

Mudug Security Analysis Paper 2015-2023

PDRC
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I. Introduction

Due to heightened tensions and recurring violent hostilities in the Mudug region,¹ PDRC commissioned an assessment to investigate conflict dynamics and explore options for providing support to affected communities. The assessment occurred from August 18 to August 25, 2023. It employed a participatory research approach which included interviews with key informants and focus groups with participants who are knowledgeable about the issue. Key informants included representatives from local authority, women groups, youth groups, business community, religious leaders, traditional leaders, independent politicians, and academics. The focus groups comprised: of women groups, youth groups, traditional leaders, business groups, and law enforcement bodies (i.e., police, paramilitary forces, and courts). Accordingly, this paper presents the outcome of this exercise and attempts to illuminate the current security situation in Mudug, types and intensity of prevailing conflicts, root causes, involved actors, challenges to security maintenance, and applicable strategies for resolving conflict, and strengthening Mudug region's security in the long term.

II. Major Sources of Mudug Conflict

Traditionally, major clans residing in former Mudug region had a long history of armed conflict. They habitually fought over control of limited resources such as pastureland and water sources. Clan reprisals stemming from camel rustling also contributed to the quandary. However, over time, the nature and complexity of conflicts evolved, featuring various new dimensions. While disputes traditionally stemmed from the above-mentioned root causes, in modern times, other conflict triggers transpired and compounded the dilemma. These included:

1) Power competition: Rivalry between Darood and Hawiye for political

ascendency at Somalia's central power often fuels conflicts in Mudug.

- 2) Degradation of social values:** Three decades of civil strife and weak governance led to the disintegration of social values, resulting in frequent violent conflicts.
- 3) Decrease of the traditional leaders' authority and respect:** This phenomenon can be attributed to the proliferation of the number of traditional leaders (both titled and non-titled), on the one hand, and on the other hand, according to some observers, many of the traditional leaders becoming interest groups who are politically motivated, thus abducting public good.
- 4) Clans not collaborating in apprehension of culprits:** Customarily, the clan defends its members, and when one of its affiliates commits a crime, it either exiles to far-off locations or gives him protection within its militia. On other occasions, the clan insists, instead of bringing the culprit to justice, on application of Somali Customary Law, which is lenient to culprits' conviction and permits compensation payment. This corroborates practice of revenge killing.
- 5) Drug addiction (Khat, Alcohol and narcotics):** In Puntland, this group is dubbed "Abtoy"—meaning drug addicts. Many believe that this factor rates second to the customary pasture and water resource conflict trait. Knowledgeable respondents argued that the Abtoy easily commit murder and are often defended by their clans' militias, which aggravates clan relationships and intensifies revenge killing. In Galkayo, Abtoy individuals, when they commit crimes, take refuge to their respective clans' sanctuaries, where they obtain protection.

¹ Former Mudug region currently divides between Puntland and Galmudug States

- 6) Proliferation of arms in public hands:** All agreed that arms in public hands facilitate an increase in homicide crimes.
- 7) Drug dealers' Lobby:** Drug dealers are also another group, which exerts significant pressure on the traditional leader to obstruct the apprehension of drug addicts as well as other clan members who commit crimes.
- 8) Al-Shabaab covert manipulation:** Al-Shabaab insurgents play a significant destabilizing role in Mudug region. A sizeable number of this assessment's participants, including the local authority, asserted that Al-Shabaab often exploits clan feuds and fuels intra and inter-clan conflicts in both North and South Mudug. While lately its strength and influence had markedly degraded, nevertheless, Al-Shabaab continues to pit clans/lineages one against the other through financing and/or coercing traditional leaders to escalate emergent conflicts. When the community is in conflict within itself, Al-Shabaab gets peace and find a space to freely operate
- 9) Weak governance:** this constitutes one of the major drivers of insecurity. Security forces in Mudug and elsewhere are not fully functional and cannot enforce law and order or maintain security. They are unable to apprehend culprits, supervise execution of clan agreements or resolve disputes arising among clans. Regrettably, many interviewees informed that a considerable number of security forces are drug addicts (abtoy) and drug traffickers, which further exacerbates the situation
- 10) Failure of payment of Diyah to the directly affected family:** One of the reasons that revenge killings often perpetuate is that blood compensation (Diyah) is not provided to the aggrieved family as Sharia regulates. However, it is dispensed, in accordance with the Somali customary Law, which distributes Diyah among the extended Diyah-paying group. The directly affected victim's family (children, spouses, and siblings) who are offered only eleven camels out of the one hundred camels/ equivalent value of the man's Diyah. In addition to that, unattended grievances and uncompensated murder cases also constitute potential causes of revenge killings
- 11) Lack of enforcement of clan agreements:** In recent years, unfulfillment of pledged Diyah and compensation payment agreements is becoming a practice, which rekindles hostilities and validates resort to revenge killing. Unfortunately, the local authorities lack the capability of ensuring implementation of clan agreements
- 12) Poor Collaboration between the traditional leaders and local authorities:** This is a recent development and poses a challenge to Mudug security. Traditional leaders complain that the local authorities do not accord them due respect as upholders of clan security and do not provide them sustainable remuneration or needed logistics for security maintenance. As a result, assessment participants noted that traditional leaders are to a certain degree reluctant to fully collaborate with local authorities on security maintenance, or on apprehension of culprits. Local authorities, on their part, argue that traditional leaders are not fulfilling their role of resolving issues as well as on apprehension of offenders. Each party points fingers to the other blaming it on the weaknesses pertaining to maintenance of security.

