

CALL FOR PAPERS & FILMS

PDRC ANNUAL PEACE CONFERENCE 2026

Theme

**FRAGILITY,
STATE
FORMATION &
PEACEBUILDING
IN SOMALIA:**

*Reimagining
governance from below
in a fragmented state*

**21st - 23rd
September
2026**



Important Dates

**May
15th 2026**

Submission of
Abstracts

**July
30th 2026**

Submission of
First Draft
Research/Film

**September
17th 2026**

Final
Research/Film
Submission

**September
21st 2026**

Conference
Launch

PDRC invites researchers, policymakers, practitioners, civil society actors, and filmmakers to submit original contributions to the conference. This call seeks to generate inclusive, evidence-based, and practice-oriented insights that advance understanding of state formation, governance, and peacebuilding in Somalia and comparable contexts.

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

More than two decades after the Arta Peace Conference, Somalia remains engaged in a complex and unfinished process of state formation. While important progress has been made in re-establishing governance institutions and advancing a federal system, the country continues to face persistent and interconnected internal and external challenges, including political fragmentation, weak institutional capacity, limited public trust in state institutions, regional geopolitics and conflict spillovers. These dynamics underscore the precarity of Somalia's still ongoing state rebuilding efforts, and the vulnerability of its foundations to local shocks and regional shift.

Despite notable gains, key aspects of Somalia's state formation remain contested. Fragile relations between the Federal Government and Federal Member States, disputed constitutional review process, and recurring electoral tensions continue to constrain progress toward a cohesive and functional governance system. At the local level, unresolved grievances, competition over resources, and intermittent conflicts further complicate stabilization efforts and weaken the social contract between citizens and the state. These challenges are expected to worsen given the draw-down of African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) and winding down of the United Nations political support.

At the same time, Somalia is increasingly operating within a rapidly evolving and uncertain geopolitical environment. Its strategic location along critical maritime routes linking the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aden, and the Indian Ocean places the country at the intersection of competing regional and global interests. Ongoing conflicts and geopolitical tensions, particularly in the Middle East, including those involving the United States, Israel, and Iran, are reshaping security dynamics, economic flows, and diplomatic alignments across the wider region. These developments carry significant implications for Somalia, influencing trade routes, investment patterns, security partnerships, and broader political positioning.

In a context of fragile and evolving institutions, such external pressures present both opportunities and risks. While increased international engagement may support state-building efforts, it may also exacerbate internal divisions if not effectively managed through coherent national strategies and strong governance frameworks. This highlights the urgent need for Somalia to strengthen its institutional resilience, improve coordination between different levels of government, and develop a more strategic and unified approach to external engagement.

Equally important is the fact that discussions on state-building in Somalia have historically been dominated by political elites, formal institutions and other influential actors, often overlooking the perspectives of ordinary citizens.

This marginalization is particularly problematic, as it not only excludes their voices but also obscures the reality that they disproportionately bear the consequences of political decisions and governance failures. Yet, the legitimacy and sustainability of the Somali state ultimately depend on how governance is experienced at the community level. Citizens' lived experiences of security, justice, service delivery, and inclusion are central to rebuilding trust and strengthening the social contract.

In this regard, the 2026 PDRC Annual Peace Conference is designed as a citizen-centered platform, placing Somali communities at the heart of state formation and peacebuilding endeavor. By bringing together community leaders, youth, women, civil society actors, policymakers, and researchers, the conference seeks to bridge the gap between formal political processes and lived realities on the ground. It will provide a unique space for diverse voices to engage in meaningful dialogue, share experiences, and contribute to shaping more inclusive and responsive governance frameworks.

The conference will serve as a high-level, multi-stakeholder forum that features the political elites and the community alike.

