was resolved through political reconciliation and consensus building on new electoral timelines.<sup>25</sup> Consensus building was facilitated by the FGS Lower House Speaker and the FGS President who brought together the then-sitting president of SWS and Presidential SWS Candidates under the banner "Southwest Somali Rescue Forum - SSRF".

The second significant conflict in SWS was between military actors pitting the SNA and Darawish forces in Barawe over the killing of SNA Soldiers. The conflict was condemned by SWS-affiliated Federal MPs whilst the Lower House through its Speaker appointed a 10-member committee to investigate the incident. The FGS Minister of Defense visited Barawe in June 2023 to address tensions pointing to the significance of the district to the country's liberation from the Al-Shabaab menace and calling for action against the responsible parties.

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21. Abdullahi Abdi Jama

22. Osman Nur Haji "Moallimu"

23. Jubbaland TV, 2023.

24. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies 2022 – Somalia State: Report

25. PuntlandPost, 2023

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There have been consistent locally-led solutions to conflict resolution such as: (i) reconciliation meetings by communities in the Bay Region and (ii) the establishment of local district councils in select districts (Wajid, Ceel-Barde, and Barawe)<sup>27</sup>

**Galmudug State:** Located in central Somalia, Galmudug State is made up of Mudug and Southern Galkayo and hosts the SNA, NISA, and ATMIS. While Galmudug is currently experiencing relative stability, the state has historically experienced a combination of clan and interstate conflicts. The inter-clan conflict has primarily been based on (i) natural resources i.e., land, water issues, grazing, and (ii) revenge killings and blood compensation. Intercommunity reconciliation meetings resulting in interclan social agreements have been a significant local conflict resolution mechanism.

**Labagle Village** – a conflict that began over drinking water well in Aug 2022 left 20 people killed in fighting that involved clan militia from Abudwak and Adado districts in Galmudug.<sup>28</sup> Dhabbad – the violent conflict between the Wagardhac and Saleemaan clans over grazing lands resulted in the killing of 20 people for the two clans which have been at war for over 40 years. The Galmudug State brokered a permanent peace agreement in Oct 2022.<sup>29</sup> Other notable conflict incidences include clashes in the Balanballe district in the Galgadud region and recurring incidents in the vicinity of Af-barwako & Towfiq, which are contested and are under the control of the Galmudug state and the Puntland state, respectively. Political conflict remains an existential threat to the state of Galmudug, especially with the extension of the presidential term limits and constitutional amendments.

**Hirshabelle State:** Located in South Central Somalia, Hirshabelle is the youngest FMS, having been established in Oct 2016. Hirshabelle, like the rest of the country, has had considerable experience with both political and inter-clan conflict, the two being often interconnected. Internal and externally driven political conflict has had a significant impact on the state, e.g. (i) the dispute of the federal election in the Hiran region between residents in Beletweyne and President Gudlawe in 2021/2022.<sup>30</sup>

26. RadioKismayo, 2023

27. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, Somalia State; Report, 2021

28. Hiiraanonline, 2022. Galmudug calls for end to clan clashes in Galgadud region,

29. Heritage Institute for Policy Studies, Somalia state; Report, 2021

30. Wardoonnews, 2022

In 2023, following the dismissal of the Governor of Hiran Region through a presidential decree,<sup>31</sup> Hirshabelle again experienced political conflict; the dismissed governor refused to relinquish his position and sought to declare Hiran's partition from the state.<sup>32</sup> Simultaneously, the president through a presidential decree<sup>33</sup> dismissed Hiran's deputy security and deputy chief of reconciliation and federal affairs of Hiran region.

**Puntland State:** Second to Somaliland, Puntland has the longest-running governance structure compared to the rest of the FMS and has attained relative stability. Conflict in Puntland is predominantly inter-state and political with few pockets and incidences of inter-community conflict. Political conflict has often been associated with electoral law, policy, and processes. Furthermore, ad hoc and non-consensus-based constitutional and legislative changes have often triggered conflict, especially in Garowe, the state capital of Puntland. In 2023, a constitutional amendment that increased the number of political associations resulting from the Local Council Elections from three to eight triggered conflict in Garowe. Over Nov – Dec 2023 and Early Jan 2024, electoral-related conflicts persisted in Garowe, bringing the town to a near standstill.

**The Status of SSC – Khatumo Administration:** “On February 6, 2023, violence erupted in Las Anod town as violent clashes occurred between Somaliland forces and local forces following weeks of protests sparked after the assassination of Abdifatah Abdullahi Abdi, a local businessman also known as Hadrawi, in late December 2022. Consequently, the SSC Khatumo expressed its intention to secede and rejoin the FGS. SSC Khatumo took over the control of the main military bases of Somaliland in the Sool region, including Goojacadde, by force on August 25, 2023, and seized tanks, artillery, and other heavy armaments among the military weapons from Somaliland, and captured prisoners of war.<sup>34</sup> By 31st Mar 2023, the humanitarian cost of the conflict was estimated at over 542,200 people displaced and 300 dead.

**Federal Government of Somalia (FGS):** Just like its Federal Member States, the Federal Government of Somalia has also seen its fair share of politically driven conflict, with Banadir being the epicenter of this conflict. Similarly, the political conflict affecting the operations of the FGS has primarily been caused by weak/ineffective governance structures and agencies, and non-consensus-based unilateral changes in constitutional and legislative provisions.

Delays in electoral timelines and extension of mandates beyond the set constitutional and legal provisions have often led to political clashes and crisis. Examples of high tension and political conflict incidences include: (i) Somali protesters clashed in Mogadishu over illegal/contested extension of the presidential term on February 19, 2021,<sup>35</sup> (ii) 14th April 2021 Somalia's Upper House Parliament terms unconstitutional the Lower House approval of the Presidential Mandate extending Farmaajo's presidential term limits by two years on 12 April 2021,<sup>36</sup> (iii) Rival security factions set up battle lines in Mogadishu on 27th April 2021 after the prime minister denounced a proposed extension of the presidential term;<sup>37</sup> (iv) Dec 27th 2021, FGS Political Crisis when Prime Minister, Mr. Roble declined his dismissal by FGS President Farmaajo, over corruption allegations. Mr. Roble termed the dismissal as “a blatant attempt to overthrow the government, the constitution and the laws of the land.”<sup>38</sup>

31. [President of Hirshabelle state House's Decree](#)

32. [BBC Somali, 2023](#)

33. [Presidential decree: dismissal and nomination of Hiran regional officials](#)

34. [Press Release SSC Khaatumo](#)

35. Reuters, Somali government forces, opposition clash in Mogadishu over election protest, 2021

36. New York Times, 2021. Somalia's President Extends Term by Two Years,

37. Reuters, Somalia's PM rejects proposed presidential term extension , 2021

38. New York Times, 2021. Somalia's President Suspends Prime Minister over Corruption Allegations.

## Immediate and Long-term Strategies to Resolve Political and Intercommunity Conflict in Somalia

**1. National Consultative Council (NCC):** The NCC brings together the leaders of the Federal Government and the federal member states in Somalia.<sup>39</sup> The NCC is convened by the FGS and plays a crucial role in addressing important issues facing Somalia including high-level resolution of state and federal level political and security crisis/conflicts.<sup>40</sup> Essentially, the NCC is a de facto high-level platform for executive leaders at FGS and FMS levels in Somalia who negotiate and agree on contentious political issues through ad hoc meetings.<sup>41</sup> The NCC has had mixed outcomes in resolving political conflict; the best evidence is President Deni of Puntland skipping several NCC meetings (from Dec 2022) in the run-up to the Federal Elections in 2023. Ultimately, the NCC must make more commitment to ensuring and attaining “Inclusive politics and reconciliation.”

**2. Completion of the Provisional Somali Constitution:** Since the approval of the Provisional Somali Constitution by the National Constituent Assembly (NCA), there remain several contentious constitutional issues, key among them being: (i) the structure of the federal legislature, executive, and the judiciary; (ii) division of power and resources between the federal and the state governments; and (iii) the status of the Capital City (Mogadishu). In 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and six Somali political leaders finally negotiated the Federal Provisional constitution,<sup>42</sup> and established the process for constitution review.<sup>43</sup> The constitutional review process has been at best tumultuous and has triggered different forms of political contestations / conflicts in Somalia.

The completion of the Provisional Somali Constitution’s review process depends on; (i) harmonizing the FMS constitutions to the FGS constitution, (ii) determination/consensus of the status of the capital, (iii) consensus on Somalia’s natural resources, (iv) consensus on elections and associated systems, (v) allocation of power, and public finance, (vi) Somalia – Somaliland talks, and the status of Sool, Sanaag and Cayn (SSC) – Khatumo.