III. Mudug Security Synopsis—2015-2022

Prior to and during the early years of the 1990s' Somalia civil war, Mudug region² was the epicenter of the Somali conflict. The armed opposition fronts of SSDF, led by Colonel Abdullahi Yussuf, and USC, headed by General Mohamed Farah Aidid³, which deposed the Siyad Barre Government, drew their grassroots political support from this region. After collapse of the Somali Military Government, these two opposition fronts fought each other over control of Mudug region to ascend to the country's central power. Due to an eventual stalemate, the two leaders of these armed opposition fronts came together in Mogadishu and concluded the famous 1993 Mudug Peace Agreement. This agreement laid the basis for cessation of hostilities and return of South Mudug Community to Galkayo town and commencement of ensuing collaboration of the two communities of North and South Mudug.

However, implementation of this peace agreement had its constraints. It remained shaky as frequent hostilities often flared up in Galkayo, and occasionally among the North and South Mudug Pastoral Communities over pasture and water sources. Armed confrontations in Galkayo intensified from 2015 until 2017 resulting in mass displacements of Galkayo inhabitants at least three times. Rivalry and discord between the two administrations of Puntland and Galmudug also deepened Galkayo town's armed conflict. Conversely, during the Galmudug Administration headed by Ahmed Duale Haf (May 2017 to Feb 2020), with support from the then Chief of Armed of SFG, General Abdiweli Jama Gorod, a new era transpired for Galkayo and Mudug region.

The two administrations and General Gorod worked together this time and with technical and financial support from UNDP⁴ and UNSOM succeeded in establishing peace and collaboration between the two communities of North and South Galkayo/Mudug.

In July 2017, the two administrations signed an agreement named "Galkayo Ceasefire Agreement"⁵, which established, among other things, a 100-man Joint Police Patrol Unit (JPPU) charged with upholding rule of law in Galkayo town and rural areas. The Agreement also instituted the Mudug Joint Peacebuilding Committee (Guddiga Nabadaynta Mudug), consisting of sixty-two members⁶. Suldan Abdinasir Jama Sed from South Mudug chaired the committee with Hussein Mohamed Hirsi and Habib Hirsi Barre, from North Mudug as deputy chair and general secretary, respectively. This committee is functional until today and many participants believed that today's peace in Galkayo Town and surrounding areas stems from the relentless dedication of this committee. All assessment participants were unanimous in that peace in Galkayo town as well as along intra-state boundaries between Puntland and Galmudug had improved and remains in a favourable condition.

PDRC, among other local and international organizations, significantly contributed to peacebuilding in Galkayo as well as in the overall Mudug region. It has been engaged in community reconciliation and peace building since its establishment in 2001. PDRC expended

² Current North-South Mudug as well as the Galmudug regions

³ SNDU, chaired by Ali Abdigir, was also a signatory to this Agreement but was not among the armed fronts which deposed the Siyad Barre Military Government in January 1991

⁴ Under the Joint UN Rule of Law Programme with funding from Germany

⁵ "Peace efforts in Galkayo progress as local leaders, police and community leaders meet for community discussions," UNSOM, 26 July 2018

⁶ Galkayo Conflict Assessment Report, Interpeace and PDRC, 2016, page 12

tremendous financial and material resources to de-escalation of Mudug conflict during the critical years from 2015 to 2017, when successive fighting incidents erupted in Galkayo and its neighborhoods. Since 2020–2022, PDRC implemented two parallel programmes related to peacebuilding in Mudug region, namely, a) Road to Peace and Good Governance Programme (R2P), and b) Talowadaag Programme. While both operated at Mudug and the border lines of Puntland and Galmudug, each functioned in parallel to the other in different localities supporting peacebuilding and reconciliation of neighbouring communities.