PDRC therefore invites researchers, development practitioners, experts, government officials, community leaders, as well as academicians to submit research papers and documentary films on the theme of "**Fragility, State Formation and Peacebuilding in Somalia**" with a particular focus on the following sub-themes:

KEY SUB-THEMES:

The following thematic areas are designed to provide a comprehensive and interconnected framework for examining Somalia's state-formation process in the context of ongoing fragility and evolving external pressures. Together, these sub-themes reflect the core dimensions of rebuilding a legitimate and inclusive Somali state capable of delivering much needed dividends, ranging from political settlement and reconciliation to governance, security, and geopolitical positioning. While each theme addresses a distinct aspect of state formation and peacebuilding, they are deeply interlinked and collectively contribute to understanding how institutional development, social cohesion, and external dynamics shape Somalia's trajectory. Anchored in the conference's citizen-centered approach, these discussions will integrate diverse perspectives to generate holistic, practical, and policy-relevant insights aligned with the overarching theme of advancing peacebuilding and inclusive state formation in Somalia.

1. POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, FEDERALISM & INCLUSIVE POLITICAL TRANSITION

This sub-theme will examine Somalia's political settlement as a central pillar of state formation, with a focus on the future of federalism and the management of the country's political transition beyond May 2026. It will explore the evolving relationship between the Federal Government and Federal Member States, emphasizing political dialogue, power-sharing arrangements, and mechanisms for resolving disputes in a context of ongoing fragility. Discussions will address key elements of the transition process, including constitutional review, electoral models, timelines, and institutional mandates. By promoting inclusive and consultative dialogue among political actors, civil society, and other stakeholders, this sub-theme aims to foster consensus, reduce tensions, and support a more predictable, transparent, and peaceful political transition that strengthens national cohesion and state legitimacy.

2. RECONCILIATION, SOCIAL COHESION & CITIZEN-CENTERED STATE FORMATION

This sub-theme will explore reconciliation and social cohesion as foundational elements of Somalia's state formation process, recognizing that while conflict is a common feature across societies, effective and non-violent responses extend beyond reconciliation alone and are more fundamentally rooted in the cultivation of social cohesion. It will examine both formal and informal approaches to addressing historical grievances, including national reconciliation processes, community-based peace initiatives, and the role of traditional leaders.

Aligned with the conference's citizen-centered approach, discussions will highlight the contributions of civil society, youth, women, and the diaspora in shaping governance and peacebuilding efforts. By grounding state formation in lived experiences and community realities, this sub-theme aims to strengthen trust, foster a shared national identity, and bridge the gap between institutions and citizens.

3. GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW & INSTITUTIONAL LEGITIMACY

This sub-theme will explore the critical role of governance reforms in rebuilding trust between citizens and the state. In a context where institutional fragility and limited accountability continue to undermine legitimacy, the session will examine pathways for strengthening the rule of law, judicial independence, and the effectiveness of public institutions. Particular attention will be given to how governance systems can become more transparent, responsive, and inclusive, ensuring that institutions deliver services (including justice). Strengthening institutional legitimacy is essential to advancing durable peace and reinforcing the social contract.

4. STATE-BUILDING AMID GEOPOLITICAL RIVALRIES & SHIFTING GLOBAL ORDER

This sub-theme will analyze how evolving regional and global dynamics are shaping Somalia's state formation trajectory. Ongoing geopolitical tensions, particularly across the Middle East and Red Sea region, are influencing political alignments, security partnerships, and economic flows with direct implications for Somalia's stability and development. Discussions will explore how these external dynamics intersect with domestic governance challenges, including their impact on trade, livelihoods, and sovereignty. The sub-theme will also examine how Somalia can better manage competing interests, strengthen institutional resilience, and align international partnerships with national priorities for long-term stability and state consolidation.

5. SECURITY TRANSITION & STABILIZATION IN POST-AUSSOM SOMALIA

This sub-theme will focus on Somalia's security transition following the drawdown of the African Union Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM) and its implications for state stability and peacebuilding. It will examine strategies for strengthening Somali-led security institutions, addressing threats posed by violent extremism, and improving coordination between national and local actors. The discussions will also consider how security sector reforms can support broader state-building objectives, including governance, service delivery, and public trust. By linking stabilization efforts with institutional development, this sub-theme aims to contribute to a more secure, resilient, and sustainable foundation for Somalia's state formation.