**3. Promoting Transparent, Accountable & Trusted Democratization Processes & Institutions in Somalia:** Unresponsive, non-consultative and unilateral constitutional and legislative changes revolving around the electoral process have been a key trigger of conflict in Somalia at both the federal and the FMS levels. As such, effective support, and nurturing of the democratization process in Somalia is a sustainable solution for political and social conflicts; it also prevents conflicts among politicians, civil societies, and clan leaders (*Isimo*) given their hardline political positions. Furthermore, there is added value in strengthening independent democratic institutions such as Electoral Commissions, the constitution, Judicial commissions, parliament, and its commissions, etc. Puntland’s recent elections and the role played by TPEC (Transitional Puntland Electoral Commission, currently PEC) provide a case study from which the rest of the country can draw their lessons and inspirations. Furthermore, the role played by the traditional and religious structures as well as the LNSAs and the business and professional communities give key insights on the resolution of political conflict, especially during an electioneering period.

**4. Positive Utilization of Social media as a Solution to Political Conflict in Somalia:** Used positively, social media has immense potential for contribution to all facets of society from business, education, and health to civic and voter awareness as well as being an advocacy building and an awareness-raising platform. Harnessed correctly, social media can be used to promote the resolution of conflict and to build public confidence in accountable governance and political processes. To control the social media platforms so that people don’t use them negatively and prevent hostilities among Somalis, the government and Internet Service Providers (ISP) have to set up policies and regulations for the social media platforms to promote peace.

39. UNSC, 2023. Somalia Situation Report: Report of the Secretary General

40. [Somali President Convenes National Consultative Council in Capital](#)

41. [Agreements-on-power-allocation-and-the-judiciary-through-somalias-national-consultative-council](#)

42. Ambassador Augustine Mahiga was the Special Representative. The six Somali signatories were: Sharif Sheikh Ahmed, president of Transitional Federal Government, Prime minister Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Ahmed, Puntland President Abdirahman Mohamed Farole, Galmudug President Ahmed Alim and Abdulkadir Moalim Nur, leader of Ahlusunna Wal-Jama.

43. Afyare E., 2022

# CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Political and intercommunity conflict are interconnected and have a high impact on Somali society and peace-building efforts in the country. Political processes lacking in transparency and accountability in Somalia's context which is characterized by low trust among the political actors as well as low capacity and easily influenced political governance institutions will often trigger/drive political and interclan conflict at both the FMS and Federal Government Levels.

FGS political leadership has a role to play at the FMS level peace and state building aspirations. Political interference by FGS leaders especially against sitting FMS President's and leaders has the potential to trigger and escalate conflict at the FMSs. FGS political leaders should focus on supporting peacebuilding processes at FMS levels and resist the urge to impose their political choices on the FMS. FGS political leaders should drive consensus building at the FMS without showing bias or supporting political factions or clans at the FMSs; political and clan neutrality is very important for national leadership.

Political contests will often take clan dimensions with clans being used to defend their politicians, this intricate and complex relationship of politics to clan dynamics in Somalia should be handled delicately. Interclan reconciliation and peacebuilding mechanisms bringing together clan and religious leaders should be sustainably supported while also increasing the involvement of LNSAs, business communities, and Special Interest Group representatives. These can then be platforms for building community and political consensus on contentious issues while also sanctioning warmongers and inciters of political and clan conflict.

Other key initiatives that will contribute to Peace in Somalia and its Federal Member States are:

1. The traditional leaders (*Isimo*), clan leaders (*Nabadonno*), and religious scholars (*Culimada*) are the base foundation of dialogue (Peace negotiations) in Somalia, and they have been taking part and playing an important role in any incident of emerged conflict. Furthermore, they are honored (more admired and respected) in our social system.
2. Consistent support and efforts towards completion of the Somali constitutional review process and finalization of the Provisional Somali constitution.
3. Harmonization of the Federal member State constitutions to the Somali reviewed Provisional Constitution.
4. The FGS, FMS, and civil societies must initiate political stability and a reliable security system, and the first baby step will be stronger community policing as well as creating independent security sectors from politics usage (prevent power of abuse).
5. The NCC must be more committed to "Inclusive politics and reconciliation" and clarify the status of SSC—Khatumo Administration and its inclusion as a member of the NCC if it becomes a state. Furthermore, Puntland should join the negotiation process.

# POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## 4:

### LESSONS FROM GOVERNMENT LED INTERCOMMUNITY RECONILIATION DIALOGUE IN SALEEBAAAN AND AYR COMMUNITIES, GALMUDUG, SOMALIA

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## Introduction and Background

### *Saleebaan and Ayr Communities*

The Saleebaan and Ayr communities of the Habargidir clan share a rich and multifaceted history influenced by cultural, social, economic, and political ties.<sup>44</sup> They boast of a longstanding history of coexistence over numerous centuries with close geographical proximity playing a pivotal role in their interactions. Their proximity catalyzed frequent intercultural exchanges and interactions, culminating in the development of a shared historical legacy and a shared brotherhood because of cultural interchange / exchange of traditions, customs, and practices. Socially, they have exhibited a blend of cooperation, collaboration, and sporadic conflicts with major interaction points being through intermarriages, trade, and communal gatherings. Given their proximity, the communities engage in trade and economic activities leading to cooperation for mutual benefit further solidifying their interdependence as well as joint economic growth and development. Politically, the two communities have experienced the same political influences over time right from colonization to the recent and present-day political power struggles. They have occasionally experienced tension because of historical occurrences like shifting governing arrangements or the intrusion of outside power.

The intercommunity relationship / bond between the Saleebaan and Ayr populations is anything but static; it has been dynamic and constantly evolved between time of peace and collaboration as well as more difficult times of tension and conflict between the two. Ultimately, the historical relationship between the Saleebaan and Ayr communities is a tapestry woven with threads of cooperation, cultural exchange, economic interdependence, and occasional strife. It is a dynamic relationship that mirrors the complexities inherent in human interactions, bearing the imprints of the historical context in which it has unfolded. This historical legacy forms a critical backdrop for understanding contemporary dynamics between these two communities, rooted in a shared heritage that has persevered through the ages.

### **Recent Intercommunity Conflict Between Saleebaan and Ayr Communities**

The roots of the recent intercommunity conflicts between the Saleebaan and Ayr communities can be traced back to the period around 2019 and intensified during this year of 2023.<sup>45</sup> Since 2019, tensions between the two communities have gradually escalated, resulting in a distressing series of armed clashes and an unending cycle of violence. The conflicts between the Saleebaan and Ayr clans took place within (i) the Mudug region - to the west of Haradhere, and (ii) the Galgudud Region – to the east of Abudwak. The conflict-affected areas included Qalanqalle, Hananbuuro, Shuriye-juge, and the vicinity of the Gadoon District, which is approximately 30 kilometers from Dhuusamreeb.

This prolonged confrontation inflicted immeasurable suffering on the affected communities and had far-reaching consequences for the broader Galmudug region given the Saleebaan and Ayr communities' significant/influential positions in Galmudug Region.<sup>46</sup>

The inter-community internal clan conflict served to further complicate an already sensitive and volatile region; Galmudug region was already grappling with numerous conflicts and security threats; the presence of the extremist organization al-Shabaab was particularly notable. Galmudug's multifaceted security challenges i.e. presence of al-Shabaab and internal clan disputes served to compound the challenges towards establishing a unified front against extremism and sustainable peacebuilding. The need for reconciliation and resolution within these communities became even more critical considering these complex circumstances.<sup>47</sup>

44. Muuse Yuusuf, *The Genesis of the Civil War in Somalia: The Impact of Foreign Military Intervention on the Conflict*, Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2021.

45. [Horn Observer Contributor](#), 'Renewed Clan-Based Clashes Erupt in Galmudug as Weapons and Militias Inflow Continues', 2023

46. Zahbia Yousuf, Muzzamil Abdi, and Abdi Ali, 'Clans, Contention and Consensus: Federalism and Inclusion in Galmudug', June, 2020.

47. United Nations-Security Council, 'Reconciliation Must Evolve to Reflect Growing Complexity of Today's Conflicts, Participants Stress during Day-Long Security Council Open Debate', Meeting 8668th - SC/14024, 2019, pp. 1–25

The escalation of conflicts between the Saleeban and Ayr clans can be attributed to a complex interplay of underlying factors whose lack of resolution bred a multifaceted inter-community conflict. The underlying factors include (i) *Intercommunity Power Competition and Rivalry*, (ii) *Resource Dependence and Scarcity*, (iii) *Weak Governance and Political Instability*, (iv) *Socioeconomic Factors* (v) *External Influences*, and (vi) *Cultural Practices - Retaliation*. By addressing these root causes, efforts can be made to break the cycle of conflict and foster lasting peace between the Saleeban and Ayr clans.