Specifically, the R2P programme addressed reconciliation of disputing communities cradling along the borderlines of Galkayo Western Corridor Zone as well as in the areas the Puntland/Somaliland of Sahmaygag and Sangajebiye in Nugaal Region. In the latter case, due to R2P peacebuilding efforts, the contending communities ended hostilities, reached agreements, and retrieved brotherhood and co-existence. The programme also intervened in conflicting communities in Galkayo Western Corridor, on the Puntland side. The programme organized a follow-up reconciliation conference, which ensued two earlier conferences⁷, in Nugal Gibin location between Sa’ad and Lelkase sub-clans. Furthermore, R2P convened two conferences in Galdogob and Bursalah, where the titled traditional leaders of the area brought together contending sub-clans/lineages in North Mudug and nominated a third-party jury to arbitrate on pertinent homicide cases which took place between of each of the following lineage groups: Lelkase-Madhiban, Lelkase-Wadalmugge, Lelkase-Rer-Mahad, Lelkase-Rer-Bi’idyahan. The jury passed verdicts on respective cases concluding signed agreements on payment of respective blood compensations.

On its part, The Talowadaag Programme technically and financially sponsored two

successive reconciliation conferences between the Lelkase and Sa’ad held in Bandiradley and Galdogob in 2022. In addition, the programme assisted in formation of the Mudug Joint Peacebuilding Committee in 2017. It provided capacity building to the committee while it offered technical and logistical assistance in its peacebuilding endeavours. The programme also supported events and reconciliation efforts that the Mudug Youth Integration Network (MADASHA) had organized in Galkayo town. These included: the “Galkacyo Peace Book Fair” and “Shaah and Sheeko gatherings,” which brought together the youth of North and South Galkayo communities.

Conclusively, it can be noted that the PDRC programmes of R2P and Talowadaag interventions in Mudug had significantly contributed to security maintenance and community reconciliations. Most of the clan agreements, which PDRC programmes hosted were executed accordingly. The few remaining cases are under process and parties could not conclude them earlier due to assorted factors such as droughts.

IV. Mudug Security in 2023

Assessment participants reported that, in general terms, the security status in Galkacyo and Mudug region was relevantly good during 2023. However, they rated security at two levels—intra-clan and inter-clan. On the intra-clan level of North–South Mudug communities, they concurred that security had remarkably improved in Galkacyo as well as the borderlines along the Puntland and Galmudug states. For instance, statistical data demonstrated that between 2017 and 2020, tens of fatalities were recorded between the Sa’ad and Lelkase Communities in Galkayo and along the cross-border area west of Galkayo. In contrast, in the same area the period between 2020 and 2023 registered only four killed and one wounded.

⁷ These earlier conferences took place in Bandiradley and Galdogob towns respectively in 2022

Two notable developments were attributed to enhancement of the Galkayo and cross-border security in Mudug region:

a) Dwindling Al-Shabaab potency due to successful operations by security forces, which eliminated their covert cells responsible for assassinations of notable community figures in Galkayo and instigating clan armed conflicts.

b) Improved understanding and collaboration between the two administrations of Puntland and Galmudug. During the last two years, they cooperated in the fight against Al-Shabaab and in reducing clan clashes in Galkayo and the rural areas. As an example, during this assessment period, two ministers from Puntland⁸ and the Minister of Interior of the SFG were touring Galkayo with the purpose of strengthening peace and stability in the city and the two states' borderlines.

Despite the above, security remains still fragile in Mudug for absence of strong governance institutions and persistence of clans' competition over pastureland and water sources. Along the borderline of Galkayo Western Corridor, Sa'ad (a clan lineage of Hawiye) and Lelkase (a clan lineage of Darod) did not execute the core terms

of an agreement they had signed in 2022 under the patronage of R2P and Talowadaag. Sa'ad failed to fulfill the agreement terms, which comprised:

- a) organizing a concluding conference in Galkayo between the two sides, and b) demolishing a building and a water catchment (Berked), which some Sa'ad members had earlier established in a Lelkase controlled vicinity. Furthermore, the Sa'ad resumed hostilities by killing two members of Lelkase, who reciprocated with two subsequent revenge killings. At the time of this assessment, the two sides were meeting in Galkayo town to revitalize the afore-mentioned agreement. Furthermore, in the borderline east of Galkayo, hostilities renewed lately when the Sa'ad lineage dug in 3 water catchments in a territory titled to the Omar Mohamoud lineage.