6. DEPENDENCY IN THE FACE OF SHIFTING GLOBAL AID

Since the re-birth of the 3rd republic, Somalia's political settlement has been underwritten by predictable donor support, including budget support, multilateral programmes, and security assistance, which together have sustained elite bargains, FGS–FMS relations, and core administrative functions. As Somalia approached the debt-relief completion amid shifting global aid dynamics, the scale, composition, and predictability of international support are likely to change, with significant implications for fiscal sustainability and political bargaining. Therefore, discussions will address the implications of shifting global aid dynamics and the need for greater fiscal sustainability. By exploring strategies for domestic resource mobilization, effective public financial management, and resilient institutions, this sub-theme aims to identify pathways toward a more self-reliant, legitimate, and stable state.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

To guide submissions, contributors are encouraged to reflect on the following questions:

- How can Somalia advance inclusive political settlements that strengthen federalism, manage power-sharing, and ensure a peaceful and credible political transition?
- What approaches can effectively address historical grievances, rebuild trust, and place citizens at the center of state formation and peacebuilding?
- What reforms and innovations are needed to strengthen the rule of law, enhance institutional legitimacy, and improve accountability and service delivery?
- How can Somalia strategically navigate evolving regional and global dynamics to safeguard its sovereignty and align external engagement with national priorities?
- What strategies can support an effective security transition, strengthen Somali-led security institutions, and ensure sustainable stabilization?
- How can Somalia enhance fiscal sustainability, reduce dependency on external aid, and build resilient economic and governance systems?

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES:

PAPERS SUBMISSION

Abstract Submission

- Abstracts (maximum **500 words**) must be submitted as **MS Word attachments** to jamina@pdrcsomalia.org / apc@pdrcsomalia.org by **15th May 2026**.
- The abstract should clearly state:
 - The objective of the paper
 - The methodology applied
 - Key findings or arguments
 - The paper's contribution to knowledge and practice

Author Information

Each submission must include:

- Full name(s) of author(s)
- Institutional affiliation (if applicable)
- Institutional address(es)

- Corresponding author
- Email address(es)
- A short biography (maximum 100 words)

Full Paper Submission

- Authors of accepted abstracts will be invited to submit full papers.
- Full papers must be submitted by **30th July 2026**.
- Final revised papers must be submitted by **17th September 2026**.

Formatting Requirements:

- Length: **3,000–5,000 words** (excluding abstract and references)
- Format: **MS Word document**
- Font: **Times New Roman, size 12, single-spaced**

Referencing Style

- All papers must follow the **APA referencing style**
- References should include **authors' full names**
- **Page numbers** must be provided for direct quotations

Review Process

- Submitted abstracts and papers will undergo a **peer review process**
- Authors will be notified of acceptance by **20th June 2026**
- Revised drafts will receive editorial feedback by **10th September 2026**

FILM SUBMISSION

- A 5–7-minute trail video on the role of Media in Peace and conflict in Somalia and other countries with similar contexts made by the applicant (individual/institution). The video clip must have English subtitles and be in MP4 format.
- All rights must have been observed in the production of the film(s)
- Paper submission is not a requirement for those submitting films.

SUBMISSION PROCESS AND KEY DATES:

- Call for Papers: 10th April 2026
- Submission of paper abstract and film preview deadline: 15th May 2026
- Notification of tentative acceptance: 20th June 2026
- Draft Full paper / film submission deadline: 30th July 2026
- Peer Review of Submitted papers / films: 15th August 2026
- 2nd Draft of Papers / presentations / films submitted to PDRC Editorial Board: 1st September 2026
- Editorial Comments / Reviews on Submitted draft full papers / films: 10th September, 2026
- Submission of Final drafts of accepted papers / presentations / films: 17th September 2026
- Conference dates: September 21st – 23rd 2026.
- Publication of presented Papers in the PDRC APC Publication Series: March 31st, 2027

We look forward to receiving your submissions. Only those selected after screening will be contacted with further instructions to participate in the peace conference in Garowe.

Thank you,

For further inquiries or information, please us contact at:

apc@pdrconsomia.org or amina@pdrconsomalia.org