Conflict in any form has a number of socio-economic and political impacts on the communities (both sides) engaged in conflict, i.e. (i) Senseless Loss of Life, (ii) Internal Displacement, (iii) Economic Fallout - business collapse and market disruptions, (iv) Impoverishes women, girls, youth and other marginalized community groups, (v) Loss of livelihoods, (vi) Breakdown of local governance structures and services, (vii) entrenches household and community vulnerabilities to shocks etc

### **Peacebuilding With Saleebaan and Ayr Communities**

Galmudug State has been plagued by numerous chronic conflicts that have deeply divided communities along clan lines<sup>48</sup> such as the Saleeban and Ayr communities of the Habargidir Sub-clan. In response to the escalating and worsening intercommunity conflicts, Galmudug's Ministry of Interior, Federal and Reconciliation (MoIFAR) organized a 7-day reconciliation conference (14th to 20th July 2023) in Dhuusamareeb, the capital of Galmudug State with the facilitation of HC. The conference brought together various segments of the Adado and Dhuusamareeb communities in the Galgaduud Region with the aim of fostering reconciliation between the Ayr and Saleebasan communities. The ultimate objective was to broker a sustainable peace agreement between the two clans. Throughout the conference, the Ayr and Saleebaan community leaders engaged in discussions encompassing critical issues such as (i) Conflict-related loss of life, (ii) conflict-related injuries on both sides and (iii) land and property disputes between the two communities. By addressing critical conflict issues, the two communities' elders and government representatives paved the way for sustainable conflict resolution.

Ultimately, the conference enhanced dialogue between the communities in conflict and structured constructive conflict resolution engagements between the warring communities under the leadership of the government. Further, the conference further enhanced the government's legitimacy and delivery of its mandate for its communities thus directly contributing to Galmudug's State Building Efforts. The collective efforts of the government, community leaders, and scholars further proved their pivotal role in bridging communication gaps and building trust among warring communities. In the pursuit of lasting peace and reconciliation between the Saleebaan and Ayr clans, the following recommendations were raised to resolve the protracted/chronic conflict between the Saleebaan and Ayr communities in Galmudug:

#### ***Implementation of Government Directive on a Ceasefire Between the Communities in Conflict:***

Both the Saleeban and Ayr Communities agreed to implement a ceasefire agreement, marking an end to the conflict while prioritizing the restoration of peace and stability in the region for their harmonious co-existence.

***Assessment of Each Communities Casualties and Guaranteeing Fairness and Equity Among the Heirs of Deceased Individuals:*** A dedicated committee was constituted as part of the ceasefire agreement with the role of identifying and verifying rightful heirs of deceased individuals thus ensuring an equitable distribution of assets among the affected families.

***Financial and Property Dispute Resolution:*** A collaborative committee on Financial and Property holdings/entitlements by each community would be established with the mandate of conducting an exhaustive assessment of both communities' monetary and property holdings. Importantly, the funds and assets will be placed in escrow for 90 days to facilitate a transparent and equitable resolution process.

48. Abass Kassim Sheikh, Janel B Galvanek, and Pascal Grimm, 'Conflict Assessment , Galmudug State. An Analysis of Local Perspectives', July, 2019

*Land Management and Settlement:* The government assumes the responsibility for land management, including the regulation of pasturelands and the establishment of new settlements. It is imperative to note that the construction of new settlements necessitates prior approval from the Galmudug Government, promoting sustainable development and the responsible utilization of resources.

***Enforcement of Islamic Law to Promote Rule of Law and Eliminate Criminal Practices:***

Commencing from July 20, 2023, the government would strictly implementing Islamic Sharia law. This commitment of enforcing the Islamic law ensures that a fair and lawful response is carried out in cases of violations, promoting justice and the rule of law.

*Collaborative Approach to Security:* The revered community elders from both sides pledged their cooperation with the government in identifying and apprehending individuals who may pose a threat to the peace or engage in unlawful activities.

*Jurisdiction Over Criminals:* Both communities are committed to subjecting all individuals who evade justice within the territory to government-led punitive actions. This reiterates the unwavering dedication to upholding law and order, ensuring that those who engage in criminal activities face the consequences of their actions.

***Upcoming Reconciliation Conference:*** A pivotal Reconciliation Conference is slated to convene on January 10, 2024, in Adado City which seeks to unite stakeholders and analyze the root causes of conflict and potential sustainable resolution of chronic conflicts in Galmudug.

*Territorial Scope of the Agreement / Boundary Review:* The territorial boundaries encompassing Qalanqalle, Hananbure, Baalle, and Shuriye Jige were identified as the geographical / territorial coverage of the ceasefire and agreement. The two communities were encouraged to continue with negotiations and dialogue to refine the specifics of these boundaries, with the objective of achieving consensus to be discussed at the forthcoming conference.

This comprehensive framework for reconciliation and peace agreement signing represents a significant step toward resolving the longstanding conflict between the Saleebaan and Ayr clans. The commitment to these mutual agreement points signifies a shared aspiration for a future characterized by unity, stability, and the well-being of all community members. It is a testament to the potential of dialogue and cooperation to bring about positive change in even the most complex and deeply rooted conflicts.

**The Value of Government Engagement in Intercommunity Reconciliation / Peacebuilding Efforts**

The involvement of government officials can indeed have a profound impact on how communities perceive reconciliation efforts in the following ways:

***Enhancing Authority and Credibility of Reconciliation Efforts:*** Senior Government officials from Galmudug state led by the Minister demonstrated the seriousness and credibility of the reconciliation process thus encouraging the warring community leadership to participate in the reconciliation conference.

***Symbolic Importance:*** The presence of Galmudug government officials symbolized official recognition of the importance of reconciliation thus positively influencing community members and their leaders thus ultimately encouraging their participation in reconciliation activities.

***Resource Allocation and Support to Reconciliation Efforts:*** Engagement of the government representatives in reconciliation efforts guarantees allocation of resources during and after reconciliation efforts thus enhancing their success and sustainability. Such financial commitments demonstrate a tangible dedication to the process which was viewed by the communities as a sign of genuine commitment to addressing underlying issues and promoting peace.

**Mediation and Facilitation:** The involvement of government representatives provided a neutral and authoritative voice to guide discussions; this was invaluable given the deep-rooted conflict between the two communities.

Ultimately the involvement of government officials can shape community perceptions of reconciliation efforts both positively and negatively. Their authority, resource allocation, and commitment can enhance credibility and promote engagement. However, it is essential for government officials to approach reconciliation with sincerity, transparency, and fairness to ensure that their involvement has a positive and lasting impact on community perceptions. Additionally, community involvement and grassroots initiatives remain vital components of successful reconciliation processes.

### **Impacts of the Saleeban and Ayr Communities Reconciliation Process on the Overall Security and Stability of the Galmudug Region.**

The reconciliation process between the Saleebaan and Ayr clans has had a profound and multifaceted impact on the overall security and stability of the Galmudug region. This impact can be observed through various key developments and transformations:

**Trust and Confidence Building:** Over time, the reconciliation process has rebuilt trust and confidence among the various tribes and communities living together in Galmudug. The successful reconciliation efforts have shown that peaceful coexistence and cooperation are attainable, leading to the gradual restoration of trust among residents.

*Reduction in Clan Rivalry:* The willingness of both clans to engage in the government-led dialogue and find peaceful resolutions to their disputes has led to a more harmonious coexistence and further build the trust of other communities in the government to contribute to sustainable conflict resolution in Galmudug.

*Promotion of Social Cohesion:* The reconciliation process encouraged individuals from various backgrounds to come together, share their goals, and work towards a common vision for the future. This sense of unity has strengthened community bonds and trust among different communities.

**Enhanced Security:** By addressing the root causes of conflicts and promoting peaceful coexistence, this conflict resolution process contributed to decreased armed confrontations and hostilities between the two clans of Saleebaan and Ayr.

**Enhanced Political Stability:** As clans and communities collaborated to resolve their differences peacefully, the reconciliation process created a more conducive environment for governance and political cooperation. This stability is vital for effective governance and the implementation of policies that benefit all Galmudug communities, including bolstering the fight against Al Shabaab.

**Access to Services:** The reconciliation process made it possible for government and non-governmental organizations to reach conflict-affected areas of Galmudug. Improved security and the reduction of conflict barriers have facilitated the delivery of essential services, such as healthcare and education, to previously underserved areas.