On the North Mudug inter-clan front, the assessment respondents discovered that, with de-escalation of the North-South hostilities and respite from Al-Shabaab threat, internal conflicts and armed confrontations thrived among the North Mudug Darod sub-clans and lineages. As of 24 August 2023, withstanding homicide cases in North Mudug included:

Standing Conflicts

1. Lelkase-Rer-Bi'idyahan

2. Lelkase-Wadalmugge.

3. Lelkase-Madhiban

4. Lelkase-Rer Mahad

5. Rer Bi'idyahan—Rer Mahad

6. Rer Mahad—Wagardha'

7. Rer Mahad—Mohamed Omar

8. Rer Ali Mohamed—Rer Khalaf

Involved Actors/stakeholders

To impact on peacebuilding and security maintenance in Mudug, it is imperative to identify involved actors who can either escalate or de-escalate armed confrontations. The assessment Identified the following crucial actors in Mudug conflicts:

⁸ The Minister of Finance and the Minister of Justice

De-escalating Actors:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Puntland and Galmudug Authorities | 2. Mudug Joint Peace Committee |
| 3. TAG Foundation (led by Asha Gelle) | 4. Political leaders |
| 5. Traditional leaders | 6. Women groups |
| 7. Youth groups | 8. Madal Network |

Escalating Actors:

1. Drug addicts (Abtoy)
2. Al-Shabaab and its supporters
3. Drug dealers
4. Political interest groups

Priority Areas for Intervention:

In view of the above, plausibly, prioritization of interventions will depend on the urgency, intensity and complexity of the conflicts stated above. Respondents suggested that some of these cases can be easily dealt with among North Mudug

communities and are considered not to bear immediate urgency or escalation liability. However, they asserted that the following cases need concerted efforts, urgent attention, and immediate intervention:

1. Conflicts Between North-South Mudug communities along the borderline
2. Rer Bi'idyahan-Rer Mahad
3. Lelkase—Rer Bi'idyahan
4. Lelkase—Wadalmugge

Regardless of the above, the North Mudug community is audaciously reacting to the deteriorating security situation and exploring the best options of quelling the ominous development. Peace promoters, potential community personalities, women and youth groups, and other civil society bodies stood up for action. These groups, after intensive discussions among themselves, approached the titled traditional leaders to act and to sensitize the sub-clans/lineages of North Mudug community to adopt drastic steps of addressing the mounting homicide trend. In response, the titled traditional leaders called for a public conference held on 21 August 2023 in Galkayo town. The conference brought together sub-clans/lineages' leaders, social groups, peace activists, intellectuals,

and civil society leaders. The assessment team had an opportunity to attend this event, where the North Mudug Titled Traditional Leaders collectively led the discussions.

The conference adopted a resolution, proposed by the Titled Traditional Leaders (Isimo), which required that anyone who commits homicide should be taken before the law and charged a death sentence ruling. Sub-clans/lineages were awarded 5 days to deliberate individually and return with a word of commitment to this ruling in a forthcoming gathering. In a concluding conference held on 7 September 2023, the sub-clan and lineages of North Mudug Community endorsed the titled traditional leaders' proposal on Homicide cases (for further details).⁹

⁹The document is named: "Guddoon Isimo, Golaha Isimada Soomaaliyeed ee Gobolka Mudug Puntland, 7/9/2023"

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the assessment of Mudug region's¹⁰ security dynamics reveals both progress and persistent challenges. While there have been notable improvements in intra-clan and inter-clan security, particularly in Galkayo town and along the borderlines between Puntland and Galmudug states, significant fragilities remain. The dwindling potency of Al-Shabaab and improved collaboration between regional authorities have contributed to a reduction in armed confrontations and fatalities, highlighting the effectiveness of concerted efforts towards peacebuilding. However, underlying issues such as the absence of strong governance institutions, competition over resources, and the resurgence of hostilities in certain areas underscore the need for sustained intervention and strategic planning to ensure long-term stability.