While challenges may still exist, the reconciliation process's achievements serve as a testament to the potential for peace and prosperity in Galmudug. Continued commitment to reconciliation efforts is essential to consolidating these gains further and ensuring a brighter future for the region.

# CONCLUSION

As representatives of state authority, government officials wield considerable influence over reconciliation perceptions. Their active involvement can bolster the credibility and legitimacy of reconciliation efforts, signal a commitment to addressing grievances, and facilitate resource allocation. The engagement of government in intercommunity reconciliation efforts however requires that government representatives exercise their roles with sincerity and fairness to avoid potential negative perceptions, such as insincerity or bias.

When governmental elements align with cultural/traditional leadership positively, they can create an environment where communities are more likely to perceive reconciliation as genuine, credible, and worthwhile. Such perceptions, in turn, encourage active community engagement, collaboration, and, ultimately, the successful and sustainable resolution of conflicts. Such success further creates confidence within the state and contributes to a reduction in intercommunity conflict within the government's territory.

Turning to the broader context, the reconciliation process has had far-reaching and positive effects on the security, stability, and progress of the Galmudug region. It has contributed to reducing clan-based conflicts, enhanced security, and promoted social cohesion. Additionally, it has paved the way for economic development, political stability, and improved access to services. While challenges may still exist, the achievements of the reconciliation process serve as a testament to the potential for peace and prosperity in Galmudug. Continued commitment to reconciliation efforts is essential to consolidate these gains further and ensure a brighter future for the region.

# POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The following policy messages can be learnt from the Saleeban and Ayr government Led intercommunity reconciliation efforts:

- Fostering dialogue between communities and government representatives to build community trust in their government to resolve conflict and deliver on governance services.
- Promoting social cohesion and trust building within and between communities is an integral component of conflict resolution efforts.
- Government backing and support for intercommunity agreements on peace and reconciliation is a key sustainability element of intercommunity reconciliation efforts.
  - Promoting the rule of law is an integral element of community reconciliation efforts.
- Resource support to Federal Member State and their local government representatives towards targeted sustainable conflict resolution efforts
  - Support conflict resolution skills among government officials.
  - Support government-led conflict mapping and analysis to identify underlying causes of chronic conflict.

# POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## 5:

### LOCAL LED PEACE AND STATE BUILDING SOLUTIONS: LESSONS FROM PUNTLANDS 25-YEAR JOURNEY

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## Introduction and Background

Puntland exemplifies among the earliest efforts of structured, locally led and owned peace and state-building solutions without the involvement of external actors (Roland Marchal, 2014). Puntland was established as a semi-autonomous state of Somalia through the 10th-12th March 1998 Garowe Constitutional Conference. The conference brought together a cross-section of Puntland communities representing six regions of Nugal, Sool, Northern and Eastern Sanag, Southern Togdher (Buhodle District), Bari, and Northern Mudug (Kinfe Abraham, 2006). Since its establishment, Puntland has faced significant political and security challenges, as the collapse of the central government in Somalia in 1991 led to a power vacuum, and various clan-based militias emerged to fill the void.

Constitutionally, Puntland has a multi-party system, although clan affiliations still play a significant role in its politics. The region has held regular clan-based elections to choose its president and members of parliament, which contributed much to the region's stability. In 2023, Puntland made history as the first state in Somalia to undertake democratic universal suffrage one-person-one-vote Local Government / Council Elections. There are aspirations for undertaking democratic elections for the parliamentary and presidential positions. In addition to the political and democratic progress, the State of Puntland has also been involved in rebuilding its peace and creating stability, improving governance, and providing basic services to its population.

## Role of Traditional Community Elders in Puntland's State Formation

Traditionally and even in the present day, traditional community leaders play an active role in peace negotiations and conflict resolution under trees where the aggrieved parties and the accused present their grievances like normal judicial processes. The jury of traditional elders is known as "Guurti or Xeerbeegti" (judges). The jury is usually known and respected, experienced, and impartial individuals. Traditionally, Puntland's Legal System encompasses four diverse legal practices i.e. Xeer (Somali customary law), Shari'a (Islamic Law) Italian Civil Law, and British Common Law. The Xeer and Sharia legal systems are predominantly common and more acceptable, relying on community norms and practices to resolve conflicts and disputes.

After Somalia's State Collapse in 1991, Puntland's Traditional Community Leaders (Isimo) and other senior elders/leaders stepped into the power vacuum and provided leadership to their people. Some attribute their adequacy and societal respect to Puntland's relative stability (PDRC). They further took on additional importance in 1998 when Puntland affirmed its existence as a semi-autonomous state in 1998. Puntland's traditional community elders played a significant role in its establishment, working in collaboration with experts, religious scholars, and Diasporas. This collaboration led to the formation of the State of Puntland with the mandate of providing government services, peace, and stability to its citizens and to re-establish the rule of law, order and security. The traditional leaders provided significant inputs on the development of Puntland's Charter and later in developing the Provisional Constitution adopted in 2012.

The influence and contribution of traditional elders are evident in Puntland through the perverse dominance/prominence of customary arrangement of administration and order in the emergent democratic and formal governance systems. For instance, Puntland's democratization process is characterized by a clan-based political framework at varying degrees. Currently, all of Puntland's MPs are elected through clan-based political processes. Despite the democratic elections for the Local Councils, the party nomination process was still heavily reliant and subservient to clan influence and considerations. As such, traditional/customary leadership systems maintain significant control of democratic governance in the country.

## **The Garowe Constitutional Conference: Bottom-Up Formation of the State of Puntland**

As one of the steps toward the formation of Puntland State, a consultation conference in which delegates from across Puntland and Somalia was held in the city of Garowe in Nugal province from 10-12 March 1998.<sup>49</sup> The principal actors of the conference were the Traditional Community Elders. The agenda items of the conference included (i) The establishment of the Puntland Regional State of Somalia and (ii) A deep analysis of the political situation of Somalia at that time and the role and position of the northeastern region (Puntland) towards Somalia in the reconciliation process. The committee of the Consultative Conference (C.C) received submissions from regional delegates, traditional and religious leaders, women's groups, scholars, and businesspeople. In establishing the semi-autonomous state of Puntland, key considerations the committee noted that the future of a unitary Somalia in the future was not tenable and admitted that a new federal arrangement was the most viable future for the country. Concern was also expressed about the lack of progress in Somalia's peace and reconciliation process, noting that this would take a long time.

With these considerations in mind, the Consultative Conference resolved: (i) To hold a 15 day (15th – 30th May 1998) Consultation conference in Garowe to establish Puntland State of Somalia, (ii) Agreed on the distribution of regional delegates as follows; Bari Province (97), Nugal Province (56), Mudug Province (56), Sool and Buhoodle (97), Western Galgudud (42) and Oversees Committee (3), (iii) Designated the selection of members of the preparatory commission to be undertaken by political organizations such as the SSDF, USP, and SNDU plus the regions, and (iv) resolved to adhere to a set of governing principles in Puntland's relations with the rest of Somalia i.e. i) Adoption of federalism in the future governance of Somalia with member states formed first followed by negotiations between them leading to the formation of a central Federal government, (ii) Equitable Power-sharing between federal member states based on equal regional representation or the 1960 parliamentary representation, (iii) The capital city of the federation shall have special status with its site and administration governed by a federal law prohibiting any claims to it by a group or clan and that the capital city of the federal state shall be the property of the central federal state and not that of any particular state or community, (iv) Acknowledged the failure of the externally driven "Top-down Approach" to Somali peace and reconciliation talks including the Cairo Declaration and its subsequent amendments in Addis Ababa, thus the preference for Bottom Up locally driven Somali National Reconciliation talks in future, (v) Without any preconditions, the factions holding illegally and forcefully occupied agricultural land, towns, districts, and regions shall withdraw from land, as a first step towards peace and reconciliation, (vi) Without any preconditions to support political decisions on the return of public and private illegally and forcefully seized and controlled certain Somali factions with a view to restoring the confidence and trust of the Somali society (Kinfe, 2006), and (vii) To establish a 25 member National Election Coordination Committee (NECC).

The mandate of the NECC was set as follows: (i) Appointing technical committees and expert groups from among themselves, (ii) Mobilizing resources, (iii) Preparing the election schedule, (iv) Documentation, mobilization and informing of the public about the Constitutional conference, and (v) To supervise establishment of guidelines for the selection of delegates that would elect the regional leaders based on genuine democratic representation.<sup>50</sup>

This process culminated in the formation of the Puntland State of Somalia under the presidency of Col. Abdullahi Yusuf Ahmed. Since its establishment Puntland has remained committed to the unity and territorial integrity of Somalia under a federal arrangement in which each region is equal to the other.