The involvement of various actors, including governmental authorities, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, and community groups, signifies a multi-dimensional approach towards addressing security challenges in Mudug. De-escalating actors play a crucial role in peacebuilding efforts, while escalating actors pose significant obstacles to progress. Prioritizing interventions based on urgency

and complexity is essential, with a focus on resolving conflicts between North-South Mudug communities and addressing internal disputes among sub-clans and lineages. The proactive response from community leaders and civil society in organizing public conferences and endorsing resolutions demonstrates a grassroots commitment to addressing the root causes of violence and fostering sustainable peace.

Moving forward, sustained collaboration between all stakeholders, including regional authorities, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, and community members, is imperative to consolidate the gains made in Mudug's security landscape. Strengthening governance institutions, promoting resource-sharing mechanisms, and fostering dialogue and reconciliation at the grassroots level are essential steps towards building a more resilient and peaceful Mudug region. By addressing underlying grievances, empowering local communities, and promoting inclusive decision-making processes, Mudug can aspire to a future characterized by lasting stability and prosperity for all its inhabitants.

6. Recommended Strategies for Mudug Peacebuilding

Based on the opinions of assessment participants, the following strategies were recommended for resolution of Mudug region conflicts:

Governance and Institutional Strengthening:

- **Strengthen Governance Institutions:** Enhance the capacity and effectiveness of governance institutions at both regional and local levels to enforce law and order, resolve disputes, and promote accountability.

This may involve investing in training programs for security forces, judiciary, and administrative personnel to improve their skills and professionalism.

Collaboration and Coordination:

- **Promote Collaborative Approaches:** Foster greater collaboration and coordination between regional authorities, traditional leaders, civil society organizations, and community groups to address security challenges collectively. Establish mechanisms for regular dialogue and information-sharing to enhance understanding and trust among stakeholders.

¹⁰ Both North and South Mudug

Addressing Root Causes:

- Address Root Causes: Address the root causes of conflict, including competition over resources such as pastureland and water sources. Implement sustainable resource management strategies and livelihood projects to alleviate tensions and promote economic opportunities for communities.

Security and Law Enforcement:

- Administer Sharia Law on homicide cases to curb senseless murder crimes and suspend the customary norm of blood compensation practice on murder cases.
- Accelerate and set definitive timeframes for payment of pending Diyahs (blood compensations) to avoid further revenge killings.
- Strengthen governance structures, particularly law enforcing bodies, to ensure security maintenance, avert clan/lineage fighting, and apprehend and take culprits before justice.
- Reactivate the Mudug Joint Peacebuilding Committee which is not so active at this point in time due to financial constraints.

Dialogue and Reconciliation:

- Empower Local Communities: Empower local communities, including women and youth groups, to actively participate in peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives. Provide training and capacity-building programs to enhance their skills in mediation, negotiation, and community mobilization.
- Engage neutral local third-party mediators in resolving the prevailing inter-clan conflicts in North Mudug on which conflicting parties can have confidence in and accede to their verdict (Qoor-dhiibasho).
- Engage social groups, particularly youth and women groups from feuding

sub-clans/lineages, to put pressure on their clan leaders to support conflict resolution processes. This effort proved effective in Galkayo town.

Dialogue and Reconciliation:

- Local authorities should provide financial and logistical support to the traditional leaders, who are a principal instrument in maintenance of security and management of clan disputes. Interviewees argued that the traditional leaders cannot play their commendable role in clan dispute resolution for lack of incentives and logistics from local authorities.
 - Local authority and traditional leaders should sit together and sort out their differences and concerns to join hands in upholding public security, consolidating the traditional peacemaking mechanisms and modern governance approaches to ensure sustainable conciliation and peacebuilding.
 - Local authorities should always take the lead in organizing constructive dialogue among conflicting groups, while taking the responsibility of guaranteeing the security of disputing delegates (ergo) during the arbitration times at venues.
 - Organize forums for local authority, traditional leaders, and religious leaders, youth, and women groups regarding citizens' obligation to participating in maintenance of law and order and peacebuilding. Youth and religious leaders to conduct wide public awareness raising campaigns on the criminality and the need to safeguard security.
- ### Information Dissemination:
- PDRC to bring together local authorities, traditional leaders, religious leaders, youth, women, and other social groups to disseminate the results or findings of this assessment on prevailing conflicts, root causes, and applicable reconciliation strategies.