49. Prof. Kinfe Abraham Somalia Calling  
50. Conference proceedings



## Lessons From Local Led Peace and State Building Efforts in Puntland *Enhancing Factors in Puntland's Relative Peace and Stability*

**Periodic Elections and Peaceful Transfer of Power:** Periodic elections provide a mechanism for the people of Puntland to choose their leaders through constituency-based power-sharing by Puntland's Clans. This process has: (i) deconcentrated power from few individuals, (ii) reduced the likelihood of authoritarian rule, (iii) promoted a more inclusive and representative government in Puntland, (iv) Contributed to confidence building in the political system, (v) Enhanced the stability and legitimacy of the political system, and (vi) Provided an outlet for dissent and political expression thus reducing the likelihood of tensions escalating into violence.

**Relatively Homogeneous Clan Composition:** The impact of homogeneous clan composition on Puntland's peace and state-building can be both positive and negative, depending on how it is managed and addressed. "While a homogeneous clan composition can reduce inter-clan conflicts, it does not eliminate the potential for rivalry and competition within the dominant clan(s). Internal power struggles and rivalries can undermine peace and stability. In Puntland, clan dynamics play a significant role in politics, governance, and social structures. Homogeneous clan composition fosters a sense of unity and social cohesion within the Puntland population, established cultural norms, traditions, and shared experiences that contribute to a stronger sense of identity. The homogeneity of Puntland's clan compositions has enhanced consensus building and promoted stability by leveraging common interests and a sense of collective security to reduce the likelihood of internal conflicts.

**Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms:** Puntland has its own unique mechanisms for conflict resolution, some of which are drawn from the traditional practices of "Xeer." traditional Somali customary law and Islamic law (Sharia) as the basis for its judicial system. Traditional Elders play a crucial role in the Xeer system, as they are the custodians of customary law and are responsible for facilitating the resolution of conflicts. In Puntland, the Guurti (council of elders) plays a significant role in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace during the "Shir" (Traditional reconciliation forums whose outcomes are binding and final (Nasro Sh. 2015).

**Puntland's Judicial System:** Puntland's judicial system combines customary law, Islamic law (Sharia), and modern legal principles. The region has a hierarchical court system that include: (i) Traditional courts presided over by elders; these handle minor civil and criminal cases based on customary law. These courts operate at the community level and deal with disputes related to land, family matters, and minor offenses, (ii) Islamic Courts, Islamic law, derived from Sharia: These courts deal with cases involving religious matters, marriage, divorce, and other issues governed by Islamic principles, and (iii) State Courts which handle more complex civil and criminal cases. These courts operate based on statutory laws enacted by the regional government.

## Key Stakeholders in Puntland's Peace and State Building Process

Isimo (Traditional Elders): The elders play the most significant and recognized role when it comes to conflict prevention, management of disagreement among or between clan conflicts, and mediating parties. The state's constitution recognized the role of the elders in peacemaking conflict resolution. Article 108 sub-article 4 of the constitution states, "In cases of disputes and misunderstanding that threaten the peace among clans or sub-clans, the traditional leaders shall be called upon to advise or find a peaceful solution". Elders are not only involved in inter-clan conflicts but also in political disagreements as they command respect and are known for their impartiality.

51. Interview With Abdinahir Shire, Political Scientist and University lecture at Garowe, 25th August/2023

52. An interview with Poet Mohamed Sakeriye Hersi

53. "Xeer" is customary legal system practiced by Somali clans and communities including those in Puntland

**Religious Leaders:** The role of religious leaders in promoting peace and stability in Puntland over the course of 25 years is highly appreciated and recognized in Puntland. They provide moral guidance and encourage values such as compassion, forgiveness, and respect for human dignity in conformity with Islamic principles, thus shaping individual and community behaviors fostering a culture of peace and harmony in Puntland. Religious leaders use their platforms (Mosques and Education Centres) to educate their followers about the importance of peace, tolerance, and social cohesion. By disseminating messages of peace and understanding, they help counter radicalization and promote a more harmonious society. Further, Religious Leaders actively undertake Advocacy for Social Justice, addressing root causes of clashes thus promoting peace and stability in Puntland (Stig Jarle EI, 2022).

**Civil Society Organizations (CSOs):** Puntland CSOs also play a crucial role in promoting peace and stability by advocating for policies that promote peace, justice, and stability and work towards influencing public opinion and government actions. CSOs engage in conflict prevention efforts by addressing the root causes of conflicts, promoting dialogue and reconciliation, and building trust among conflicting parties. They facilitate peace negotiations, mediate disputes, and encourage peaceful coexistence. CSOs in Puntland mainly monitor human rights violations, promote good governance, and hold governments and other stakeholders accountable for their actions. They oversee, document, and report human rights abuses, promote transparency, and advocate for justice and accountability (SPA, 2019). CSOs further act as a bridge between governments, communities, and international actors, filling gaps in peace-building and stability efforts. Their independence, grassroots connections, and focus on inclusivity and social justice make them valuable contributors to peacebuilding in Puntland.

**International Community:** The International Community plays a significant role in peace and state-building efforts in Puntland through financial and technical support towards developing and reforming Puntland's governance system. This includes providing training, resources, and technical assistance to enhance the capacity of the governance institutions. The International Community also provides technical expertise and capacity-building programs to strengthen Puntland's government institutions and civil society organizations. This support helps improve the skills and knowledge of local actors involved in peacebuilding, governance, and development processes.

It is important to note that the success of peace and state-building efforts in Puntland depends on the collaboration and ownership of local stakeholders, including the regional government, community leaders, and civil society organizations. The international community's role supports and complements the locally led and borne initiatives, thus ensuring a coordinated and comprehensive approach to peacebuilding in Puntland.

## Challenges to Puntland's Peace and State-Building Efforts

**Conflicts:** Since its formation, the state of Puntland has continuously engaged various forms of conflict which serve to hinder/act as a bottleneck to Puntland's Peace and State Building Efforts. These include:

**Territorial and Clan Conflicts:** These disagreements encompass inter-state conflict between Puntland and its neighboring states of Galmudug in the West and Somaliland (breakaway state) in the North.

**ISIS and Al-Shabaab:** The presence of extremist groups like ISIS and Al-Shabaab also pose a significant threat to peace and stability. These groups often engage in acts of terrorism, including bombings, assassinations, and attacks on security forces and civilian populations. Their activities create fear, disrupt governance, and hinder development efforts.

**Inter-Clan Conflicts:** like other regions in Somalia, Puntland has a history of inter-clan conflicts. These conflicts are often fuelled by competition for resources, political power, and historical grievances. Inter-clan conflicts can lead to displacement, loss of life, and the breakdown of social cohesion, making it difficult to establish a stable and peaceful environment.

***Proliferation of Arms:*** The existence of unregulated and unregistered arms among the public and the presence of multiple armed groups and militias further fuels / drives the threat of violence, and insecurity in Puntland. The proliferation of arms poses a great challenge to the efforts to build and promote sustainable peace in the State of Puntland as individuals and groups easily have the means to engage in clashes with each other, exacerbating inter-clan conflicts and complicating efforts to establish effective governance and security.

***Urbanization in Rural Areas:*** Rapid urbanization in rural areas strains resources, leading to increased competition for limited resources. This always fuels inter-clan conflicts, as different groups vie for control over land, water, and other essential resources.

***Political Differences:*** Political divisions and rivalries among different political groups/individuals undermine efforts to establish effective governance and promote stability. Political differences can lead to power struggles, weak institutions, and a lack of consensus on important issues, hindering progress and exacerbating existing conflicts. Coupled with the proliferation of arms, political differences are often settled through armed conflict in Puntland with clan militias being actively used to perpetuate conflict.

***Illegal Drugs:*** The illicit drug trade contributes to insecurity and instability by fuelling criminal activities and corruption. Drug trafficking networks undermine established governance structures, compromise law enforcement, and perpetuate violence.

# CONCLUSION

Over the years, Puntland has made significant strides in peace and state-building efforts. Puntland boasts a relatively stable political environment as a result of its homegrown establishment as a semi-autonomous state in 1998. 25 years after its establishment, Puntland has become the first state to undertake democratic universal suffrage elections. Despite its socio-political and economic progress, Puntland continues to face significant challenges and bottlenecks in the peace and state-building journey such as interstate conflict, terrorism and sporadic intercommunity conflicts, poor governance and corruption, and socio-economic challenges such as high levels of unemployment and poverty, among others.

Puntland's achievements in peace and state-building over the past 25 years are commendable, considering the challenging context in which it operates. While significant progress has been made, the region faces multifaceted challenges that require sustained efforts and strategic interventions. Multifaceted strategies and multi-stakeholder engagement and support are required to address security threats, promote good governance, and foster socio-economic development.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### ***To the Government:***

*Prioritizing and Strengthening Security and Governance Institutions:* Puntland's government should prioritize key areas such as (i) Strengthening security by enhancing intelligence capabilities and promoting regional collaboration, security sector reform, and leveraging local led / bottom-up conflict resolution mechanisms, and developing a strategy for the disarmament of arms held by the public, and (ii) Promote democratic governance practices, such as anti-corruption measures, transparency, and accountability to build public trust and legitimacy.

*Restricting of Urbanizing Grazing Lands:* Puntland's government should develop a strategy for controlling/limiting the rapid urbanization in the state from encroaching on grazing lands which poses an existential threat of resource-based conflict as well as loss of livelihoods for its predominantly pastoral rural population. Controlling the Outlawed Drugs of Alcohol and other Substances:

*Reigning in Drug Abuse and Trafficking:* The Puntland government should increase its regulation and control of illicit drug use and trade and ensure greater control over its territorial boundaries to minimize the proliferation of these drugs. Stringent regulatory and policy measures will be required combined with concerted efforts by all stakeholders including the CSOs, Community and Religious Leaders.

*Strengthening Judicial System:* Improving the capacity and transparency of the Puntland Judicial System and strengthening the justice institutions in Puntland will enhance peace, stability, and public trust in the government and public institutions.

*Strengthen Collaboration with Community Structures:* The Puntland government should deepen and strengthen existing collaboration and engagement with community leadership structures. In particular, the government should develop strategies to address equitable representation and governance, address marginalization, and mitigate the negative aspects of clan dynamics. This includes fostering dialogue, promoting inter-clan cooperation, and ensuring that decision-making processes are inclusive and transparent.

### ***To the Universities and Think Tank Institutions:***

Universities, Research institutions, and Think tank institutions are recommended to undertake studies and research on homegrown Peace, stability, and state-building that can inform decision-makers. Closer collaboration, dialogue, and engagement platforms should be developed and leveraged to bring together scholars and policymakers to influence governance policies and strategies.

### ***To Civil Society Organizations:***

Local CSOs should continue playing their pivotal role in Puntland's Peace and state-building by complementing the government efforts, especially in service delivery and reaching underserved populations. They should also work in close consultation with the government to build trust and capacity of the government and to ensure that their development and social projects contribute to and support the Puntland Development Plan. Further, as the government takes on more roles, Local CSOs should intensify advocacy efforts while promoting good governance by holding the government accountable for key governance, and socio-political and economic development issues.

Further, LCSOs should continue building resilient livelihoods, community governance, and conflict resolution capacity, focusing on the hard-to-reach, marginalized, and neglected communities and community groups. Other key areas of focus and interventions include civic education and promoting the engagement/linkage of communities with government development planning and budgeting process with a view to ensuring that communities contribute to bottom-up governance and development process. Importantly, Local CSOs should focus on community governance structures by enhancing the inclusion of marginalized community groups such as women, youth, PWDs, IDPs, and minority clans among others thus ensuring no community group is left behind in community development processes.

### ***To the International Development Partners:***

International support and partnerships remain crucial. The international community should continue to provide financial assistance, technical expertise, and capacity-building programs to reinforce Puntland's peace and state-building efforts. Supporting initiatives that promote youth employment, women's empowerment, and community engagement will be instrumental in fostering a resilient society.

# POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## 6:

### DIVERGENT PATHS: PRIORITIZE PEACE OR JUSTICE IN SOMALIA'S POST CONFLICT STATE AND PEACE BUILDING INITIATIVES

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## Introduction

In 1991, Somalia experienced state collapse in revolt against the repressive centralized Siad Barre military regime; by 1993, 280,000 people had lost their lives.<sup>54</sup> 30 years later, Somalia is still grappling with the effects of state collapse: a fractured inefficient government struggling<sup>55</sup> to rule over its territory and heavily reliant on external financial and military support for its survival. Over the 30-plus years of Somalia's protracted conflict/crisis, gross human rights violations have been perpetrated; Somalia's future state-building efforts are greatly impacted by the dynamics of Somalia's conflict history which further pose challenges to peace processes, state-building, and post-conflict justice.

Importantly, the Somali national government must resolve the peace versus justice dilemma for successful post-conflict state-building. In doing this, decision-makers and policymakers must answer the following questions i.e. (i) Which actors, obstacles, and surrounding circumstances were in place during and before the Somali peace processes? (ii) Is peace compromising Somalia's post-conflict justice (PCJ) system? And (iii) what transitional justice procedures can result in a long-lasting peace following such a protracted conflict? This will necessitate an analysis of: (i) the historical, socioeconomic, and structural dimensions of the protracted civil war, and (ii) the pre- and post-reconciliation conditions that hampered the efforts of institutions designed to preserve peace and pursue justice for past violations of human rights. Importantly, responsibility for crimes and political acts of violence must be determined and acknowledged; **"Xalay Dhalay"** ('complete forgiveness of that occurred crimes) - the concept of transitional justice will neither heal the scars from previous atrocities nor constitute a magic bullet for persistently unresolved grievances.

Transitional justice cannot be achieved in an environment characterized by dysfunctional governance and political systems against a backdrop of historical mistrust and protracted conflict. Protracted state failure is associated with internal variables such as (i) competition over resources and power by elites, (ii) long term repressive and authoritarian regimes, and (iii) external colonial legacy .<sup>56</sup> Continue state instability is driven by the accumulation of social, economic, and institutional chaos, corruption and deep-seated poverty coupled with excessive external meddling.<sup>57</sup>

## II. Prerequisites and Conditions of Justice.

In post-conflict societies, rebuilding state institutions is a crucial part of the recovery and peacebuilding package as they are key factors in preserving the progress made in peace processes such as political agreements and timely resolution of issues that risk the eruption of renewed conflict between opposing factions during the transition period. Trust and confidence building is an important component of periods of transitions as they allow the repair of strained bonds in torn societies and foster cohabitation. Mismanagement and external influences driven by vested and selfish interests during periods of transitions for fragile and resource-poor administrations in post-conflict states risk the recurrence of conflict e.g. US-led "war on terror," which is seen as a mandatory international obligation for the sake of the global security.<sup>58</sup>

The objectivity and credibility of post-conflict governance institutions affect perceptions of their legitimacy and acceptability to resolve community and societal grievances; without this, any peacebuilding efforts are short-lived and unsustainable. In the case of Somalia, there is an urgent need for a framework to change and reform federal and state-level governance institutions especially focusing these efforts on the judiciary, the police, courts, and a constructive stakeholder inclusive and consultative constitutional review process. These institutions play a critical role in peacebuilding and justice delivery, and often, their failure/ineffectiveness results in their association with previously failed governance institutions especially for protracted conflict environments/societies. In protracted conflict environments characterized by deep mistrust and societal division, re-establishing trust in governance institutions is one of the most important and difficult challenges.<sup>60</sup>

54. Webersik, 2008

55. Menkhaus, 2006

56. Elmi & Barise, 2006

57. Stahn, 2005

58. Menkhaus, 2003

59. Schneiderholm, 2007

60. Chesterman, 2005

Often, post conflict governments and societies often lack the political goodwill to address institutional failure thus handicapping their efforts at restoration of legitimacy, security, credibility, and efficacy for a sustainable feature. For Somalia, this is further worsened by the lack of own financial resources which further emboldens foreign interference and meddling in the local state and peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, this emboldens beneficiaries of conflict and instability thus further erecting barriers and bottlenecks to the establishment of strong governance institutions given their stakes and interests in maintaining the status quo <sup>61, 62, 63</sup>

In post-conflict nations like Somalia, justice and peace must go hand in hand and will require sacrifice and hard work to focus on: (i) reviving and reforming governmental institutions (both the physical structure and institutional legitimacy), (ii) reestablishing the social fabric and public confidence in the political system, and (iii) enacting constitutional amendments to strengthen peace agreements by granting more people equal rights to political representation and participation.<sup>64</sup>For Somalia, these changes are crucial due to the infamous historical background of subpar legal systems before state collapse and in post-conflict governments. Furthermore, as part of sustainable peace and state-building, Somalis must seize the chance to address the causes of protracted violence and conflict with the associated historical injustices. <sup>65</sup>

## **Iv. The Initiatives for Peacebuilding: The Path to Justice and Peace:**

### **1. Somali Peace Reconciliation Path**

Resolution of conflict often provides post-conflict communities with a package of justice, reconstruction, development, democracy, ceasefires, and liberalization lies in the solution of conflict ; this accurately captures the healing and transition process a society goes through from war to peace. However, given violent conflicts, resulting peace agreements in the post-conflict phase face opposition and challenges from previously warring parties who view them as a loss of accumulated power or a means to gain power over their rivals.<sup>67</sup>A total of 14 Peace Conferences were held between 1991 and 2004 to try to put an end to the conflict in Somalia, but most of them had failed. These can be explained by Stedman's theory of the spoiler problem of halfhearted peace processes without clear end goals driven by international communities, competing interests and hostile policies from neighboring countries and local spoilers with vested greedy interests.<sup>68</sup> Peace conferences and the protracted humanitarian emergency have become part of Somalia's War Economy.<sup>69</sup>

The last two peace initiatives, Arta-2000 in Djibouti, and Emphegati-2004 in Kenya, succeeded in establishing peace agreements with power-sharing and a truce among the warlords and political actors as a foundation for constructing a national shared interim administration, despite the failures of previous peace processes.

Though lengthy, the peace process improved politically, the country still confronts a security concern because of the peace initiatives' byproducts of state fragility and a malfunctioning functioning state. Evidence suggests that "Somali peace and state-building processes have always served to increase, not decrease, conflict <sup>70</sup>". To achieve peace and justice in any post-conflict community, genuine reconciliation and political agreements that address the political environment, and the dynamics of conflict are vital.

Similarly, Somalis frequently fail to give adequate attention to genuine reconciliation (which goes beyond power-sharing and warlords receiving peace dividends) or the inclusion of justice procedures to redress past atrocities in the reconstruction plan.<sup>71</sup>

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61. McAuliffe, 2014

62. Menkhaus, 2003

63. Menkhaus, 2006

64. McAuliffe, 2014

65. Badiyow, 2014

66. Keen, 2000

67. Zahra, 2008

68. Elmi & Barise, 2006

69. Webersik, 2014

70. McAuliffe, 2014; Menkhaus, 2006

71. Badiyow, 2014



## 2. Justice Norms and Local Practices

Rwanda's "Gacaca" courts were a transitional justice mechanism implemented after the 1994 genocide. They were based on a hybrid of customary localized justice systems and formal restorative justice approaches; they were used to bring charges against those responsible for the genocide. Substantial empirical data suggests that local judicial systems in heterogeneous cultures stand to have greater success in holding those responsible for perpetrators of historical crimes and human rights abuse accountable. As such, an effective transitional justice system should be combined with local justice procedures that contribute to reducing conflict such as "punitive sanction at micro-level (individual, family, neighborhood, and village level)<sup>73</sup>".

Somalia boasts a long-standing customary law system (Xeer), a credible and widely trusted legal system that has played a significant role in localized and community-based justice and dispute resolution mechanisms. Somali communities have relied on the Xeer justice system since time immemorial in resolving individual and community conflicts. Complemented by Islamic law (Sharia), they have been utilized by Somali communities even in the absence of secular formal law. Often, the Xeer and Sharia law hold more influence in the resolution of community and political conflict through traditional and religious leaders who are thought to be fair and unbiased adjudicators of disputes/conflicts. The two-form trusted, credible, legitimately enforced, and adhered to localized dispute and conflict resolution mechanisms that deliver localized justice solutions. Localized justice, such as Islamic Sharia Law and the Xeer, are bottom-up justice approaches / systems that (i) gives credit for the ownership of the state-building process; and (ii) second, it gives local demands more of a priority.<sup>74</sup> 'The relative peaceful administrations of Somaliland & Puntland' serve as prime examples of local Xeer and Islamic sharia based / inspired justice and governance systems that were built through bottom-up local approaches to peace and state building.<sup>75</sup>

Historical abuses in protracted conflict environments can be addressed through (i) tribunals (individual responsibility), (ii) addressing and clarifying past abuses (truth commissions and investigating bodies), (iii) reparatory schemes to victims (material or non-material), and (iv) institutional reforms (including the judiciary, army, and police) as critical components of peace accords after mass violence.<sup>76</sup> These are, however, not easy solutions/paths for post-conflict societies; this is often cited as one of the major obstacles to establishing peace in post-conflict countries. Justice model options for post-conflict cultures are influenced by (i) political agreements, (ii) social structures, and (iii) social traits, given their significance and societal ramifications.<sup>78</sup> For instance, Rwanda's retributive justice sought to punish perpetrators, while South Africa's restorative justice sought reconciliation between the victims and offenders. Post-conflict peace talks result in formal peace agreements to address past violence or widespread human rights violations while ushering in peaceful and democratic states; there is no one-size-fits-all approach to the post-conflict justice model.

Somalia's complex and multifaceted conflict in the context of complicated social structures and unique traits poses several challenges: (i) where should Somali transitional justice start? And (ii) what powers and resources should the Somali government commit towards post conflict justice? Unfortunately, Somalia's past peace building efforts did not include justice; warlords were not held accountable for their crimes. Somalia's peacebuilding efforts have not resolved issues associated with the historical evolution of their conflict.<sup>80</sup> Admittedly, given Somalia's political climate and history of conflict, it was understandable that maintaining peace while also pursuing justice for past atrocities in a volatile atmosphere was difficult, if not impossible.<sup>81</sup>

72. Waldorf, 2006

73. Zartman, 2000

74. Abdille, 2012

75. Lewis, 2011

76. Sriram, 2007

77. Mitchell, 2011

78. Lie, Gates, and Binningsbo, 2007

79. Lambourne, 2009

80. Elmi & Barise, 2006

81. Abdiweli 2012

Whilst traditional conflict management approaches e.g. Somali Xeer are ineffective for political state-building process especially in big cities with sophisticated systems, they often deliver localized justice<sup>82, 83</sup>. The Somali Xeer's evolution and increased integration with both urban and rural life, provide opportunities for the Somali Xeer, in conjunction with other governance structures to administer post conflict justice more effectively.

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82. Zartman, 2000  
83. Thome (2005),

# CONCLUSION

In protracted multifaceted conflict environments, defining the relationship between justice and peace is challenging; it becomes even more complicated when (i) one solely considers the factors that define justice and peace, (ii) focuses on the conditions under which they succeed or fail, and (iii) considers the effects they have on the relationship between them and society at large.

In cases such as Somalia's protracted crisis, the peace processes and agreements to terminate hostilities are enhanced when complemented by local justice norms into transitional justice for post-conflict societies. Notably, political post-conflict agreements that ignore/avoid pursuing context-specific post-conflict justice are bound to fail and do not enhance sustainable peace and state-building. The degree to which justice for past atrocities is carried out will depend on (i) the inclusiveness of the peace procedures/agreements, (ii) broad coverage of issues by the resulting peace agreements, and (iii) security and justice sector reforms as part of the post conflict institutional frameworks.

Given Somalia's breakdown of the social contract, evident in the history of social inequality, repression, and poor governance, there is a need to focus efforts on regaining institutional legitimacy and boosting public confidence in the governmental system, particularly in judicial institutions. This is important in dealing with social grievances and injustices in all their forms. Importantly, emerging justice mechanisms and institutions should leverage and integrate the trust and credibility of the Somali Xeer Justice system to bolster confidence in post conflict judicial systems.

# POLICY BRIEF SERIES

## 7:

### THE SOMALIA NATION-STATE: THE NEED FOR SYSTEMATIC SUSTAINABLE PEACEBUILDING SOLUTIONS

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## Background

The Annual PDRC Annual Peace Learning Conference in 2023 showcased a rich array of knowledge, experience, and diverse perspectives by Somali practitioners on the potential solutions to the country's protracted conflict. The PDRC Peace Learning Policy Brief Series seeks to synthesize research articles submitted and presented during the peace conference into policy-relevant knowledge products available to policymakers and stakeholders in Somalia's Peacebuilding initiatives. PDRC hopes that with this initiative, Somali Professionals and Practitioners will impact the country's future and lead to Somali Borne Peacebuilding Outcomes and Solutions.

## Introduction

Somalia's Federal Governance System was adopted on a transitional basis in 2004, further solidified in 2012 by Somalia's Provisional Federal Constitution (PFC). Theoretically, Somalia's Federalism sought to deconcentrate political power, authority, and resources away from Mogadishu;<sup>84</sup> This would ideally reduce political contestations and conflict between Somali political stakeholders. Somalia's Federal Experiment has not functioned as expected, with the failure of Federal Member States (FMS) to apply initial agreements of the federal structure of government, especially in the sharing of state and federal authority and political governance.

The Provisional Federal Constitution (PFC) is the framework document for Somalia's Federal structure, and constitutional review has been ongoing since 2012; among other objectives, the process sought to address the resource and power-sharing dynamics between the Federal and State Governments. The politicization of the process of finalizing the constitution has led to numerous delays, with the process sometimes completely stalling; political goodwill has not been the best. Delicate political issues involving the nation's technical federalism, ranging from a centralized system to highly distributed models.<sup>85</sup> 12 Years after the establishment of the PFC, there are numerous contentious issues that are yet to be addressed.

Political discord and social fragmentation remain a challenge to state and peace-building efforts in Somalia, with a numerous region of the country still under the control of the Al Shabaab militant group. At the same time, the intercommunity and political conflict is pervasive in Somalia. In multi-dimensional conflict environments, a precursor to any peace and development initiatives is the acknowledgment, location, and resolution of the conflict problem<sup>86, 87</sup>. A systems approach to conflict resolution will further open up opportunities for utilization / exploitation of natural resources to support human existence and advancement.<sup>88</sup>

With Somalia's protracted conflict, a pervasive culture of violence to control, acquire, and protect power and resources emerged; Somali people are consequently polarized along clan lines, and there is little cohesion. Clannism provides implicit security in a setting characterized by violent rivalry over political power and control.

This is further fueled by the endemic failure of political governance institutions and practices in the country.<sup>89</sup> This has stoked mistrust and the absence of reconciliation between and among communities. The government's weak economy, ineffective governance, unresolved clan conflicts, and hostilities further compound the mistrust.

## System's Approach to Peacebuilding

The systems approach to peacebuilding links peace to sustainability and views the two as interconnected dynamic states resulting from interacting multiple systems and subsystems.

84. Dialogue in Somali, 2022

85. Dialogue in Somali, 2022

86. Okpetu 2011

87. Zannier, 2015

88. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, 2015

89. (Issa-Salwe, 2023)

## System's Approach to Peacebuilding

The systems approach to peacebuilding links peace to sustainability and views the two as interconnected dynamic states resulting from interacting multiple systems and subsystems. Thus, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy; multifaceted protracted conflict and humanitarian crisis environments such as Somalia present an even greater level of complexity. An adaptive, sustainable peacebuilding strategy can be contextually developed and iteratively implemented using the systems approach. This will, however, require understanding and addressing the relationships and interactions of all the components impacting/affecting Somalia's peacebuilding efforts in line with the principles of systems theory. Ultimately, there is a need to identify and prioritize the elements of Somalia's peacebuilding as, at some point in time, tradeoffs are required when using a systems approach to address socio-political issues.<sup>90</sup>

Sustainable peacebuilding in Somalia necessitates addressing *clan-based prejudicial grievance and intolerance, strengthening democratic institutions, upholding the rule of law, defending human rights, and active engagement of all stakeholders, including socio-political actors*. This will further entail the application of specialized tools and initiatives focused on building inclusive societies that promote tolerance, diversity, and integration while guaranteeing rights and freedoms. Thus strengthening democracy, governance, and the rule of law ultimately leads to sustainable peacebuilding.

Political and community-level *reconciliation* is a critical mechanism for addressing historical injustices in protracted conflict environments. Since Somalia's state collapse in 1991 and the resulting clan-based conflict and state fragmentation, Somalis have not had an opportunity for reconciliation. Even after establishing the Mogadishu-based federal government, the country still has not undertaken meaningful reconciliation. It continues to be engaged in a conflict to liberate parts of the country from the Al Shabaab Militant group.

With the establishment of the Federal governance structure, political conflict pitting the Mogadishu Government and the States has become a constant threat to peace and state-building efforts. This conflict is primarily driven by the power-sharing complexities between the Federal and the State governments occasioned by the constitutional gaps, reconstitution of the Somali National Army (SNA) and deficiencies. With other constitutional concerns like the national security framework and the condition of the capital, it has produced a scenario that requires serious consideration. The best possibility of accomplishing this is through an integrated, inclusive political process that considers these issues in the constitutional review process and fast-tracks them.

## The Impact of Top-Down Resolution Peacebuilding Resolutions in Somalia

In April 2016, two UN peacebuilding resolutions (A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282, 2016) by the General Assembly and Security Council introduced the concept of "sustaining peace", breaking away from the 1990s UN's thinking on post-conflict peacebuilding. A/RES/70/262 and S/RES/2282's preamble states that "sustaining peace encompasses activities aimed at preventing the outbreak, escalation, continuation, and recurrence of conflict", basically highlighting, that there should be no distinction between peacebuilding and peacekeeping; reduced likelihood of a breakdown or return into violent conflict is the ultimate objective of maintaining peace and sustainable peacebuilding. The aforementioned resolutions allow the UN system to focus more on conflict prevention by addressing the root causes and symptoms of disputes/conflict, thus minimizing the likelihood of new conflict cycles.

Somalia presents a unique case where the international community must work with peacebuilding and peacekeeping goals and strategies. For the liberated areas of the country, the international forces under the AU banner have been engaged in peacekeeping while building the capacity of Somali military forces in peacebuilding and technical support for the liberation of areas occupied by the Al Shabaab terrorist group.

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90. Zannier, 2015

This indeed falls with Lederach's and Abduljabar's thinking that the UNSG idea of 1990s was to end conflict and achieve sustainable peace through (i) *preventive diplomacy*, (ii) *peacemaking*, (iii) *peacekeeping* and (iv) *post conflict peace building*.<sup>91</sup>

## A Paradigm Shift Towards Peace Building in Somalia

Peacemaking entails a mix of three key approaches i.e., (i) *peacebuilding*, (ii) *direct*, and (iii) *cultural* approaches<sup>92</sup> which go hand in hand with establishing and maintaining peace<sup>93</sup>. Inherently, peacemaking seeks to address the underlying causes of conflict while stopping the conflict from turning violent. Somalia is at this critical juncture of its peace-building process and must take several measures to achieve sustained, long-lasting peace; principally, Somalia must create governance structures based on justice, equity, and cooperation. The regional and local stakeholders should be involved in the design of peace procedures & mechanisms while also participating in establishing and strengthening institutions and structures that make up its fabric.

Somalia's tumultuous path reinforces the thinking that peacebuilding is a tremendously difficult, complex, and dynamic process, especially when the conflict turns violent.<sup>94</sup> Stakeholder capacity and consensus are indeed a strong factor in unraveling the complexity of a conflict environment and in catalyzing peace building. Strengthening domestic actors and stakeholders in the peace process through consensus building and fairness in Somalia will contribute to sustainable peace in Somalia.

Furthermore, Somali peace can be sustained through "Indigenous empowerment" / "peacebuilding from below," whereby procedures and methods are built over time while building capacity over the long term. Success in Somalia will be enhanced by addressing the root causes of conflict while resolving disputes quickly and developing lasting relationships.<sup>95</sup> Despite peacebuilding being a continuous process aimed at ending conflict and promoting lasting peace<sup>96</sup>, peacebuilding objectives are also dynamic, given the conflict escalation phase. In the same way, peacebuilding should aid in ending a conflict and preserving peace after acute violence has receded if it develops into war or civil unrest.

Sustaining peace will necessitate initiatives that support the engagement of regional and community-level stakeholders in inclusive peace processes and local initiatives. Evidence-based discussions and actions in peacebuilding require multi-stakeholder engagement for the iterative development and implementation of contextual local peace strategies and initiatives.<sup>97</sup> Furthermore, there is need for different and systemic approaches at all societal levels if Somali's conflict is to be transformed into lasting peace.

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91. Abduljabar Mohamed, 2021

92. Galtung 1975

93. Abduljabar M., 2021

94. Lederach, 1997

95. Lederach, 1997

96. Paffenholz 2003

97. Zannier, 2015

# RECOMMENDATION

## Thinking Seriously About the Future of the Somali State

- To attain sustainable peacebuilding, Somalia must adopt a more severe mindset and use a bottom-up strategy to preserve the nation-state, end hostilities, and safeguard finite resources.
- Somalia should invest in, strengthen, and empower its governance institutions to enhance credibility, inclusivity, fairness, and impartiality, thus building the trust of the Somali people in the ongoing state and peace-building initiatives.
- Efforts should also be made to establish and maintain the credibility, impartiality, and integrity of governance institutions, which are critical foundations for a peaceful society.

# CONCLUSION

It is commonly known that fragile states are subject to a range of linked stresses i.e. (i) political instability and crises, (ii) social disintegration, (iii) economic collapse, and (iv) incompetent leadership. As Somalia struggles with the effects of the post-conflict conflict, ethnicity and war have been added to the religious uprising. Due to its numerous repercussions, the competition has impeded progress, long-term peace, and overall socio-economic development. Therefore, it is necessary to have sustainable conflict resolution and peacebuilding support that can bring solutions that would help rebuild the Somali nation.